

# Investigate

## Essential

# Why is pollution a problem?

## Learning outcomes

- Students can explain what pollution is.
- Students can investigate different pollutants, how they may get into streams and how the students can prevent this from happening.

## Method

1. Discuss the meaning of the word pollution. (You could do this as a 'think, pair, share' exercise.) What do the students understand by the word pollution? Where have they heard it being used before? What does the dictionary say? Get the students to brainstorm a list of all the pollutants they know of. Record and display.
2. Divide the photocards (provided with this book) between groups of students and ask them to discuss and write the answers to the questions on the worksheet provided (**BLM 2**).
3. Add any additional pollutants to the original brainstorm.
4. Make a list of the reasons why pollution is a problem. You could use the story below.



## Teachers' notes

Pollutants are things that are not naturally found in the water. Normally they have been 'added' by people. In rural areas we have introduced pollutants such as agricultural chemicals, fertilisers, cow poo and other animal wastes. Meanwhile, in the city we have produced pollutants such as petrol, chemicals, litter and detergents. Many pollutants, especially in urban areas, reach streams through stormdrains (read the stormwater leaflet for more information). Other pollutants can be wind-blown, dropped in by people or leached from the land.

## True story

Recently a dog fell ill after playing in the stormdrain outlet in the Botanic Gardens in Wellington. A vet examined the dog and found that he had a stomach infection which was most probably caused by stormwater pollution.

- What might happen to someone who ate watercress or whitebait from a polluted stream?
- How else might a polluted stream cause harm to people or other living things?