



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Everything you need, one page per day.

Week 29 · Earth Day

26–30 April 2027 · 13 minutes a day · ages 2.5–6, English learners

Our Earth Day week — Earth Day itself was Thursday 22 April, and 谷雨 fell on the 20th · last week before the Labour Day holiday, 1–5 May · back Thursday 6 May

WEEK OVERVIEW



Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week

The Earth is ours to look after, and a three-year-old can genuinely do it. Nothing this week is a picture of somebody else helping: they pick up real litter, plant a real seed in a cup with their own name on it, sort real washed empties, and turn off real taps. Every day ends with the room actually cleaner than it was. Every script here is word-for-word the same as the teachers' page.

FIVE WORDS THEY'LL OWN BY FRIDAY

clean trash recycle tree save

Littles (2.5–3) — one word + a gesture is a win: “Clean!” (one big wiping arm), “Tree!” (arms up as branches), “Trash!” (hold your nose).

Bigs (4–6) — sentence frames: “I can clean up.” · “Put the trash in the bin.” · “We can recycle it.” · “I love the Earth.”

Never ask a little for a sentence. They will get there by watching the bigs.

THE 13-MINUTE FLOW, EVERY DAY

- 2 MIN** Magic Box hook — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek, the day's real object.
- 4 MIN** Teach — the day's word, dramatised with that object. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 MIN** Song — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 MIN** Game — one named game, tied to the day's word.
- 1 MIN** Close — whisper → normal → SHOUT.

IN THE MAGIC BOX, DAY BY DAY

Mon a bag of washed recyclables — a bottle, a can, a sheet of newspaper · **Tue** a real seedling with the soil still on its roots · **Wed** three sorting bins, paper, plastic and food, each with a photograph on the front · **Thu** a cloth bag and a refillable bottle, laid next to a single-use plastic bag · **Fri** everything from the week plus the class handprint “Earth tree” poster and a cloth.

THE WEEK'S CLOSE

Everyone: “**Clean it up... LOVE THE EARTH!**” (*big wiping arm · stoop and pick · hands on your heart · both arms thrown wide into a huge circle on the shout*)

THEME SHELF · FOUR TRAYS

- 1** · Recycling sorting — the three labelled bins, real washed objects and the 12 sorting cards. *Control: a photograph on the front of each bin.*
- 2** · Planting tray — soil, seeds, a spoon, a mister, paper cups. *Control: a line round the cup — soil to here, water to here.* They go home Friday.
- 3** · Earth Day 3-part cards — clean 干净 · trash 垃圾 · recycle 回收 · tree 树 · save 节约, plus the two sorting signs and the action cards. *Control: the whole control cards.*
- 4** · Leaf wiping & table washing — wet cloth, dry cloth, brush, laid out in the order they are used. *Control: no streaks, no puddles left behind.*

CHINESE ANGLE

One 汉字 card a day on the mat: 垃圾 · 树 · 回收 · 节约 · 地球. 垃圾分类 named on Wednesday with the real Beijing bin words 可回收物 · 厨余垃圾 · 其他垃圾; 节约用水 on Thursday with the tap shut; 世界地球日 and 我爱地球! on Friday, hands on hearts. 谷雨 fell on 20 April — the rain that makes Tuesday's planting work.

FRIDAY'S DARK PHONICS SOUND

short a — the quick, flat “a” that never says its own name: cat, hat, bag, can. “**fat cat in a hat!**” The week's own words carry it: trash, plant, can, bag, plastic.

MONDAY • DAY 1

Trash on the Ground

Today's words: **trash**

Grab: a bag of **washed recyclables** in the Magic Box — one plastic bottle, one tin can, one sheet of newspaper; a **bin with a lid** to stand in the middle of the circle; about twenty pieces of clean “litter” (scrunched paper, empty dry packets) in a bag in your pocket; the picture cards from print pack page 11; the 垃圾 card.

2 MIN

MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box crackles and clatters when it moves. Hold it up. Whole class chants:

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Shake it hard — a horrible rattle. Lift the lid a crack, **sniff**, and pull your face away.

Teacher: “Somebody left all of this... **on the ground.**” (*lift out the bottle, then the can, then the newspaper, one at a time, and drop each one on the carpet*)

Three things on the floor in the middle of the circle. Everybody holds their nose: **“Trash!”**

4 MIN

TEACH • TRASH

Everybody stands up. We say it twice — the first time sad and slow, the second time with the whole class doing it:

Trash on the **ground**, (*point down, and let your face fall*)

Trash on the **floor**, (*sweep one flat hand right along the carpet*)

Pick it **UP**... (*stoop right down and pick up one piece*)

and the Earth smiles **more!** (*draw a big round Earth in the air, then a huge smile on your own face*)

Now the bin comes into the middle. Hold one piece of trash up high, drop it in, and everybody **listens** for the sound it makes. Do it again with the can — a different sound.

Say the plain true thing, slowly: trash is not a bad thing. Trash is a thing **in the wrong place**. It has one place it belongs, and that place is the **bin**.

Littles hold their nose and say **“Trash!”** Bigs owe you the frame: **“Put the trash in the bin.” “This is trash.”**

Teacher fails: take the last piece, put it carefully on the floor **beside** the bin, dust off your hands and walk away looking extremely pleased with yourself. Hold it. Wait.

Chinese moment: lay the 垃圾 card beside the bin and say 垃圾桶 once, pointing at it. Leave the card there all week; the row grows by one card a day.

3 MIN

GAME • LITTER RELAY

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Everybody shuts their eyes. You walk round the circle scattering the clean litter — loudly, so they can hear it landing.

Teacher: “Oh **no**. Look at our room. ... **Walking** feet — one piece each — GO!” (*everything found goes straight into the bin, and then they come back and sit down*)

Nobody races anybody. When the floor is clear, tip the bin out onto a tray and **count every piece together**, out loud, pointing. Littles carry one piece and say **“Trash!”** Bigs tell you what they did: **“I put the trash in the bin.”**

Scatter **exactly** as many pieces as there are children, and count them into the bag before circle. The counting at the end is the real work, and it only works if the number comes out right.

1 MIN

CLOSE

Standing round the bin, big wiping arms ready. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Clean it up... LOVE THE EARTH!” (*big wiping arm · stoop and pick · hands on your heart · both arms thrown wide into a huge circle on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Michael Recycle* (Ellie Bethel) — a green-caped hero cleans up a filthy town. Let them shout the rhymes at you.

3 MIN • Today’s song moment — chorus → Monday’s verse → chorus, standing round the bin.

Trash, trash on the ground — (*point down all round the circle*)

Pick it up when it’s found! (*stoop, pick, and post it into the bin*)

TUESDAY · DAY 2

Plant a Tree

Today's words: **tree** (*trash comes back every day*)

Grab: a real **seedling** in the Magic Box with the soil still on its roots; a bag of soil, a spoon, a packet of seeds and a mister; **one paper cup per child** with their name already written on it; a tray for the cups on the window sill; the 树 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is heavier than usual and it does not rattle at all. Chant, then hold it flat and carry it round the circle without tipping it.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Lift the lid a crack and **sniff**, with your eyes shut. Sniff again. It smells of wet earth — let your face say so.

Teacher: "Something in here is **alive**... and it is still holding on to its own **mud**." (*lift the seedling out in two hands, roots dangling, and hold it up against the window*)

It goes right round the circle and every child touches one leaf with one finger. Arms up as branches: **"Tree!"**

4 MIN TEACH · TREE

Everybody crouches down as small as a seed. We grow twice — slowly, then all together:

A little brown **seed**, (*a tiny ball between finger and thumb, held up*)

Down in the **ground**, (*press it into the floor and pat the soil flat*)

Water and **sun**... (*wiggling rain fingers, then a big round sun overhead*)

and a **TREE** all around! (*stand and stretch, arms out as branches, and sway*)

Then the real seedling, held in your two hands. Say the plain true thing, slowly: a tree **drinks the rain** and makes the **air we breathe**. Everybody takes one enormous breath in and lets it out at the little tree.

Littles do the branch arms and say **"Tree!"** Bigs take the frame: **"Let's plant a tree." "The tree needs water."**

Teacher fails: start planting the seedling **upside down** — leaves buried in the soil, roots waving in the air. Pat it down firmly. Stand back and admire it. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 树 card joins 垃圾 on the mat — 种树, to plant a tree. And 谷雨, Grain Rain, fell only last Tuesday: 谷雨种大田 — the rain that came last week is the reason anything we plant today will grow.

3 MIN GAME · PLANT A SEED

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" One cup each, name already on it. The order is the lesson, so say it once and then let them do it:

Teacher: **"Soil...** then **one** seed... then soil on top... then **two** squirts of water." *(do the whole sequence yourself first, in silence, while they watch)*

Two spoons of soil, one seed, a pinch of soil over it, two squirts. Littles do the spooning with a hand over theirs; Bigs do the whole sequence alone and tell you the steps back: **"Soil, seed, water!"**

Every cup goes on the tray on the window sill in a straight line. They go home on **Friday** — tell them that now, and tell them again on Friday.

One seed each, not a handful. A cup with a fistful of seeds in it grows a green mat and then dies, and the child learns the wrong ending to the story.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing by the window sill with the cups behind you, branch arms out. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Clean it up... LOVE THE EARTH!" (*big wiping arm · stoop and pick · hands on your heart · both arms thrown wide into a huge circle on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Tiny Seed* (Eric Carle) — one seed out of many makes it all the way to a flower. Stop on every page and ask what the seed needs next.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Tuesday's verse → chorus, standing by the window sill.

Plant a tree — one, two, three, (*three seeds pressed down, counted out loud*)

Water it well and watch it be! (*mist with your fingers, then grow slowly from crouch to full stretch*)

WEDNESDAY · DAY 3

Sort It Out

Today's words: **recycle** (*trash · tree come back*)

Grab: three sorting bins in the Magic Box (or beside it if they won't fit) — paper, plastic, food — each with a photograph taped on the front; the 12 sorting cards from print pack page 14 and the two signs (pages 12–13); yesterday's washed empties; the 回收 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box will not shut — the lid is sitting up on top of something. Chant, then let the lid slide off on its own.

Everyone: “What's in the box? What's in the box?”

Lift out **one bin at a time**, very slowly, and stand the three of them in a row where everyone can see the photograph on the front of each.

Teacher: “One for **paper**... one for **plastic**... and one for the **food** we don't finish.” (*tap each photograph as you name it*)

Everybody makes a posting hand and drops it: **“Recycle!”**

4 MIN TEACH · RECYCLE

The three bins stay in the row. Say it twice; the second time everybody posts with you:

Paper in the paper bin, (*a flat hand posted in, like a letter*)

Plastic in the plastic — in! (*drop a fist in and open it*)

Food goes in the **food** bin too, (*rub your tummy, then drop*)

Nothing on the floor — that's **YOU!** (*point right round the circle, at everybody*)

Now the word itself, held up with the bottle in your hand and said slowly: **recycle** means this bottle gets made into a **new** thing. Not thrown away — made **again**. Squash it, post it into the plastic bin, and tell them it comes back as another bottle.

Littles do the posting hand and say **“Recycle!”** Bigs owe you the frame: **“We can recycle it.” “The paper goes in the paper bin.”**

Teacher fails: take the banana skin and post it into the **paper** bin with enormous confidence. Nod at it. Wait for the roar.

Chinese moment: the 回收 card joins 垃圾 · 树 — 垃圾分类, sorting the rubbish, which is exactly what every building in Beijing now does. Read the three real bin words off the real bins outside if you have them: 可回收物 · 厨余垃圾 · 其他垃圾.

3 MIN GAME · SORTING RACE

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” The 12 sorting cards are face down in a basket. The three bins are in a row on the far side of the carpet.

Teacher: “Take a card... **tell us what it is**... now walk it to the right bin.” (*nobody runs — the whole class watches each child and calls the bin out with them*)

One child at a time, all the way round. Littles name the thing with one word; Bigs say the sentence as they post it: **“The newspaper goes in the paper bin.”**

When every card is in, tip each bin out and check it together, one bin at a time. Getting one wrong is completely fine — that is what the checking is for.

Play it once more with the two big signs from pages 12–13 instead of the bins — 回收 or 垃圾, recycle it or bin it. That two-way version is the one that goes on the shelf tomorrow.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing behind the three bins, posting hands ready. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Clean it up... LOVE THE EARTH!” (*big wiping arm · stoop and pick · hands on your heart · both arms thrown wide into a huge circle on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *What a Waste* (Jess French) — big photographs, one idea a page. Read two pages only, and let them find our three bins in the pictures.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Wednesday's verse → chorus, standing behind the three bins.

Paper, plastic, glass and can — (*four posting hands, one for each*)

Sort them out, yes we can! (*both thumbs up, big nod*)

THURSDAY • DAY 4

Turn It Off!

Today's words: **save** (*trash · tree · recycle come back*)

Grab: a **cloth bag** and a **refillable bottle** in the Magic Box, with a **single-use plastic bag** laid on the floor next to them; a tap the children can reach; the classroom light switch (and a chair if it is high); the 节约 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box is light and soft, and something inside it **slooshes**. Chant, then tip it gently from side to side so they can hear the water.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Out comes the **cloth bag**, shaken open with a snap, and then the **bottle**, held up so the water moves. Lay them both down. Then pick up the thin plastic bag from the floor with two fingers, as if it were something the dog left.

Teacher: "This one gets used **once**... and then it's trash **for ever**. These two get used **again**... and **again**... and **again**." (*fill the cloth bag, empty it, fill it again*)

Everybody cups both hands as if holding water: **"Save!"**

4 MIN TEACH • SAVE

Everybody stands. Two switches and two taps, twice through — the second time with the class:

Turn off the **light**, (*flick a switch with one finger — say "click" out loud*)

Turn off the **tap**, (*twist a tap shut with a whole hand, twice*)

Save the water... (*cup both hands together, very carefully*)

save every **drop!** (*hold completely still and look down into your hands*)

Now the real tap. Turn it on hard and just let it run, saying nothing at all, for five long seconds while everybody watches the water go down the drain. Then turn it off. Ask them what we just lost.

Then the lights: switch them off, stand in the half-dark for a beat, switch them on. That is the whole lesson and it costs ten seconds.

Littles cup their hands and say **"Save!"** Bigs owe you the frame: **"I can save water."** **"Turn off the tap."**

Teacher fails: turn the tap on full, start telling a long story about your weekend, and wander away from the sink. Keep talking. Let them stop you.

Chinese moment: the 节约 card joins the row — 节约用水, save water, which is written on half the taps in Beijing. Say it once, all together, with the tap shut and everybody's hands cupped.

3 MIN GAME • TURN IT OFF!

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" First on the carpet: you call it, they mime it, faster and faster — **light! tap! light! tap!** — and on **"Turn it off!"** everybody freezes.

Teacher: "Now we do it **for real**. Walking feet, quiet voices — we are going hunting." (*out of the door in one line, and it is Earth Day week, so this is a real job*)

Walk the corridor and the empty rooms. Every light left on, every tap left dripping: one child turns it off and the whole line whispers **"Turn it off!"** **Count them** on your fingers as you go and announce the total when you get back.

Tell the office you are coming. A class of three-year-olds switching off the staff-room lights is a great deal funnier when somebody knew about it first.

1 MIN CLOSE

Back on the carpet, hands cupped round one drop of water. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Clean it up... LOVE THE EARTH!" (*big wiping arm · stoop and pick · hands on your heart · both arms thrown wide into a huge circle on the shout*)

Before home time: make the class **handprint "Earth tree"** poster for tomorrow — a brown trunk on a big sheet, and every child's green handprint pressed on as a leaf. It is the thing they carry round the school in the parade.

3 MIN • Today's song moment — chorus → Thursday's verse → chorus, with the lights off.

Turn it off — the light, the tap! (*one finger flicks the switch, one hand twists the tap*)

Save the water, save a drop! (*cup both hands and go completely still on "drop"*)

FRIDAY · DAY 5

Clean Earth + Big Review

Today's words: **clean** — and **trash** · **tree** · **recycle** · **save**, the whole week

Grab: every prop from the week packed into the box; the class **handprint “Earth tree” poster** from yesterday; the **seed cups** off the window sill, ready to go home; a bucket, a wet cloth and a dry cloth; the awards (print pack page 17); the 地球 card. Monday is the start of the **Labour Day holiday** — back on **Thursday 6 May**.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box comes out bulging and will not quite shut.

Teacher: “Today the box is **FULL** — it's got our whole **WEEK** inside it!”

Pull each thing out and hold it up in complete silence. They will supply the word before you can.

The bottle → **“Recycle!”** The seedling → **“Tree!”** The bin → **“Trash!”** The cloth bag → **“Save!”**

Last of all, one small thing left in the bottom: a folded **cloth**. Shake it out and wipe the lid of the box with it. **“CLEAN!”**

4 MIN TEACH · CLEAN, THEN THE WHOLE WEEK

Everybody stands. We tell the whole week with our bodies, twice — slow, then fast:

Clean the table, *(one big wiping arm, right across in front of you)*

Clean the floor, *(sweep low, side to side)*

Pick up the **trash**, *(stoop, pick, and post it into the bin)*

and **plant** one more! *(press a seed down, then arms up as branches)*

I love the **Earth** — *(both hands over your heart)*

and the Earth loves **YOU!** *(draw one enormous circle with both arms and point at the class)*

Then the real thing: the wet cloth and the dry cloth come out and **two children actually wash a table** while the rest of the class watches. Wet, then dry. When it is done, everybody looks at it. It is cleaner than it was, and they did it.

Littles do the five gestures and shout the five words. Bigs owe you a whole sentence each: **“I can clean up.” “We can recycle it.” “I love the Earth.”**

Teacher fails: wipe the table with the **dry** cloth first, then stand back and admire the streaks and the crumbs. “Beautiful.” Hold it. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 地球 card joins the row — 垃圾 · 树 · 回收 · 节约 · 地球, the whole week on the mat. Then tell them: 世界地球日 was last Thursday, the 22nd of April — the day the whole world looks after the Earth — and this week was ours. All together, hands on hearts: 我爱地球!

3 MIN GAME · EARTH DAY PARADE

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Two children carry the handprint poster at the front. Everybody else carries one thing from the week — a bin, a bottle, a cloth, their own seed cup, held in two hands.

Teacher: “Round the whole school — **walking** feet — and we sing the **chorus** the whole way.” *(uke round your neck if you can play walking; otherwise clap it)*

Stop at every classroom door, hold the poster up, and let the class shout the line together: **“Clean it up — love the Earth!”** Then walk on. Finish back on your own carpet.

Tell the other classes it is coming. Three doors that open and cheer turn a walk down a corridor into the thing they remember about this term.

1 MIN CLOSE + AWARDS

Every child gets an “EARTH HELPER” award and their seed cup to take home with the holiday news. Then, standing round the handprint tree, all five gestures:

Everyone: “Clean it up... LOVE THE EARTH!” *(big wiping arm · stoop and pick · hands on your heart · both arms thrown wide into a huge circle on the shout)*

Got 3 spare minutes? Sing the whole song one more time sitting round the seed cups. Then wish them a happy holiday, in both languages, and tell them the date they come back: **Thursday 6 May** — and that it is only two days long, and that it starts with the whole universe.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Friday's verse → chorus, standing round the handprint tree.

Happy Earth Day! Sing and shout — *(both arms up, and really shout it)*

One green Earth to care about! *(one big circle drawn in the air, then hands on your heart)*

SONGBOOK

★ “Love the Earth”

C (0003) **F** (2010) **G7** (0212) **Am** (2000) · Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“clean — it — up-and”)

Brisk and busy, like somebody actually tidying up, and a big lift on “Love the Earth” at the end of the chorus. **Am** is the only shape that might be new and it is the easiest of the four — **one finger**, second fret of the G string — and it appears exactly twice, both times in the chorus. Every verse is only C and G7. C is one finger, F is two, G7 is three, Am is one; learn them in that order. Chant the song without the uke first; add the chords once they know the actions.

CHORUS — EVERY SINGLE DAY

- C** Clean it up, clean it **F** up! **C** (*big sweeping hands*)
Am Pick it up and **C** fill it **G7** up! **C** (*stoop, pick, drop it in the bin*)
C Plant a tree and **F** save the **C** sea, (*press a seed down, then wave your hand like water*)
Am Love the **C** Earth — it's **G7** you and **C** me! (*hands on your heart, then one big circle*)

MONDAY · TRASH

- C** Trash, trash on the ground — (*point down all round the circle*)
G7 Pick it up **C** when it's found! (*stoop, pick, post it in the bin*)

TUESDAY · TREE

- C** Plant a tree — one, two, three, (*three seeds pressed down and counted*)
G7 Water it well **C** and watch it be! (*mist with your fingers, then grow tall*)

WEDNESDAY · RECYCLE

- C** Paper, plastic, glass and can — (*four posting hands*)
G7 Sort them out, **C** yes we can! (*both thumbs up, big nod*)

THURSDAY · SAVE

- C** Turn it off — the light, the tap! (*flick the switch, twist the tap*)
G7 Save the water, **C** save a drop! (*cup both hands and go still*)

FRIDAY · EARTH DAY

- C** Happy Earth Day! Sing and shout — (*both arms up, really shout it*)
G7 One green Earth **C** to care about! (*one big circle, then hands on your heart*)

Each day: chorus → today's verse → chorus. Friday: the whole song top to bottom, standing round the handprint tree with the seed cups at its feet, and again all the way round the school in the parade — that run-through is the review of the week. If your fingers get stuck, put the uke down, give one child the bin to hold and do the finger-play instead; the actions carry the meaning either way.