

Food Packaging – School Wide Analysis



Lesson Overview:

Students will analyze their school's food waste and use real-life data to inform their local community of the importance of environmentally friendly and sustainable packaging.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Examine school waste over a 1-day period
- Create brochures to be sent home to the student body to encourage reusable, recyclable, sustainable food packaging

Materials:

- One bag of school lunch-program waste for each group (ideally waste that comes from rooms where students eat their lunch. Alternatively ask the lunch program to provide a bin ONLY for lunch program foods)
- Plastic gloves for each student
- Newspaper to spread over tables or floor
- Five large containers or bins labeled – reduce, reuse, recycle, compost and waste

Instructions

Activating Discussion:

As a whole group, introduce or review the following 5 terms in kid-friendly language:

- **Reduce** – use less (buy used items, borrow items)
- **Reuse** – use an item over again (use plastic take-out containers from a restaurant to store left overs)
- **Recycle** – an item that can be made into another product
- **Compost** – organic waste that will break down over time (apple cores, banana peels, other examples students may think of)
- **Waste** – all other items that do not fit into the above four (single-use plastic fork, straws, plastic wrap, etc.)

Learning Plan (including Activity Options):

1. Each group to spread their waste bag onto the newspaper and sort into the five bins
2. Once the sorting is complete, record the amount of items in each bin
3. From each bin, record the amount of items that are related to food

Teachers may choose to engage in a number of different activities from here. There are a wide variety of post-lessons, choose the activity that will work best with your group of students. Some examples include:

- *(Prior to sorting) Ask students to make predictions as to how much plastic waste will be in each bin and compare with the actual results*
- Weighing how much plastic waste is in each of the bins

- Taking an inventory of the kind of items in each bin
 - Creating a chart and/or graph
4. Students will then create a brochure or public service announcement poster to be shared amongst their student body. Suggested requirements for their work may include:
- Your message must be related to school lunches
 - Why is this an important issue?
 - A “Did you know” fact related to lunch packaging
 - A suggestion/tip for how to pack an environmentally friendly
 - A coloured illustration

Instructor: The products made will vary largely depending on the abilities of your students and the teacher’s assessment needs. Adjust the final product’s requirements as you see fit.