



Food Waste Reduction Lesson Plan

This is a flexible lesson plan that can be modified to fit your classroom's needs. It can be completed in a one-hour block or delivered throughout the week, and has options for long-term and short-term projects.

Watch these short videos

[Too good to waste \(Why composting is better than putting food & yard waste in the landfill\)](#) 3:50

[Calgary recycling \(How Calgary's recyclables are sorted\)](#) 6:34

[Calgary's green cart program \(How Calgary's compost is made\)](#) 5:28

Classroom discussion: Food waste prevention & packaging waste reduction

Half-page, double-sided printable handout

Here are some conversation starters and top tips for food waste prevention and packaging waste reduction in students' lunches. This half page handout can be printed for students to take home or used by teachers to facilitate a discussion.

Take home assignment: Dinner discussion

Half-page printable handout

This activity helps students discover how our attitudes towards food affect how much we waste! At dinner, students ask the people eating with them these thought-provoking questions and report back to the class.

To reinforce the learnings from this activity, here are some suggested activities:

- Facilitate a class discussion or debate
- Assign an essay or personal reflection around one of these questions
- Lead an Art activity to draw a picture of a creative way to use up leftovers

Recycling Council of Alberta: Waste-free lunch challenge

Downloadable teacher's planning guide

The Waste-Free Lunch Challenge is designed as a resource for classroom educators to raise awareness of waste reduction. The goal of the challenge is to help schools decrease the amount of garbage they produce and to educate students, staff, and parents about waste reduction and the principles of the 3 R's – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

<https://recycle.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WFLC-Program-Details-1.pdf>

Food waste prevention

Conversation starters

- Why is food waste acceptable?
- How can we reduce it in our lunches? In our homes?
- Would you eat a bruised apple or banana?
- Have you ever eaten something past its best before date?
- Do you like leftovers?
- Why is it important to know where your food comes from?



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Tips to prevent food waste

- Talk to whoever helps pack your lunch about what foods you prefer.
- Pack the right portion sizes.
- Use an icepack to avoid spoiled food.
- Bring home what you don't eat. You can see how much you are eating, and reuse (within reason) parts of the lunch that weren't eaten.
- Use resealable containers so food can be saved for later.



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Packaging waste reduction

Conversation starters

- Where does our packaging come from?
- What items tend to have more/less packaging?
- What containers could you reuse without having to buy them?
- Is it easier or harder to pack a waste-free lunch?



Tips for packing

- Bring a reusable lunch bag.
- Pack whole fruits or vegetables without a container.
- Use resealable containers so that leftovers can be closed up and consumed or composted later.
- Use yogurt containers or plastic screw-top jars.
- Beware of single-serving containers which can have a lot of packaging.
- Avoid disposable plastic wrap, foil, wax, or foam.
- Bring a water bottle.
- Pack a cloth napkin.
- Use plastic or metal reusable forks/spoons.



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Dinner Discussion

It's time to find out how our attitudes towards food affect how much we waste! At dinner tonight, ask the people eating with you any of the following questions and report back to your class.

- Is food waste acceptable? Why do we waste food?
- How can we reduce food waste in our lunches? In our dinners? Breakfasts?
- Would you eat a bruised apple or banana? Why or why not?
- Have you even eaten something past its best before date?
- Do you like leftovers? What are your favourite leftovers?
- Why is it important to know where your food comes from?



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