



**FOOD WASTE
WARRIORS**



**GRADES
K-2**

A Little Food Waste Leads to a Lot

STUDENTS WILL LEARN . . .

- what food waste is and why it isn't good.
- the resources that go into producing food.
- three ways to reduce food waste.

A Little Food Waste Leads to a Lot



HOW IT WORKS

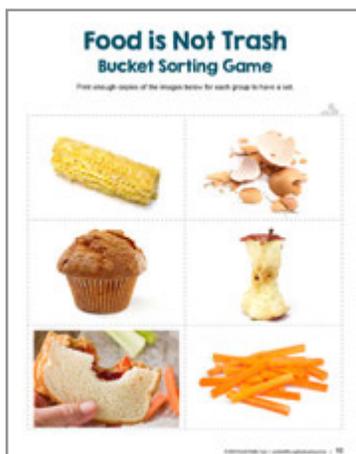
1. **Watch the slideshow** to introduce the issue of food waste (10–25 minutes).
2. **Conduct a classroom or at-home food audit** so students can SEE just how much is wasted (1 class period plus a lunch period).
3. **Have students do the hands-on activities** designed to extend learning about food waste (20-40 minutes per activity).

What You'll Get

- “What is Food Waste?” slideshow (includes teacher notes)
- “Food is Not Trash” printable
- “Where Does Food Come From?” printable

What Else You'll Need

- Plastic disposable containers (enough for each student to have one)
- Food scale
- Large bucket for collecting food waste
- Three buckets or boxes (different colors if possible)
- Scissors for each student



Slideshow: What is Food Waste?



Show students exactly how much food is wasted at their school or in their home.

This slideshow introduces students to the problem of food waste. Teacher notes are included for each slide to deepen discussion. No advance preparation is necessary!

Pre-Slideshow Questions

- 1.** Start a non-judgmental conversation about food waste with questions like:
 - * Have you ever opened your lunch box or picked up your lunch tray and found food you don't like or aren't hungry for?
 - * What do you do with that food?
- 2.** As students share their responses, you might want to ask clarifying and open-ended questions like:
 - * How do you think the food gets to your plate or lunchbox in the first place?
 - * What do you think happens to the food once you put it in the trash?
- 3.** Then show the slideshow, reading or paraphrasing the notes included with each slide.

Food Audit

The heart of this program, this memorable activity shows students exactly how much food is wasted at school or in their home.



1. Arrange for students to eat lunch in the classroom.
2. Before eating, give each student a container.
3. After lunch, have students put any remaining food and drink in the plastic container. Do not include wrappers, sandwich bags, etc.
4. Students take turns weighing their food using the classroom scale. After they weigh their food, have them dump it into the large bucket.
5. Record individual food waste amounts on the board. Help students calculate the weight of the class's **total** food waste and record that as well.
6. Show students the bucket containing all of their discarded food together.
7. Discuss whether they are surprised by how much food was wasted by the whole class.

Online Learning

Encourage students to measure leftover food after two different meals. If they have a kitchen scale, they can use that. If they don't have a scale at home, they can use a plastic container (milk jug with top cut off, disposable food container, etc.). Have students fill the container with leftover food after a meal and mark the line with a Sharpie. Then have them repeat the activity another day and see if their "leftover line" is any lower. If you want, students can take and share pictures of their Meal 1 and Meal 2 leftovers in your virtual classroom.

Your class can be part of WWF's national research by entering your classroom's audit results in the Food Waste Warriors Data Dashboard.



[Learn More !\[\]\(05be7c7a8995decd503647c99211f7c2_img.jpg\)](#)

Activity

Food is Not Trash Bucket Sorting Game

Time required: 20-40 minutes



1. Print the bucket signs (Save It, Share It, Compost It) and attach them to three different buckets or boxes.
2. Determine ahead of time how many groups of 3-5 students you will have. Make enough copies of the food pages so each group has a set of pages.
3. Divide your class into those groups. Give each group a set of food pages and have them cut them apart.
4. Remind students of the slideshow learning. What kinds of waste goes into a compost? What kinds of waste cannot be composted? Practice sorting the pictures until they are able to sort. Some items in the sorting game will fit into more than one category which will give kids a chance to share their thinking.
5. Put the food pictures in a bucket or bag and let your kids show you what they've learned! One by one students pull a picture from the container and then run to place it in the bucket they think it goes in. When the student comes back, they tap the next student to go. At the end, the students sit in a circle and have a healthy conversation about why they put each picture in the bucket they chose. Let kids debate kindly if they disagree. The more they think about their food waste, the bigger the learning!

Compost	Don't Compost
Fruits and vegetables	Dairy products
Nutshells	Bones
Tea bags	Meat or fish
Coffee grounds	Baked goods

Simplify

Work one-on-one to help talk through the sorting of the images. Bring in real food to sort if the symbolism of the images isn't making an impact.

Amplify

Have students watch this video: [Making a Homemade Composter!](#) and create their own composter out of a plastic bottle.

Online Learning

For students learning at home, play a game where you hold up the photos one by one and let kids vote for "save it," "share it," or "compost it" using their hand-raising icons or their actual hands! If you want to, let a student share their reasoning for each item.

Activity

Where Does Our Food Come From?

Time required: 20-40 minutes



1. You can begin by saying that when we waste food, we are also wasting all of the resources that went into growing our food and getting it to our tables. Lead a discussion about what we need to make food by revisiting the slideshow.
2. Together with your class, make a list of 8-10 of their favorite foods. Then ask them to choose one food and think about all the resources that go into producing that food and getting it to our plates.

Here's an example: Chicken nuggets require chickens, grain, grass, sunlight, water, money, trucks, gas, and people (like farmers and cooks).

3. Print and cut apart the "Where Does Food Come From?" matching game. The number of copies will depend on how you choose to use it. You can play the matching game together as a class, set it up as a station in your classroom, or send it home for students to complete independently. The goal is to help build connections between what they see on their plate and its cost in terms of resources.

Both activities in this lesson use printables for an easy informal assessment tool.

Simplify

To simplify this activity, make things more concrete by going on a field trip (in person or remotely) to a garden or a farm.

Amplify

To amplify, have students compare resources needed to grow produce with those needed to raise animals for food. Ask them to share their findings.

Online Learning

Have students complete the printable independently and then discuss their answers during online class time.

Food is Not Trash Bucket

SAVE IT

Food is Not Trash Bucket

SHARE IT

Food is Not Trash Bucket

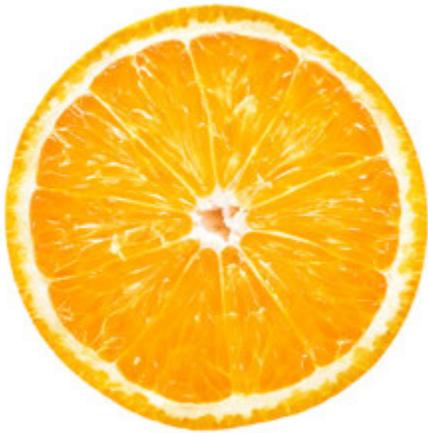
**COMPOST
IT**

Food is Not Trash

Bucket Sorting Game

Print enough copies of the images below for each group to have a set.









Where Does Our Food Come From?

Match the food to the resources needed to get that food on your plate!

