

Lesson #7: What a Waste!

Preventing Food Waste as a Climate Solution

07

Big Idea



Food waste is a big deal in Canada, and an easy solution for many students to see and do. Connecting food waste as lost energy resources and new emissions helps us rediscover the important role food plays in our daily lives. Discover some ways to counter food waste by exploring how food is lost through production steps until it lands on your table. Then, create a class food waste pledge to prevent future waste on our end!



Suggested Steps:

1. Start by going through the slideshow.
2. Afterwards, do the first and then the second activity.
3. Close the lesson with a journal reflection prompt or My Climate Story handout.

Guiding Questions:

- How do my food choices impact the planet?
- What is lost when I throw away food?
- What can I do to prevent food waste?

Learning Objectives

I know (knowledge), I can (skills), I understand (conceptual understanding)



I KNOW

- ↳ That food waste means wasted energy and other resources.
- ↳ That my decisions on food waste matter and can help fight climate change.



I CAN

- ↳ Find solutions to reduce the food that I might waste.
- ↳ Collaborate to find good food waste solutions with family and friends.



I UNDERSTAND

- ↳ How food waste happens across production of the food I eat.
- ↳ That everyone can make a difference by being mindful of waste.

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Activity 1: Farm to Fridge Food Roleplay

Time: 30 mins

Process: 10 steps

Materials Needed:

- Food Waste Roleplay cards
- Pen, pencil or marker to track remaining food
- Food Waste Station Explanations Guide
- Signs for Food Waste Stations to set up around the room
- Whiteboard and markers for review (Optional)

1. Ask your students to think about the different steps that food might go through to get from field to fridge.
2. Explain that today, you'll be looking at how food can get lost or wasted as it is getting produced.
3. Assign or hand out at random a different food item to each student, or have them work in pairs to go through each stage if you'd like. Explain to the students that you will imagine you are moving a large amount of that food item to eventually go to a grocery store and be bought by families.
4. As a class, you will walk through each station together and see how your food will be impacted. As you go through each station, more and more food will be lost or wasted.
5. Walk through each station with the students, beginning by reading out the description of the stage or step in production, as labelled or on a whiteboard.
6. Have your students discuss in their group what they think might happen to their food at that step, and then reveal the resulting food waste. Have your students take note of the food waste and subtract from their total beginning yield.
7. Continue going through each station following the steps above, where time allows, until you have completed the final stage. After the final station, have students review and tally how much food they have left and share with the class.
8. Discuss with your students what surprised them about this exercise. Were there any steps they thought seemed a bit funny?
9. As a further discussion, ask students to think about the energy and water required for each of their choices. Use a white board if you'd like and ask students to rank the food options in order of energy or water use guesses.
10. Close the exercise by asking the students to think about other factors that may make more or less food waste. How could transportation distance and the level of manufacturing of different food impact what is lost? How could their food buying choices help?

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Activity 2: Food Waste Solutions Discussion & Pledge

Time: 30 mins

Process: 10 steps

Materials Needed:

- Food Waste Pledge Template

- Whiteboard and markers

1. Begin with a class discussion about what you have recently eaten, whether it was for breakfast, lunch, or a snack.
2. Write down some of the examples. Ask students to think about what some of the foods have in common? What plants or animals was it made of? How did it come to you? What kind of packaging?
3. After hearing some student responses, ask them to think about the impact of food waste. What would happen if you threw away one third of your food everyday? How much garbage would that equal? How much of our classroom garbage do you think is food waste or packaging? How much of it could be composted or recycled, if not already done so?
4. After thinking about the different foods your students eat, along with the previous activity, ask the students to think about how they can reduce food waste. What kinds of steps can you take together as a class? (e.g. use less plastic and packaging, find ways to use food in creative ways, or purchase irregular shaped fruits and vegetables. Write down the different actions of your brainstorm.
5. Explain to your class that you are going to work on a pledge together to cut down on food waste. Ask them to help define pledge if need be. Then, begin drafting your pledge together, or individually.
6. Use a piece of lined paper, or a pledge template. Have the students write down the pledge, and write a copy on easel board paper.
7. After reviewing the pledge with your students, have everyone in the class sign it, including the adults! Then, decide how you will help support each other to meet the goals of the pledge. What can be done when we work together?
7. As a further discussion, you may want to ask other classes to join with you, either down your hallway or next door.

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My Climate Story Reflection



As part of planting seeds for climate stories, your students are developing their own story to help them walk through their role in climate change. You can use this assignment in place of -or to support- a journal reflection.

The worksheet for developing My Climate Story for this lesson asks your students to explore some more stories of young leaders taking action for the planet and for others. Learning more about others and hearing their great solutions will be inspiring for your students to create their own climate story at the end of the unit.

For further guidelines on helping your students develop their own Climate Story, check out the explanation in the Teacher's Guide (page #).

Reflection/Journal Prompts

- How can I help my family to not waste food at home?
- Draw the adventures of one food item from its beginning of life to your kitchen table.
- Imagine a meal that is healthy for you and the planet. What would be on your plate?



Extension Activities:

- ↳ You may want your students to also map out other energy that would get used in these processes: people labour to pick, grow, deliver the food, where it gets stored and how it moves around (vehicles, boat, etc. to emphasize even more.
- ↳ Vermicomposting is a great, interactive way for your students to see how food breaks down. Consider putting a vermicomposting bin in your classroom and have your students learn about the role worms and other bugs/insects have in breaking down organic matter.
- ↳ For an even further study, Try taking up a food waste audit with your class. -> gather food waste for a week and look at it. This also provides good numbers