



Take-home

Students will work with their families to calculate the approximate number of items they keep from being thrown away for one week by opting for composting, recycling and reusable replacements.



Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, students will:

- ✓ understand the importance of reducing their overall waste
- ✓ come to know a variety of ways in which they can reduce the amount of single-use items they use
- ✓ take action/make plans to reduce their overall waste
- ✓ will have worked with their families to calculate the approximate number of items they are using/saving in their daily lives and thought of ways to reduce their waste production

There is only **ONE** option for this challenge.

Please have students complete the challenge at home, and then calculate and submit the total number of items kept from being thrown away for a week by all students and their families. This will provide your class with an opportunity to discuss ways to collectively reduce their use of single-use items (e.g., coffee cups, plastic bottles) and increase their awareness of waste production.

Important

Please respect all school and governmental guidelines and restrictions surrounding COVID-19. Review the 2021 CDC COVID-19 policy [here](#). This challenge does NOT require students to participate in an in-person setting.





Take-home

Activity

Students will complete this challenge at home. The teacher will calculate and submit the total number of items kept from being thrown away for one week by all students and their families.

Materials

As necessary to complete the challenge, Waste tracking sheet (attached).

Proof to be submitted

Copies of Waste tracking sheets, total number of items kept from being thrown away by the class for one week

Activity

Present students with the word “waste” and ask them to define it. Discuss the different types of waste that occur in society (e.g., food waste, recycling, single-use plastics, pollution) and why waste (particularly plastic waste) is causing great interest and concern. Explain to students that several developed countries export plastic recyclables and waste to developing ones and that, in recent years, many of the world’s poorest countries have spoken out about how they have reached capacity for handling and processing waste from other richer, and oftentimes more wasteful, countries.

See if students can think of reasons why so much waste is produced in developed countries like Canada (e.g., people incorrectly assuming that all waste is diverted to recycling or composting facilities rather than ending up in landfills, poor attitudes or approaches to recycling and waste such as “out of sight out of mind”, uncertainty about what type of waste belongs in which bin). Let students know that they will take an important first step towards improving their personal reusing and recycling habits! And even better, they are going to get their families involved!

Distribute the Take-Home Waste Tracking sheet and letter (attached) to students to bring home. Explain to students that this challenge will be done at home and that they must share the letter with their families. Go over the worksheet with them. Students will hand in their calculations after the week has passed.

As a class, add up the total number of items kept from being thrown away in a week by the entire class. The group should discuss the impact of this exercise on their understanding of waste accumulation and the importance of recycling and reusing items. Conclude with a discussion about the necessity to divert energy for waste processing purposes and promising research avenues to help reduce this like using biomass waste to create energy.



Teacher tip

Teachers, students and their parents/guardians are encouraged to share their results and conclusions through social media. Their social media posts may be chosen and showcased on the Classroom Energy Diet Challenge blog and reshared on our social media accounts (Twitter: [@Energy_Lit](#) or Facebook/Instagram: [@CanGeoEdu](#)). All are invited to use the hashtag [#EnergyDietChallenge](#).





Take-home

Name _____

Date _____

Waste tracking sheet

Challenge your family to keep as many items out of the garbage as possible this week by composting and recycling, and opting for reusable items rather than single-use ones! A week without trash—think you can pull it off?

Items that were recycled or composted instead of put in the garbage:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:
Total #:	Total #:	Total #:	Total #:	Total #:

Single-use items replaced with reusable options, or items reused multiple times:

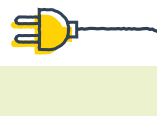
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:
Total #:	Total #:	Total #:	Total #:	Total #:

Items placed in the garbage:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:
Total #:	Total #:	Total #:	Total #:	Total #:

Weekly grand total of items put in the garbage: _____

Weekly grand total of items kept out of the garbage: _____





Take-home

Letter to parent and guardians

Dear parents and guardians,

Your child's class is participating in a challenge about reducing household waste as part of the Classroom Energy Diet Challenge (energydiet.ca), a competition that aims to increase energy awareness. This contest has a total of \$45,000 worth of prizes for participating Canadian kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms.

This particular challenge, called the Take-Home Challenge, invites you to work together with your child to learn about household waste production by tallying how many items you can keep from being thrown away in a week, and to think of ways to reduce your use of single-use items. The challenge should require only a few minutes a day to complete as you track which items you composted, recycled and replaced with reusable options. We also ask that you track how many items do get placed in the garbage.

To do this challenge, your child was given the "Take-Home Waste Tracking Worksheet" to complete with your help. To complete the worksheet:

- Track the individual items (as best you can) that you compost or recycle each day of the week (e.g., apple core, soup can)
- Track the potential single-use items (as best you can) that you replace with reusable options or that you reuse each day of the week (e.g., coffee cup, plastic straw, water bottle)
- Track the individual items (as best you can) that you end up having to throw away
- Tally the weekly grand total of items you threw away versus items you kept from being thrown away.
- Have your child return the worksheet to their teacher after the week has passed.

If you want, share your progress and results on social media! Your posts may be chosen and showcased on the Classroom Energy Diet Challenge blog and reshared on Canadian Geographic Education's social media accounts (Twitter: [@Energy_Lit](https://twitter.com/Energy_Lit) or Facebook/Instagram: [@CanGeoEdu](https://www.facebook.com/CanGeoEdu)). Please use the hashtag **#EnergyDietChallenge**.

Thank you for participating!

Sincerely,

The Classroom Energy Diet Challenge Team

