

REDUCING AND REUSING LUNCH WASTE

Grades:

1 – 2

Time Allotments:

Teacher preparation: 15 minutes

Lesson and Activity: 45 minutes

Vocabulary:

Waste Reuse

Waste Reduction

Integrated Curricular Areas and Corresponding Core Curriculum Content Standards:

Science: **5.1:** (G4) A1&4

Language Arts: **3.3:** (G1) A1-2, C1 (G2) A1-4, B4, C1

Mathematics: **4.1:** (G2) C3

Life Skills: **9.2:** (G4) A1-4

Content Objectives: Students will be able to –

1. Describe lunch items and food preferences that generate waste at lunchtime;
2. Describe ways to reduce lunchtime waste as well as the benefits of doing so; and
3. Define the terms “reuse” and “reduce.”

Process Objectives: Students will –

1. Compare and contrast two different lunches and the amounts of waste each produces;
2. Estimate amounts of trash from lunch and what is discarded from students daily; and
3. Identify ways to reduce lunch waste.

Materials:**For teacher’s presentation:**

- **Lunch A:** Lunch box containing a thermos of drink, piece of fruit, a sandwich in a plastic, reusable container, chips and/or carrots or celery in a reusable plastic container, and a cloth napkin
- **Lunch B:** Paper bag containing a juice carton, straw, piece of fruit wrapped in foil, sandwich in a plastic sandwich bag, bag of chips and a paper napkin
- Chalkboard, chart or large paper for writing, markers or chalk

Anticipatory Set:

- Lead a discussion with students regarding what the contents are of their lunches when they bring one to school. List lunch items on the board and identify what gets thrown away with each item
- Then ask students: *How much lunch trash would our class produce if everyone brought their lunches in on the same day? (Estimate a # of trash items per person)*
- *How many pieces of trash do you think the entire grade will produce if everyone brought in lunches? How about all of the students at our school?*

Teacher's Presentation or Modeling:

- Teacher will show, discuss and compare two different packaged lunches – **Lunch A** and **Lunch B**
- Have students examine, compare and discuss the contents of **Lunch A** and **Lunch B**
- Ask them to identify the # of trash items that each lunch will produce – list them

Guided and Independent Practice:

- Divide up food items from both lunches and have students consume them
- Have students count up the non-recyclable pieces of trash that each lunch produced and write these #'s on the board

Closure:

- Encourage class discussion on the following questions:
 - *Which lunch produced less trash?*
 - *Why did one lunch produce more trash than the other?*
- Calculate these figures in advance and share these amounts with the students:
 - Using final trash totals from the two lunches, determine an “average amount of trash per bag lunch” to determine an estimated amount of trash to be produced by:
 - A) Your grade, if every student brought a lunch to school; and
 - B) Your entire school/# of students, if every student brought a lunch to school.
- Encourage class discussion on the following questions:
 - *What do you think happens to this lunch trash?*
 - *Are there benefits for reducing this amount of trash? If so, what are they?*
 - *Why would students bring in lunches more like “Lunch A” versus “Lunch B”?*
 - *How can you change your own lunch so that it produces less waste?*

Assessment:

- Participation in group discussion and responses to questions;
- Participation in analyzing contents of the lunches; and
- Suggestions for reducing waste produced by their own lunches.

Extension:

- Have students work individually, with a partner or in small groups to draw a picture of a lunch box with a perfectly selected lunch that produces little to no waste

Safety/Clean Up:

- Recycle any recyclable items from the lunches and dispose of all non-recyclable trash items. Wash reusable containers.

Additional Resources:

- ***Packing a Less-Litter School Lunch – A Primer for Parents*** (Link to PDF)
 - Text created by Priscilla E. Hayes of Luna Productions Environmental Education
 - Permission to print provided by: Whole Earth Center
 - 360 Nassau Street
 - Princeton, New Jersey 08540
 - 609-924-7429

- **Creating Less Trash at School**
 - Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance
 - <http://www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/school/index.html>