

**ACTIVITY**  
**HOW MUCH**  
**GARBAGE**  
**DOES YOUR**  
**FAMILY THROW**  
**OUT?**  
**(GRADES 2 - 6)**

Time: Small amounts of time over a week

Materials:

- A bathroom scale
- Your garbage and paper waste
- Pen/pencil
- Notebook

One of the things that affect CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, natural animal habitats and global warming is the amount of garbage we produce. Your students will discover the amount of garbage they throw out and the amount of paper they consume weekly and yearly. Your class will also recognize that there are ways to make a difference and to reduce our impact on the environment. (To simplify, calculate the amount of garbage your class creates in a week.)

**DID YOU KNOW ...** A decade ago, every man, woman and child in Canada was producing an average of one tonne of garbage a year? How much are you throwing away?

What you do: Determine the amount of garbage that your family produces each week, each year.

1. Weigh yourself on a bathroom scale. Record this number in your notebook.
2. Weigh yourself again on the scale, this time holding each bag of garbage that your family is throwing out. Record this number.
3. Subtract your weight from the weight of you and the garbage bags. This number is the weight of the garbage.
4. Do this exercise for two weeks making sure to record all the garbage being thrown out over the two weeks.
5. At the end of the two weeks, add your recorded garbage weights together. Divide this total by two. This number will give you the average weight of garbage that your family throws away each week.

6. There are 52 weeks in a year. Multiply the number of kilograms of garbage that your family on average throws away each week by 52. This will give you the weight of the garbage that you family throws out every year.

7. Perform the same experiment, except this time, weigh the amount of paper (including newspapers) that your family uses



weekly and puts out for recycling.

What can you and your family do to reduce your garbage impact?

Make sure you are reducing, reusing, recycling and composting. Be green shoppers and buy things that last a long time. Don't buy throwaway items or things with extra packaging and shop with cloth bags so you don't accumulate lots of non-biodegradable plastic. Buy in bulk and make sure the lunches you take to school are "litterless".

Can you think of other ways to help cut down on garbage?

GO FURTHER: Arrange a "litterless lunch" competition in your school. Compete among other classes, or among your own students who can produce the least litter from their lunch over the period of a month. Start with using lunchboxes and go from there! Make the prize environmentally friendly, like the permission to make morning announcements for a week, or a movie pass.

Source:

[www.ecokids.ca/pub/fun\\_n\\_games/printables/activities/index.cfm#environment](http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/fun_n_games/printables/activities/index.cfm#environment)

Specific Learning

Outcomes:

2-0-1A, 2-0-1C, 2-0-3B,  
2-0-8A, 2-4-12, 3-0-1A,  
3-0-1C, 3-0-4A, 3-0-5C,  
4-0-1C, 4-0-4A, 4-0-5B,  
4-0-7A, 5-0-8G, 5-2-01,  
5-2-04, 6-0-4A, 6-0-8G,  
6-0-9E, 6-0-9F

General Learning

Outcomes:

A1, A2, B1, B3, B5, C1,  
C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7  
D3, D5