

Investigating Food Waste in our School

Now that our Responsibility Unit is over and we learned a lot about what it means to be responsible, including being a responsible consumer of food, we are going to do some food waste investigating. What do we do with all of the leftover food we have at school? Where does it go? What can we reuse? Are we being wasteful where we could conserve? These are the types of questions we are going to ask and answer!

Responsibility Sub-Concept(s)

Self-discipline, Kindness

Project Timeframe

1-2 weeks, broken up as needed by class schedule

Required Materials

- Poster board paper and drawing utensils
- Paper/pen or tablet or phone for interviewing, research, and data collection

Standards Map

This project aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

PART 1 (Week 1)

Students can work either in small groups to do their investigative work and then bring their findings back to the large group, or have the students stay working together as a whole.

Project steps for Week 1:

1. Open forum discussion about this issue in their school. What do students think about food consumption and waste? What are the issues they observe or wonder about?
2. Brainstorm a list of questions that should be asked to determine if the school community is being responsible with its food production, consumption, and disposal. Try to think of 5-10 questions.
3. Determine who (in the school) is best equipped to answer these questions and write their name(s) next to each question. These are the people the students will interview about this issue.
4. Assign students (or pairs/small groups) to one of the identified individuals and have them set up a time to meet with the individuals. Have students/pairs/groups bring along their list of questions for the interview.
5. Have students conduct the interviews and take careful notes of the information they learn.
6. Students who are not part of an interview team should conduct other investigations. For example, how is the lunch room setup? Is it conducive to maximizing students' desire to eat? How does having a comfortable lunchroom foster better choices in behavior and eating? Students may also investigate strategies like "silent first five minutes" where everyone is silent during the first five minutes of the lunch period so as to encourage eating/concentrating rather than talking and messing around.

Part 2 (Week 2)

After the interviews have been completed, students should come back to the large group and discuss what they learned. Ultimately, the class (or small groups) will develop a list of 3-5 goals for how students can make more responsible food/food waste choices. These should be written on visual posters (which might include some of the interesting information they learned) and possibly hung in the lunch room as a timely reminder for all students.