TUMBLEWEED®

Make Your Lunch More Environmentally Friendly

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- ✓ Gain an understanding of the waste generated every day
- ✓ Identify how some waste can be reused or recycled.

Process

Students will:

- Undertake research
- Analyse waste
- Identify opportunities
- Present findings.

Skills

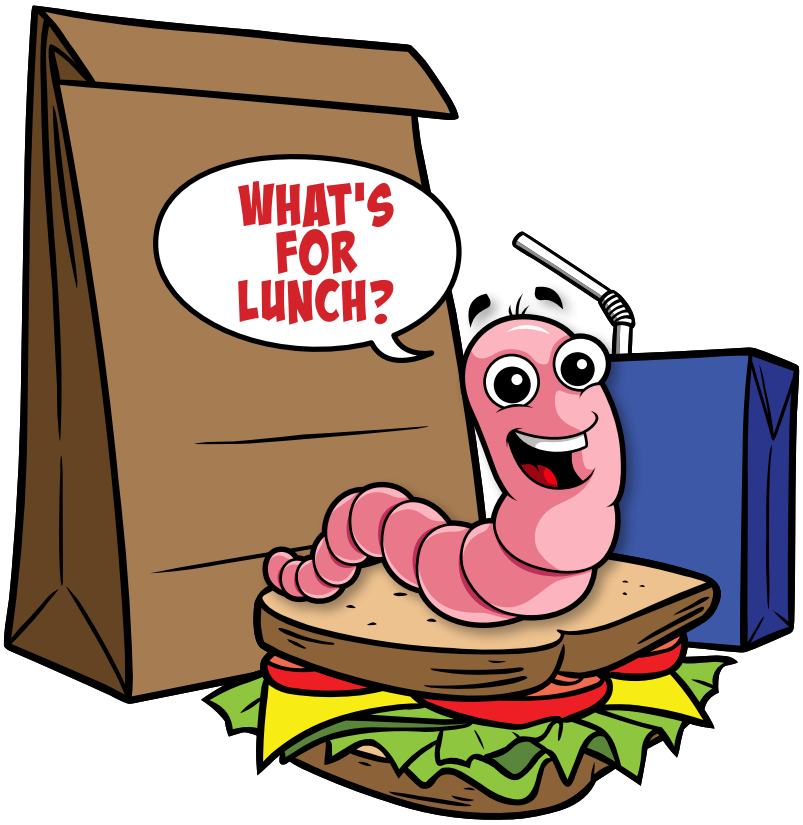
Students will:

- Collect data over three to five days
- Learn to research and analyse data
- Learn to present data.

Values and Attitudes

Students will:

- Appreciate the value of waste minimisation
- Encourage others to reduce waste



Background Information

Every day we generate waste which can be reused, composted, or recycled. What people buy and how it is packaged can have a big impact on the amount of rubbish generated, as well as other environmental problems. When organic waste is thrown in the bin, it ends up as landfill, which breaks down and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. This contributes to groundwater pollution through the acid liquid leachate that is released. We are all capable of reducing the amount of rubbish we produce and dealing with the rubbish in a way that is less harmful to the environment.

Activities

In the process of this task, students will:

- Put a tarp under four buckets and assign each one for **Reuse**, **Recycle**, **Compost**, and **Landfill**. Label accordingly.
- Bring their lunch leftovers – including all uneaten foods and packaging – back into the classroom after lunch and put them in the appropriate bucket. Nothing should be thrown away or recycled until the log is filled out.
- Discuss the concept of **Reduce**, **Reuse**, **Recycle**; reducing the amount of packaging is best. Reusing a package is second best. Recycling/Composting comes in third, with Landfill the last resort.
- Complete a log sheet allocating each piece of waste to the appropriate categories; **Reuse**, **Recycle**, **Compost**, and **Landfill**.
- Graph class totals for Recycled, Reused, Composted, and Landfilled materials.
- In small groups, brainstorm and record ideas to reduce the amount of lunch rubbish they create.
- Multiply the results of just one day's totals by five to represent the number of materials generated in one week and a school year. This total can be multiplied by the number of classes in their school, and the number of schools in their city, state, or country to demonstrate the amount of waste generated.

Other options

The activity can be extended by asking students to:

- Weigh each category of waste collected.
- Arrange a class or school wide zero waste lunch day a class-wide or school-wide zero waste lunch day.
- Analyse their waste according to rock, mineral, soil, plant, and the animal then make a pie chart representing the percentages over time.

Create a Log Table with the following headings: Describe Item, Reuse, Recycle, Compost, Landfill, Could Replace with.