

That's Just Garbage!

Did you know that the average student generates 67 pounds in garbage every year?

Introduce Garbage

Ask the group to name things that are considered garbage. Challenge their replies by finding examples for future use of things they name as garbage (i.e. apple cores can be turned into compost, which helps plants grow). Write these items on a board or on a piece of paper and discuss how some things can be reused, while others need to be thrown away or composted. Ask them about ways they know to reduce the amount of garbage they produce. Use a packed lunch sack to demonstrate different ways they can reduce what ends up in the trash. For example, using a reusable sandwich container instead of plastic bags.

Activity:

Question the group as to how much garbage they think they produce (pounds per individual) in one week?

Tell them to not change their behavior at all, so they know how much garbage they produce without altering the results. Over the course of the week, have students journal the amount of garbage they throw away and write it down in their science journals. Have students rotate in collecting the contents of the garbage containers and measuring the total trash produced in a day. Only the trash can should be measured, unless there is currently no recycling or composting programs. At the end of the week, divide the total amount of garbage generated by the number of students and calculate the average trash production per student.

Discuss if they are surprised. Why? Ask them if they can think of any ways to reduce their garbage? If your school or institution has the option, look into recycling programs or use our lesson plan "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" to assist in the implementation of this program.

