

THE GREEN TEAM School Slash Trash Report Extension

OBJECTIVES

Students create and implement a plan for reducing waste at school, collect and analyze data, and summarize and share their results with the school community.

ACTIVITY

Discuss strategies to reduce waste at school with your class. Working in teams or as a class, students create a strategy to plan and implement at school. Planning guides for starting a [school recycling](#) and [food waste diversion program](#) are available on THE GREEN TEAM library: www.thegreenteam.org/library-curricula

Guiding questions to help students create their school waste reduction plan:

- What is the goal of the plan?
- What problem(s) will you address? (e.g. recycling contamination, wasted food, trash generation)
- Will you focus on reduction, reuse, composting and/or recycling?
- Which waste stream(s) will you target? (e.g. cardboard, plastic, Styrofoam, organic materials)
- Who will you work with to achieve your goal(s)?
- What data do you need to evaluate your impact?
- How will you share your results with the school community?

Students implement their plans and use the School Slash Trash Report to measure the results.

- Use the template on the reverse to make a copy of the School Slash Trash Report for each team. Students use the report to keep track of the trash, recycling, and composting each week for a month, as well as any additional waste reduction strategies used. Encourage students to help their classmates reduce the amount of trash thrown away. Provide an opportunity for students to share waste reduction ideas and activities with each other and the school community.
- Decide where to collect data, such as the school cafeteria, individual classrooms, or locations of school functions such as social or athletic events.
- Determine the units of measurement, such as quantity, weight or volume of bags or containers.
- At the end of the month, collect the Reports and review the results with the students. Help them calculate how much waste they reduced, recycled, and composted. Help students analyze their data and evaluate the results. Empower them with the knowledge that their actions achieved measurable results and that they can make a difference.
- Guide the students in summarizing the results and sharing them with the school community. Students could give group presentations to other grades, classes or administrators; write letters to school administrators or community leaders; create “how-to” videos on recycling, sorting, composting, and reducing waste; create artwork to display, or write articles and announcements for school news outlets.

Questions to Guide Analysis and Discussion:

- How did the reduction in the amount of trash disposed (if any) compare to the increase in the amount of material recycled or composted (if any)? Were they equal?
- If the increased amount of recycling and composting was less than the decreased amount of waste disposed, what could account for additional waste reduction? (e.g. removal of liquids from trash, behavior changes, such as switching from single-use to reusable items).
- What percentage of each waste stream is comprised of trash, recycling, composting, other? How do they compare to each other?
- Which waste reduction strategies were the most effective?
- Help students evaluate the benefits attained by their waste reduction projects (environmentally, financially and socially). For example, if the school pays \$100 to dispose of each ton of trash, were the students able to achieve cost savings through their projects? (1 ton = 2,000 lbs.). See the [Slash Trash Extension Analysis Addenda](#) for examples of how this activity can connect to additional curriculum standards for grades 6-12.

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School Slash Trash Report Step by Step Instructions

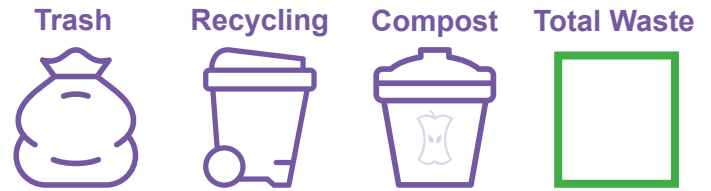
- Before starting** to track their trash, students begin by writing down the amount of waste typically disposed each week at the specified location. This provides a baseline number that will be used to measure differences seen after new recycling and composting activities are used. This may require collaboration with school facilities staff or other administrators.
- Week 1:** Students encourage their schoolmates to reduce, reuse, compost and recycle. At the end of the week, they record the activities used and record the results on their reports.
- Week 2-4:** Throughout the month, students try to reduce the amount of trash disposed by adding to or improving the recycling, composting or other waste reduction activities at school. Students continue to record the results each week.
- At the end of the 4th week,** students should be able to observe a reduction in the amount of trash disposed and an increase in the amounts recycled and composted. Help students analyze and display the results visually by creating bar graphs or pie charts showing changes in trash, recycling and composting amounts over time.



School Slash Trash Report

Location of data collected: _____

Units of Measurement: _____



Weekly Baseline Numbers

(Multiply by 4 to calculate monthly baseline numbers)

	Trash	Recycling	Compost	Total Waste	
WEEK 1					WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____
WEEK 2					WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____
WEEK 3					WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____
WEEK 4					WHAT DID YOU DO? We Recycled (circle): paper • glass • aluminum • metal cans • plastic • other: _____ We Composted (circle): leaves and grass • food scraps • other: _____
					Compare the weekly and monthly amounts to the weekly and monthly baseline amounts to calculate the results of the School Slash Trash project.
MONTHLY TOTALS					