

What's in your lunchbox?

Year level

Lower primary to middle primary with extension activities listed at end of lesson plan.

Lesson description

In this activity students look at the amount of rubbish generated from lunch and morning tea and identify ways in which this rubbish could be reduced.

In this lesson students will:

- become aware of the large amount of rubbish generated at lunch and morning tea
- examine waste and sort into different types
- discuss what happens to this waste and how it affects the environment
- discuss ways to reduce food waste and pack a zero waste lunch.

Curriculum links

Years 1 and 2

V 8.4 Recognise situations and opportunities to promote health, safety and wellbeing (*Health & Physical Education - ACPPS018*)

V 8.4 Examine health messages and how they relate to health decisions and behaviours (*Health & Physical Education - ACPPS021*)

V 8.4 Explore actions that help make the classroom a healthy, safe and active place (*Health & Physical Education - ACPPS022*)

V9 Investigate a range of health messages and practices in their community and discuss their purposes (*Health and Physical Education - AC9HP2P06*)

Years 3 and 4

V 8.4 Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (*Health & Physical Education - ACPP036*)

V 8.4 Describe strategies to make the classroom and playground healthy, safe and active spaces (*Health & Physical Education - ACPPS040*)

V9 Describe and apply protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies in a range of online and offline situations (*Health and Physical Education - AC9HP4P08*)

V9 Interpret the nature and intention of health information and messages, and reflect on how they influence personal decisions and behaviours (*Health and Physical Education - AC9HP4P09*)

V9 Examine the properties of natural and made materials including fibres, metals, glass and plastics and consider how these properties influence their use (*Science - AC9S4U04*)

V9 Describe the ways food can be selected and prepared for healthy eating (*Design and Technologies - AC9TDE4K04*)

Materials

- Lunch boxes with morning tea and lunch
- Tarpaulin
- [Poster 'What goes in your recycling bin?'](#)
- Or arrange to loan a [waste audit kit](#) from Council to be delivered to your school to make it easy to do a waste sorting activity with the students.

Procedure

1. Discuss the packaging which is left in students' lunchboxes after eating morning tea and lunch.
2. Ask students if they know what happens to our rubbish after we throw it in the bin.
(Answer: It ends up in landfill)
3. Discuss the problems with sending waste to landfill, for example, that we are running out of room for all our waste and that some materials take a very long time to break down.
4. Introduce the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycling) as ways that we can prevent our rubbish from taking up space in landfill. Explain that composting and worm farming are a different type of recycling called organic recycling.
5. Explain to students that they are going to sort their rubbish into reusable packaging, recyclable waste, compostable waste and waste to landfill. Emphasise that we are trying to keep waste out of landfill.
6. Discuss which of the lunch items had their own natural packaging such as the skins on fruit and vegetables. Show students an example of natural packaging such as a banana skin. Place all the fruit and vegetable scraps in a pile on the tarpaulin. Ask students what we could do with the fruit and vegetable scraps.
(Answer: Compost these scraps in a compost bin or worm farm)
7. If school has a compost bin or worm farm collect scraps in a bucket with a lid to place in compost bin. If school doesn't have a compost bin or worm farm, this is an opportunity to see if you can arrange for the school to get one.
8. Ask students if there is any reusable packaging in their lunch box such as containers, drink bottles or reusable bags. Place these back in lunch boxes to go home ready to be used again.
9. Discuss with students the items that can be recycled in the recycling bin, show examples of these items and also place the poster of 'What can go in your recycling bin?' somewhere where it is clearly visible.
10. Ask students to pull out any packaging that is recyclable and place in classroom recycling bin.
11. Count how many pieces of rubbish are left.
12. Discuss ideas for reducing waste in lunchboxes and what we can do to have a rubbish free or 'nude food' lunch.



Extension activities

- Do a waste audit of the waste from more than one classroom, from the eating area or for a whole day across the school. Use the loan [waste audit kit](#) from Council.
- Organise a zero-waste lunch day once a week for the whole school with a prize for the class with the least waste to landfill.
- Put together a display of a zero-waste lunch.
- Compile some zero waste lunch suggestions and place ideas in the school newsletter or website.