

# A waste-free picnic



## Learning objectives

At the end of the activity, children will:

- Understand what 'reduce', 'reuse', 'recycle' and 'compost' mean;
- Understand why reducing food waste and packaging waste is important;
- Have worked successfully in groups to achieve a goal;
- Have communicated the need to cut food and packaging waste to their parents.

## Curriculum Links

Maths, Design & Technology, Citizenship and Education for Sustainable Development.

## Sustainable Schools Doorway

1 Food and Drink, 4 Purchasing and Waste.

### Introduction

A waste-free picnic is a fun way to learn about food waste, packaging waste, and the importance of cutting down on what we throw away.



### Lesson 1 - Planning the picnic

- 1** Explain that children will work in groups to plan a special picnic that produces as little waste as possible.
- 2** Divide the children into groups of four or five to brainstorm the types of food they could bring to a 'waste-free' picnic, which would minimise both left over food and packaging waste.
- 3** Bring the class together to share ideas. Encourage children to note down good ideas from other groups.
- 4** Divide the class into groups for a second time to decide what food and drink each group member will bring for the picnic.
- 5** Ask the children to bag up and bring in any waste from the preparation of their picnic food at home (eg. bread bags, vegetable peelings). It might be a good idea to send a letter to parents beforehand to explain the activity and what is required.

### Lesson 2 - The picnic

- 1** Recap the aims of the waste-free picnic to make sure the children understand them.
- 2** Each group should set up their picnic. Provide each group with four plastic bags (ideally, reused ones) labelled as per the table at the bottom of the pupil sheet. Ask them to sort the waste they produced at home into these bags, and check that they understand where different materials should go.
- 3** Give the children time to eat their picnics and then ask them to put all the waste in the appropriate bags.
- 4** Groups should then weigh each bag using spring balances and record the weights in the table on the work sheet. Each type of waste has been given 'Waste Points' depending on how much it harms the environment - the lower the number of points, the less harmful it is.
- 5** Each group should multiply the weight of each type of waste by its 'Waste Points'. Then add them up to get a final score - lowest wins!

### Extension ideas

- Ask children to write a letter to their parents explaining the aim of the task, what they need to bring and why. Even better, invite parents to join in with the picnic!
- This idea can be adapted for use at any time of year, indoors and outdoors, for example for a Christmas party.



# A waste-free picnic



## Lesson summary

Working in groups you get to plan and enjoy a picnic, which produces as little waste as possible. Each group will then weigh their leftovers and score waste points. The group with the lowest score wins!



## Tips for the waste-free picnic

- 1 Choose food that you and others will like.
- 2 Don't bring more food than your group can comfortably eat.
- 3 Choose food that has as little packaging as possible.
- 4 Think about whether you will be able to compost your leftovers.
- 5 Fruit (not citrus) and vegetable peelings or tea bags can be composted, cooked food, meat and dairy products can't.
- 6 Bring drinks in reusable bottles.
- 7 Remember, if the waste is created at home rather than at school, it is still waste!
- 8 Don't just stick to sandwiches. How about making your own pizza, fruit juices or smoothies?
- 9 Choose reusable plates, cups and napkins.
- 10 Use reusable boxes or bags to bring your food to school.

## Did you know?

We throw away around one third of all the food we buy. Most of this ends up in landfill sites where it rots to produce methane, one of the most powerful greenhouse gases causing climate change.

## What can we do?

Don't buy or cook more than you can eat, chose food with little or recyclable packaging and compost uncooked fruit and vegetable leftovers.

## What to bring

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

## How well did you do?

Weigh each type of waste and multiply it by the number of 'Waste Points' it has been given. Remember the lowest score wins!

Types of Waste	Weight	Waste Points	Total Score
Waste that can be reused		1	
Waste that can be recycled		2	
Waste that can be composted		2	
Waste that has to be thrown away		5	
<b>Total</b>			

