



Waste Free Lunch Challenge



WASTE
REDUCTION
WEEK
IN CANADA



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Waste Free Lunch Challenge

Intro

The Waste Free Lunch Challenge is designed to be a resource for classroom educators to raise awareness around the issue of waste reduction. The objective of the challenge is to reduce the amount of waste generated by schools and to engage students, teachers, and parents on the 3R's principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

The Waste Free Lunch Challenge can be implemented as part of **Waste Reduction Week**

Canada or as a separate program throughout the school year. For more details on Waste Reduction Week, please visit www.wrwcanada.com.



Why Go Waste Free?



A typical student produces approximately 30 kg of waste per school year.¹ With over 350,000 elementary students in BC², that translates into over 10,000 tonnes of garbage entering the landfill annually.

Once a class or a school decides to make waste reduction a priority, the easiest place to start is by targeting lunch and snack waste. By including students, teachers, and parents, the challenge creates awareness amongst the different groups, reduces school costs for waste disposal, and promotes a healthier environment for all.

¹ Recycling Council of Ontario, p.5

² Ministry of Education, Student Statistics 2013/2014

What is a Waste Free Lunch?

Waste free lunches are packed with zero waste in mind, favouring reusable food and drink containers, washable cutlery, and cloth napkins over prepackaged foods, plastic bags, juice boxes and pouches, paper napkins and throwaway utensils.

A Disposable Lunch	A Waste Free Lunch
Plastic or paper bags	Durable lunch box or bags
Drink boxes, pop cans, bottled water	Reusable water bottle or thermos
Plastic disposable spoons, forks and knives	Washable silverware
Paper towels or tissues	Cloth napkin for reuse
Clingwrap, wax paper or styrofoam	Tupperware, tiffins and bento boxes

Why Should Your School/Class Participate?



Taking on the Waste Free Lunch Challenge makes a statement. By taking on the challenge during Waste Reduction Week in Canada, educators become part of a national campaign to raise awareness at both the school and community level on issues of waste and packaging while meeting the following objectives:

- **ACHIEVE** learning outcomes in Science, Language/Visual Arts, Math, and Social Studies;
- **PRACTICE** active reduction, reuse, and recycling;
- **REDUCE** litter within the school environment;
- **SHOW** the benefits of reducing waste management costs;
- **PROMOTE** awareness of the environmental and social impact of food packaging.

Program Details

The Waste Free Lunch Challenge is designed to be delivered over the course of two weeks. The required time commitment depends on class participation and the number of activities adopted throughout the challenge.

1.) Getting Started

Prior to the week of the challenge, an initial waste audit for the classroom (*refer to the Resources section*) is conducted to assess the type, quantity and origin of generated waste. This should be conducted on a normal day so that it is representative of an average day's garbage. Conducting the audit on short notice will ensure that students will not have time to prepare their lunches differently.



2.) During the Waste Free Lunch Challenge

Throughout the week, teachers may choose from a variety of waste reduction activities and lessons to conduct with students (*refer to the Activities section*). The only mandatory activity during this time is a second waste audit conducted during the week to assess if there has been a reduction in lunch waste.

3.) Follow-Up

Teachers may decide to conduct another waste audit a few weeks or months after the Waste Free Lunch Challenge to gauge if there have been any lasting changes in lunch practices.

Timeline and Task List

- Select date of Waste Free Lunch Challenge
- Put notice in school or classroom newsletter
- Put up posters (student-made) to raise awareness for challenge
- Conduct the first normal day waste audit
- Conduct pre-challenge activities
- Remind students of Waste Free Lunch Challenge through PA announcements
- Send home letters for parents along with tips
- Begin the challenge/conduct optional challenge activities
- Complete second waste audit
- Compare the differences between the two audits

Tips for Running a Successful Waste Free Lunch Challenge (Classroom or School-wide)

Select Your Stewards:

- A teacher and a small group of students should be selected as the organizers and promoters of the event.

Spread the Word:

- Promote the challenge through PA announcements, newsletter articles, and letters home to parents explaining why going waste-free is important.

Prep the School:

- If the school doesn't have existing recycling or composting programs, this is the perfect time to kickstart them! The exercise of consciously separating recycling and food waste during the audit can be educational and lead to new waste-reduction initiatives or improve existing ones.



Head to the Lunchroom:

- The cafeteria plays a vital role in the Waste Free Lunch Challenge. Ask the food services staff to take the challenge as well. Ask them to reduce their use of disposable utensils. Inquire if they currently separate food scraps from waste. Work with them to see if you can set up signs and posters to raise awareness in students who regularly buy their lunches.

Measure Your Progress:

- Remember to conduct waste audits before, during, and after the Waste Free Lunch Challenge to track your school or classroom's progress!

Reward and Share Success:

- Celebrate waste reduction efforts by highlighting zero-waste heroes and awarding prizes for participants so that the momentum continues to build beyond the Waste Free Lunch Challenge. Write up stories about the experience during the week and share them.

Waste Free Lunch Challenge Classroom/School Activities

Prior to Challenge Activity: PA Announcements

Have students create and perform PA announcements to promote the Waste Free Lunch Challenge.

Prior to Challenge Activity: Custom Letter Home to Parents

Have students write letters to their parents and guardians informing them of the Waste Free Lunch Challenge. The letter should address the main points about the challenge, but also allow for original content by the student.

Prior to Challenge Activity: Promotional Posters

Have students design and create posters designed to promote and highlight the upcoming Waste Free Lunch Challenge.

Prior to Challenge Activity: Zero Waste Pledge

Have students fill out a personal pledge to bring a waste-free lunch and place the pledges in an area with high visibility and traffic. Remind them that the pledges are for everyone to see during the week.

Optional Challenge Activity: Waste Surveys

Have students design a survey to assess the prevalence of ready to use/disposable items associated with food. On a normal day prior to the challenge, surveyors can go around and ask to see other students' lunches. The surveyors can note the type of waste around each meal and use the information to develop a graphical or oral presentation about their findings.

Optional Challenge Activity: Packaging Show & Tell

Have students bring their favourite lunch snacks in and speak about the packaging. Note if it is natural or man-made, if it is recyclable or compostable, and whether the packaging is functional or designed for marketing purposes.

Optional Challenge Activity - Garbage Tracking

Have students create a map or diagram to trace where the items in their lunches go after it is recycled, composted, or trashed. This can serve as the foundation for a discussion into the environmental impacts of recycling depots, incinerators and landfills and why reduction is preferred over reuse and recycling.



Sample documents available in the Resources section.

Connections to the BC Environmental Learning & Experience (ELE) Curriculum Maps



Subject	Grade	Selected Prescribed Learning Outcomes	Forms of Knowledge (Complexity, Aesthetics, Responsibility, Ethics)
Science	K	Describe ways to rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle.	C, A, R, E
	4	Determine how personal choices and actions have environmental consequences.	C, A, R, E
	5	Analyze how BC’s living and non-living resources are used.	C, A, R, E
		Identify methods of extracting or harvesting and processing BC’s resources.	C
		Describe potential environmental impacts of using BC’s living and non-living resources.	C, A, R, E
Social Studies	K-1	Demonstrate responsible behaviour in caring for their immediate environment.	R, E
	2 -3	Describe their responsibility to the local environment.	C, A, R, E
	5	Explain why sustainability is important.	C, A, R, E
Health and Career Education	K-7	Identify practices that contribute to health, including healthy eating, regular physical activity, emotional health practices, and disease prevention practices.	C
	6	Describe transferable skills that are developed through school and recreational activities. (e.g., teamwork, organization, creativity)	C, A
		Assess the influence that peers have on individuals’ attitudes and behaviour.	R, E

	7	Identify skills that are transferable to a range of school and recreational situations. (e.g., time management, teamwork, problem solving, communication, adaptability)	C, A
Visual Arts	K-7	Make 2-D and 3-D images: using a variety of design strategies; exploring a variety of media; to communicate experiences and moods; to tell a story; and that engages more than one of the senses.	A
	2-3	Create images based on objects, places, events, or issues in their classroom, school, and community.	C, A
	4	Suggest reasons for following safe and environmentally sensitive procedures in the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes.	R, E
	6	Compile a collection of ideas for images drafted using feelings, observation, memory, and imagination.	A
Language Arts	K-7	All Language Arts PLOs (Oral Language, Reading and Viewing, Writing and Representing), being process-oriented, implicitly address environmental education in each curriculum organizer.	C, A, R, E
Mathematics	K-7	Math PLOs (numbers, patterns and relations, shape and space, and statistics and probability) can be integrated into the cross-curricular units of study exploring sustainability and environmental topics.	C, A, R, E



Waste Free Lunch Challenge Resources

Sample PA announcement (Courtesy of the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board)

<http://mmsb.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/MMSBWasteFreeLunchPAAnnouncements.pdf>

Sample letter home to parents (Courtesy of the Multi-Material Stewardship Board)

<http://mmsb.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/WasteFreeLunchSampleLettertoParents.doc>

Sample Promotional Posters (Courtesy of the Recycling Council of Ontario)

<http://www.trca.on.ca/dotAsset/69940.pdf>

Waste Audit Excel Tracking File (Courtesy of the Recycling Council of Ontario)

http://www.wastefreelunch.com/uploads/File/2014_Resources/Waste_Audit_Tool_2014.xls

Waste Audit Guide (Courtesy of the Manitoba Green Action Centre)

<http://mmsb.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/MMSBWasteAuditGuide.pdf>

Sample Waste Free Lunch Pledge - See attachment on next page.

Reference

BC Ministry of Education. *The Environmental Learning & Experience Curriculum Map: Environment and Sustainability Across BC's K-12 Curricula.* Retrieved at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/environment_ed/ele_maps.pdf

BC Ministry of Education. *Student Statistics - 2013/14.* Retrieved at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/student_stats/prov.pdf

Recycling Council of Ontario. *Waste Free Lunch - Teacher's Planning Guide.* Retrieved at <http://www.wastefreelunch.com/teachers-resources>

Multi Materials Stewardship Board. *School Resources.* Retrieved at <http://www.mmsb.nl.ca/schools/school-resources/>

Manitoba Green Action Centre. *Packaging Exercise.* Retrieved at <http://greenactioncentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/ESB-Packaging-10.pdf>

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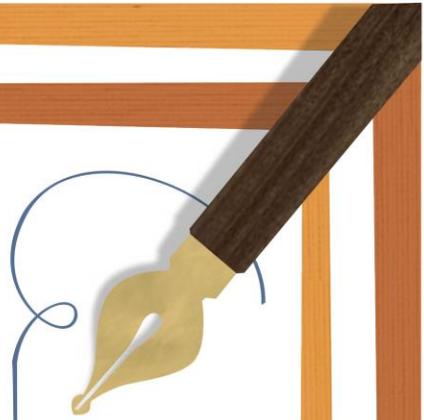


For more information, please contact the Recycling Council of BC:

Email: education@rcbc.ca

Website: www.rcbc.ca/education/road-to-zero-waste

Phone: 1(800) 667-4321



Waste Free Lunch Challenge

Print Your Name

I pledge to pack lunches free of packaging during the Waste Free Lunch Challenge, practice the 3R's, and do my part in keeping the environment clean!

Date

Sign Here

