



SAY YES TO WASTE LESS

# WASTE WATCHERS

A SECONDARY & JUNIOR COLLEGE  
ACTIVITY GUIDE



National Environment Agency

Safeguard • Nurture • Cherish



GREEN  
PLAN

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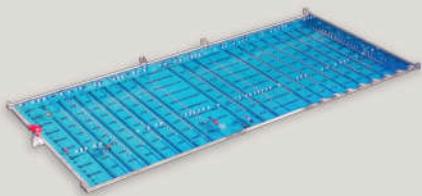
# About The Activity Guide

## About The Activity

This is a 40–50 minute story-led classroom activity that turns students into ‘waste investigators’ — using real-life school scenes to help them identify and reduce the use of disposables and food wastage. It’s fun, engaging, and easy to run.

## Providing The Why

Annually, households and trade premises in Singapore dispose of around **265,000 tonnes of disposables**—enough to fill **500 Olympic-size swimming pools**



This massive waste puts immense pressure on our already-strained waste management system.

Annually, Singapore disposes of **646,000 tonnes of food waste** —the equivalent of every person tossing out **2 bowls of food per person per day!**



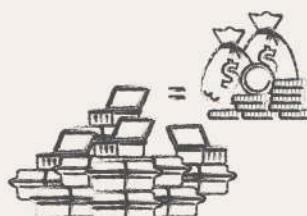
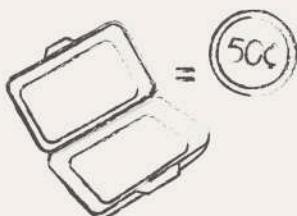
While our waste is incinerated rather than directly landfilled, the challenge remains severe. **Semakau Landfill, our only landfill, is expected to reach capacity by 2035.**



At the current rate of disposal, we'll need a new landfill **every 30 to 35 years** —an unsustainable reality given our limited land and resources.

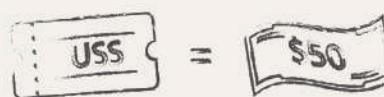
## There's a Price to Waste

1 takeaway container costs \$0.50



Assuming 3 meals a day for 365 days a year, it will cost you \$547.50

A ticket to USS costs about \$50. That is approximately 11 trips to USS!



To learn more about the Price of Waste, scan here:



## Objective Of Activity

This activity guide aims to help students:

1

Recognise wasteful behaviours concerning disposables and food wastage

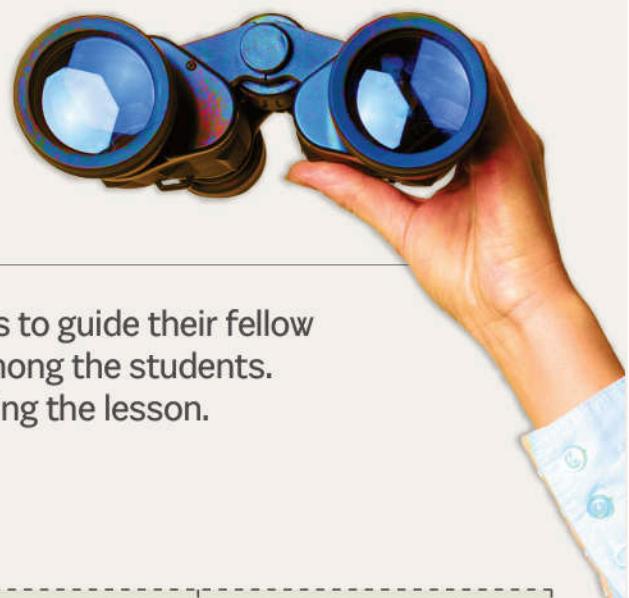
2

Reflect on their daily habits in school and at home

3

Take simple, actionable steps to reduce waste

# Activity Flow



This activity can be led by a teacher or Green Club members to guide their fellow students, fostering leadership skills and stronger bonds among the students. If led by a student, the teacher will serve as a facilitator during the lesson.

Total Activity Duration: 1 hour 50 minutes

Section	Duration	What to do	Materials to be Used
<b>Pre-Activity Preparation</b> (This activity prep can be done 1-2 days prior to activity)	20 mins	<p>Explain to students the objectives and instructions of this school activity.</p> <p>Group students into teams and allocate them to different parts of the school for waste audit checks.</p>	<b>Pages 5-6:</b> Teaching Materials (Pre-Activity Prep)  <b>Pages 10-11:</b> Digital copy of "Waste Watchers Audit Checklist"
<b>Waste Audit</b> (in groups of 4-5)	30 mins	<p>Hand out the "Waste Watchers Audit Checklist" (one sheet per team)</p> <p>Set the tone with thought-starter questions before they embark on their allocated location within the school compound.</p>	<b>Pages 10-11:</b> Digital copy of "Waste Watchers Audit Checklist"  (To go through/ disseminate the digital copy. Only give out the physical copies on actual day to prevent students from misplacing the copies).
<b>Brainstorming &amp; Reflections</b>	1 hr	<p>20 mins: Allow for team brainstorming and preparation.</p> <p>40 mins: Team presentations, class discussions and action planning.</p>	<b>Page 7:</b> Simple tips to reduce waste  <b>Page 8-9:</b> Teaching Materials (Brainstorming & Reflections)

# Teaching Materials: Pre-Activity Prep

Duration: 20 mins

## Waste Watchers: Instructions to Students

### ① Teams & Areas

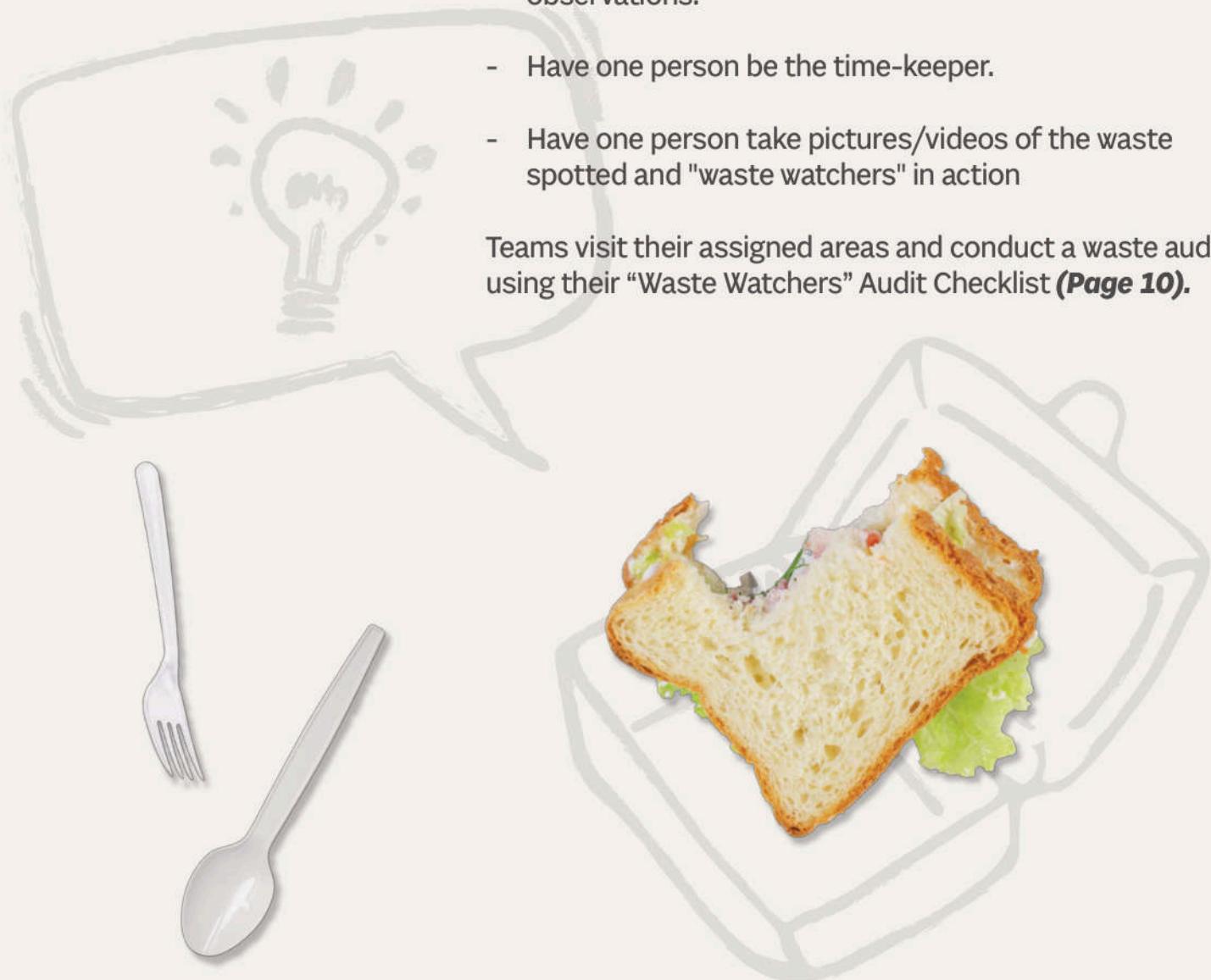
Divide the class into teams of 4-5 students. Assign each team a specific area of the school to audit (canteen, classrooms, hallways, library, sports facilities, etc.). Vary areas to maximise the impact of findings

### ② Introduce the Activity Format

Assign each team a group leader to allocate roles and responsibilities to the team.

- Have one to two persons take notes and record observations.
- Have one person be the time-keeper.
- Have one person take pictures/videos of the waste spotted and "waste watchers" in action

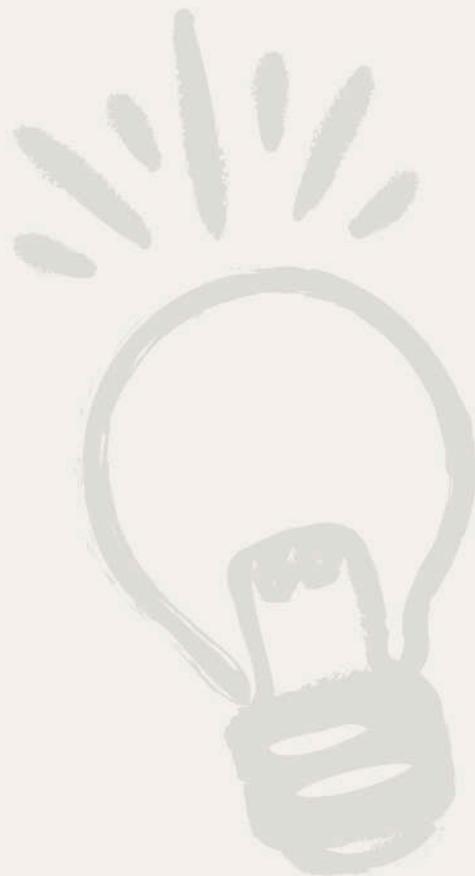
Teams visit their assigned areas and conduct a waste audit using their "Waste Watchers" Audit Checklist (**Page 10**).



# Teaching Materials: Pre-Activity Prep

Duration: 20 mins

## Waste Watchers: Instructions to Students



### ③ Waste Watchers Checklist Overview

Type of Waste	Amount of Waste	Ideas to reduce waste
(Example) Food, Packaging	(Example) Half a sandwich	(Example) Encourage my friends to order just what they can finish
<b>Food</b>	<b>Half an eaten sandwich</b>	<b>Bring a reusable container for my leftovers</b>

Focus on these key questions to help navigate the Waste Audit:

- ✗ What types of waste do you see most?  
(E.g. food waste, single use items/disposables, others)
- ✗ How much waste is there?  
(Estimate: a lot, some, a little)
- ✗ Why is this waste being generated?  
(What habits or systems are contributing to it?)
- ✗ Is this waste avoidable? How can we reduce it?  
(Jot down your reflections)



# Simple Tips to Reduce Waste

This page can be printed for the classroom, and/or printed individually for students to bring home and share with their family.

It is recommended to print on recycled paper where possible.

## At School

- ① Only pack or buy what you can finish during lunch or recess.
- ② Use a reusable water bottle, lunch box and cutlery.
- ③ Where applicable, dispose of leftovers in the food waste bin.



## When Having Meals

- ① When sharing dishes, start by ordering a few items. You can always order more if you are still hungry, which helps prevent over-ordering and wasting food.
- ② Say no to side dishes you don't usually finish.
- ③ Bring your reusable container to store leftovers.



## When Shopping

- ① Encourage your family to make a grocery list and buy only what is needed.
- ② Give imperfect food a chance as they taste the same and help reduce waste.
- ③ Bring your own reusable bags or use the bag you're carrying for small purchases.
- ④ Opt for items with less or no packaging.



## At Home

- ① Store food properly to extend its shelf life.
- ② Keep near-expiry food items within easy view so you don't forget to eat them.
- ③ Place reusables by the door where you will see them so you will remember to bring them out.



## Everywhere

- ① Say no to single-use items (straws, plastic bags).
- ② Recycle right. Place only clean paper, plastic, metal and glass items in the recycling bins.



# Teaching Materials

## Brainstorming & Reflection

**Duration:** 1 hour

20 mins

### Team Preparation & Brainstorming

#### Brainstorm Solutions:

- Get teams to analyse their findings and brainstorm practical solutions to reduce or manage the waste they identified. (Refer to **Page 11:** Waste Watcher's Audit Checklist)
- Encourage realistic and actionable ideas. (Refer to **Page 7:** Simple Tips to Reduce Waste)

40 mins

### Team sharings, Class Discussions & Action Planning

#### ① Team Sharing:

Teams share their findings and select their best 2-3 ideas to share with the class.

#### ② Class Discussion:

Facilitate a brief class discussion to identify common waste spotted across different locations, the top sources contributing to them and the potential solutions to avoid or reduce waste.



#### ③ Voting (optional):

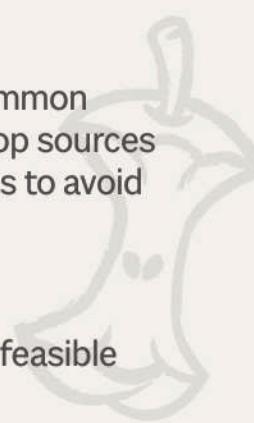
Have the class vote on the most impactful and feasible solutions.

#### ④ Action Planning:

Decide on 1-2 specific actions the class will take to implement the chosen solutions (e.g. create posters, talk to the canteen stall owners, track each other's waste actions)

#### ⑤ Share & Inspire:

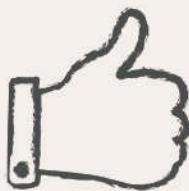
Encourage your students to exchange ideas and learnings about their chosen or implemented solutions with other classes. They can also present their initiatives or observations during school assembly sessions to inspire broader participation and rally school-wide support for wasting less.



# Teaching Materials

## Brainstorming & Reflection

### WRAPPING UP



#### REMIND

your students that small changes can make a big difference

(refer to **Page 7: Simple Tips to Reduce Waste**)



#### Monitor

progress and observe over the next 1 month whether the implemented solutions are making a difference.

Analyse your observations and improve your proposed initiatives/solutions.

#### Implement

the chosen solutions from each team and extend this activity as a challenge! The team with the most impact within a week wins



#### Showcase

your students' efforts!

Share photos and/or videos of your Waste Watchers challenges and tag @cleanandgreensg with #SayYEStoWasteLess

For more information refer to the links below.



**Waste Statistics and Overall Recycling 2024**  
Visit: [go.gov.sg/wastestats2024](https://go.gov.sg/wastestats2024)



**Waste Situation in Singapore**  
Visit: [go.gov.sg/thewasteproblem](https://go.gov.sg/thewasteproblem)

# Waste Watchers Audit Checklist

SAY  
**YES**  
TO WASTE LESS

Location

## AUDIT CHECKLIST 1: Food Wastage

Type of Waste

(Example)  
Lunch

Amount of Waste

(Example)  
Half a sandwich

Ideas to Reduce Waste

(Example)  
Order only what I can finish



## AUDIT CHECKLIST 2: Disposables

Type of Waste

(Example)  
Drink at Lunch

Amount of Waste

(Example)  
Disposable Cup

Ideas to Reduce Waste

(Example)  
Bring my own reusable bottle when buying a drink



What's the difference between food waste and food wastage?

Food wastage = avoidable (unfinished food)

Food waste = unavoidable (bones, apple core)



# Waste Watchers Audit Checklist



## Questions to think about

Type of Waste

(Example)  
Lunch

Why is this being generated?

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Is this waste avoidable? How can we reduce them?

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