

**SAY
YES**
TO WASTE LESS

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MY WASTE DIARY

**AN UPPER PRIMARY
ACTIVITY GUIDE**



 National
Environment
Agency
Safeguard • Nurture • Cherish

 **GREEN
PLAN**



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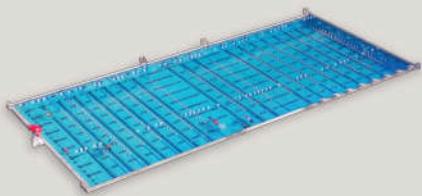
About The Activity Guide

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!**



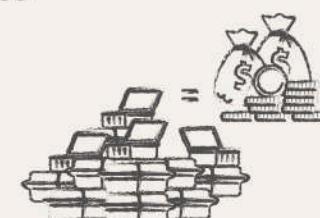
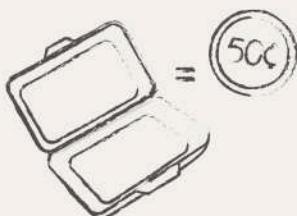
While our waste is incinerated rather than directly landfilled, the challenge remains severe. **Semakau Landfill, our only landfill, is expected to reach capacity by 2035.**



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.

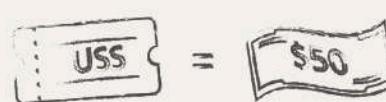
There's a Price to Waste

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 5 minutes (in class)

Section	Duration	What to do	Materials to be Used
Pre-Activity Preparation (1-2 Days before tracking starts)	20 mins	<p>Explain to students that they will be tracking their waste for the next 1-2 weeks.</p> <p>Encourage them to think about what kinds of waste they might encounter.</p> <p>Use the Simple Tips to Reduce Waste as a guide to help students with their Waste Diary.</p>	Page 5-6: Teaching Materials (Pre-Activity Prep) Page 7: Simple Tips to Reduce Waste Page 11-12: Digital copy of "My Waste Diary"
"My Waste Diary" Tracking (over 1-2 weeks)	Diary tracking: 1 Day: In School Practice 1 Week: Actual Tracking	<p>Hand out the "My Waste Diary" worksheets</p> <p>Go through the different categories in the Waste Diary.</p> <p>Run through the two points of activity: 1 day practice in school and 1 week as an extension activity to be used as a classroom discussion.</p> <p>Explain the importance of being honest and accurate in their recording.</p>	Page 11-12: "My Waste Diary" worksheet (To go through/disseminate the digital copy of "The Waste Diary". Only give out the physical copies on the actual day to prevent students from misplacing the copies).
Reflection & Discussion (After period of tracking)	45 mins	<p>10 mins: Allow for student preparation.</p> <p>15 mins: Break students into small groups for discussions.</p> <p>20 mins: Class discussion and action planning.</p>	Pages 8-10: Teaching Materials (Reflection & Class Discussion) Pages 11-12: "My Waste Diary" worksheet

Teaching Materials: Pre-Activity Prep

Duration: 20 mins

My Waste Diary Overview: Instructions to Students

1 Diary Overview

Introduce the diary format (**Page 11**) — students will log each instance of waste they generate directly (e.g. throwing away lunch scraps) and/or encounter in their environment (e.g. seeing litter at the playground).

Use the "Simple Tips to Reduce Waste" (**Page 7**) as a guide to help students identify the possible types of waste generated under different scenarios.

Date/Time	Source	Type of Waste	Quantity	Reason for Disposal	Could This Have Been Avoided?
16 Sep, 3pm Log each instance of waste generated	The Canteen Where did it come from?	Food ✗ Provide examples for each type of waste	Half a sandwich Number of items, estimated weight/volume, description	Couldn't finish Share the reason for the waste generated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

2 Recording

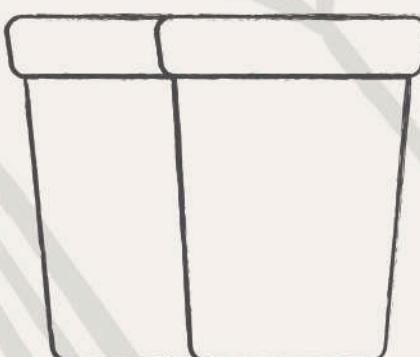
Each day, students fill in their diary entries, journaling at least 3 instances where waste was generated.

3 Support

Offer assistance to students who are struggling with the recording process.

4 Prompts

Encourage honesty and completeness. Remind students there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The goal is to learn and become more aware.



Teaching Materials: Pre-Activity Prep

How to Record?



Teachers guide students to log waste accurately in their “My Waste Diary”

STEP 1: Help them identify the waste

- Examples of food wastage: half-eaten sandwich, half-eaten plate of rice, leftover noodles, uneaten fruits/vegetables
- Examples of disposables: plastic straw, Styrofoam, plastic/paper containers and cups
- Encourage approximations rather than exact weights, so students don't feel stressed.

STEP 2: Describe clearly

Use simple words (e.g. “banana peel” instead of “banana”).

Emphasise the difference between food waste and food wastage. Food wastage = avoidable (unfinished food); Food waste = unavoidable (bones, apple core).

STEP 3: Record in the diary

Teachers can model how to fill in a sample entry on the board:

Example: “2 leftover nuggets = Food wastage”

Example: “1 banana peel = Food waste”

Example: “1 plastic straw = Disposable”

Teacher tip:

Remind students there are no “right” or “wrong” answers — the aim is to notice and be honest.

For more information refer to the links below.



Waste Statistics and
Overall Recycling 2024
Visit: go.gov.sg/
wastestats2024



Waste Situation
in Singapore
Visit: go.gov.sg/
thewasteproblem



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: Reflections And Discussion

Duration: 45 mins

10 mins

Introduction & Preparation

This activity is designed to help students reflect on their Waste Diaries, understand the main causes of food wastage and disposable use and recognise the impact of their habits.

Through group discussions and class sharing, students will be encouraged to:



Identify common waste behaviours



Share and learn from each other's observations



Brainstorm ways to waste less together



Commit to simple actions to reduce waste in their daily lives



Teaching Materials: Reflections And Discussion

15 mins

Small Group Sharing

Divide class into groups of 4–5. Each group discusses their findings using guiding questions (refer to **Page 12**)

Supporting Student Reflections

After the logging exercise, teachers facilitate reflection with a class or group discussion.

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think food or disposables get wasted?
- Which habits cause the most waste in school and outside?
- Did noticing your waste habits change how you think or act?
- Brainstorm a few simple actions to waste less using guiding questions below, as well as with the "Simple Tips to Reduce Waste" (**Page 7**) as a guide.

Further Guiding Questions for Groups:

Food Wastage

- What are some ways we can waste less food in school (e.g. at recess or when shopping)?
- What should we do with leftovers instead of throwing them away?

Disposables

- What can we bring from home to avoid using disposables?
- How can our class remind each other to use reusables every day?

Personal Action

- What's one small action you can start doing today to waste less?

Teaching Materials: Reflections And Discussion

20 mins

Class Sharing & Solutions

1 student from each group presents their findings.

- The facilitator discusses common points of wastage.
- As a class, agree on simple actions to waste less (e.g. bring reusables, only order what they can finish).

Optional Activity Extension

① Action Planning:

Decide on 1-2 specific actions the class will take to implement the chosen solutions (e.g. create posters, remind each other to bring reusables daily, track each other's waste actions)

② 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.

My Waste Diary

**SAY
YES**
TO WASTE LESS

Date/Time	Source	Type of Waste	Quantity	Reason for Disposal	Could This Have Been Avoided?	Has This Waste Been Recycled?
(Example) 25 Apr, 1 PM Day 1 (For practice)	(Example) Lunch	(Example) Food	(Example) Half a sandwich	(Example) Didn't like the filling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions for Discussion

What were the most common reasons for waste?

Which habits contributed to most waste?

How did tracking waste habits affect your choices?

Write/Draw down some of your personal goals to reduce waste!