Eco-Schools USA at Home: Consumption and Waste

HOW-TO ASSESS WASTE AT HOME

WHY THINK ABOUT MY CONSUMPTION AND WASTE?
The United States is home to just 4.3 percent of the world's population; however, it generates 30 percent of its trash. The average American creates a staggering 4.5 pounds of garbage daily. Almost everything we do creates waste, and as a society, we are currently producing more waste than ever before. Both our buying practices and wastefulness have significant environmental impacts.

MATERIALS
- Eco-Schools USA at Home Audit and Action Plan
- tarp/old shower curtain
- gloves
- a day's worth of trash
- papercraft materials

GUIDING QUESTIONS
RESEARCH THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS. THEY WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE TOPIC BETTER.
1) What is a consumer? Who are consumers?
2) What does it mean to be wasteful?
3) How can waste be categorized?
4) What are some environmental impacts associated with buying too much?
5) How can you become an eco-minded consumer and less wasteful?

STEP BY STEP
1) Read through the Eco-Schools USA at Home Consumption and Waste Audit and Action Plan and decide on dates to do a pre-action audit and a post-action audit. This will help determine the length of your project.
2) Gather one day's worth of trash of the entire family. Skip bathroom trash.
3) Prep your audit area. Set down a tarp (or large plastic item for trash sorting. If it's not windy, prep your space outside-you don't want trash to blow away! If outside is not an option, opt for tiled floors instead of carpet so that any leaks can be cleaned up more easily.
4) Organize your waste into four categories.
   - **Recycled Curbside.** paper, glass, metal, plastic bottles
   - **Recyclable-Not Curbside.** plastic bags, e-waste, batteries, textiles, lightbulbs
   - **Compost.** yard clippings, non-meat food waste, soiled paper
   - **Not Recyclable.** non-recyclable packaging, diapers, straws

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5) WASH YOUR HANDS.

6) Once you have your waste sorted by category, using the template provided, complete the audit, and make an action plan to reduce your waste.

7) After implementing your action plan, conduct a post-action audit, and share your results with your teacher, extended family, and or the local community.