

# LEARN AT CHESTER ZOO

## HOW MUCH DO WE THROW AWAY?

### EDUCATORS GUIDE

#### School Waste Audit

Closing the circle to become more sustainable can be a real challenge. A good place to start is to gather information and to take stock of the waste you are currently producing. You might be surprised with what you discover! If we want to become more sustainable the best place to start is by having a good look at what is already happening. Which areas are you able to improve upon? Are there any areas where you can avoid using up resources?

#### Top tips!

You may well want to plan this activity with various staff within the school. For example, the catering team to provide data on food waste or the caretaker to assist with rubbish collection.

You may want to keep the audit just to your class and look at the waste produced in your own bins or you may want to get the whole school involved? Could each class collect their own information?

Safety – Don't forget if you are collecting litter from the school grounds to check the health and safety guidelines of your school.

#### Curriculum links

**Literacy** - Discussions on a topic, presentation of pupil's findings during discussions.

**Mathematics** - Gathering data, present their findings in an appropriate manner e.g. bar charts. Multiplication and calculating percentages.

**Science** - Sorting materials according to their properties.

#### Resources

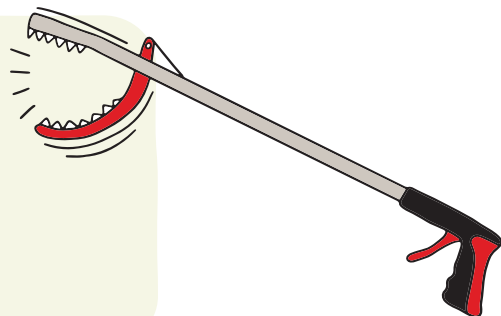
Gloves

Waste collection bags

Printable recording sheet

Litter pickers

Scales



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## ACTIVITIES

### Step One - Preparation

Start by discussing where pupils might find waste around the school. Next, look at how your class can organise this waste into categories, e.g. food waste, rubbish bins, recycling etc...

Ask the pupils how we might collect this data in order to measure the amount of waste produced, e.g. litter picking around the school grounds. Useful questions:

- 1 How can we go about sorting the materials into their types?
- 2 Which materials would be magnetic?
- 3 How can we stay safe? Discuss the health and safety aspects of handling waste, e.g. the need to use gloves, not touching anything sharp.

### Step Two - Gather Information

With the help of the school staff collect data about waste over a week. Discuss with pupils how we might record this data? Can we use a bar chart? (you may want to use our record sheet on [page 4](#)).

### Step Three - Analyse

- 1 Have look at the weights you gather. Which is your largest amount of waste you've found?
- 2 Can any waste be avoided? Are there alternatives you could choose?
- 3 When it comes to food waste can you find ways of avoiding waste?
- 4 Can you interview the caretaker to find out where the waste gets sent and who collects it? Perhaps pupils could plan some questions in groups?

### Step Four - Making changes

Consider wasteful habits in school e.g. Do you stick paper worksheets on to the paper pages of an exercise book? Could you use a folder or tags instead to save paper? Are lights left on wasting electricity? Are windows left open while the heating is on?

Have a look at our resource for Reduce, Reuse and Recycle activity here <https://www.chesterzoo.org/schools/resources/reduce-reuse-recycle/>

You may also like to watch ... <https://www.chesterzoo.org/schools/resources/how-to-be-green/>

You may like to discuss what happens to all this waste at this point... Which waste can be recycled?

<https://www.chesterzoo.org/schools/resources/decomposition/>

<https://www.chesterzoo.org/schools/resources/composting-conundrum/>

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### Totally Rubbish! Waste Audit Recording Sheet

#### Top Tip

Divide by the total weight of rubbish at the bottom of the column and multiply by 100

Material collected	Collection day! Weight (g / kg as appropriate)	Weight for a whole week (Multiply by five)	Weight for a whole year (Multiply by 39 - average weeks in a school year!)	Calculate the % of waste for the year made up by each material
Paper				
Card				
Cans				
Plastic				
Glass				
Foil				
Organic food waste, e.g. apple cores				
Other				
Total				