



HOME INVESTIGATION 3

Food Waste



Start Here!

Almost half of food produced in the United States is wasted! Most of the waste is buried in the ground in a landfill. Food that is thrown away also wastes all of the land, water, and energy that it takes to grow, store, and transport it. We all need healthy food to live and grow, so let's investigate how to waste less food and live more sustainably.



Investigator's Notebook: Ready Set Go!

Now let's collect and analyze some data.

We can reduce food waste from the very beginning—where we buy our food! Buying food that has less packaging and only buying the foods we will use before they go bad can help reduce waste.

Where does your family get food during the week? Circle yes or no on the chart below and read the tips for reducing waste.

Source of Food	Yes or No?	Tip!
Grocery Store	Yes / No	Shop the outside aisles of the grocery store for the freshest foods that usually have less packaging.
Farmers Market	Yes / No	If you visit, ask a farmer what fruits and vegetables are in season and growing in Tennessee right now.
Restaurants and Fast Food	Yes / No	Try not to order more than you will eat. Leftovers are one of the biggest sources of food waste at home.
Home Garden	Yes / No	Gardens provide fresh food without any packaging. Any extra food can be donated or preserved by freezing or canning them.
Gas Station or Convenience Store	Yes / No	Think about how you can recycle the packaging of whatever you buy.

Composting is nature’s way of recycling food and yard waste. It is a natural process that happens when **organic materials** decompose and return to the soil. By composting at home, you help keep food waste out of landfills where they take up space and release methane, a greenhouse gas.

1 Does your family compost food scraps? Circle one.

- A** Yes, we compost every day.
- B** Yes, we compost sometimes.
- C** No, we aren’t composting right now.
- D** I’m not sure if we compost.

2 Does your family ever donate canned or packaged food that you’re not going to eat—before the expiration date? Donating canned or packaged food can help reduce food waste because someone else can eat it before it goes bad. Circle one.

- A** Yes, we donate canned and packaged food all the time.
- B** Yes, we donate canned and packaged food sometimes.
- C** No, we aren’t donating canned or packaged food right now.
- D** I’m not sure if we donate canned and packaged food.



Investigating Your Kitchen

Today, pay attention to the food that is wasted every time you eat. Fill out the chart below by marking which meal it was, if there was any food thrown away, how much, and if the waste was composted.

Meal: breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack	Was there any waste? Yes or No	Would the amount of waste fit into one cup? Yes or No	Was the waste composted? Yes or No
Breakfast	Yes	Yes	No