



How Much Garbage Does Your Family Throw Out?

Objectives:

- Discover the amount of garbage people throw out and the amount of paper they consume weekly and yearly.
- Recognize that there are ways to make a difference and to reduce our impact.

DID YOU KNOW... A decade ago, every man, woman and child in Canada was producing an average of one tonne of garbage a year? How much are *you* throwing away?

Try this experiment!

What You Need

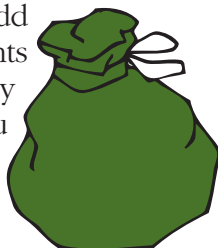
- a bathroom scale
- your garbage & paper waste
- pen/pencil
- notebook



What You Do

Determine the amount of garbage that your family produces each week, each year.

1. Weigh yourself on a bathroom scale. Record this number in your notebook.
2. Weigh yourself again on the scale, this time holding each bag of garbage that your family is throwing out. Record this number.
3. Subtract your weight from the weight of you and the garbage bags. This number is the weight of the garbage.
4. Do this exercise for two weeks making sure to record all the garbage being thrown out over the two weeks.
5. At the end of the two weeks, add your recorded garbage weights together. Divide this total by two. This number will give you the average weight of garbage that your family throws away each week!



6. There are 52 weeks in a year. Multiply the number of kilograms of garbage that your family on average throws away each week by 52. This will give you the weight of garbage that your family throws out every year! Unreal, isn't it?!
7. Perform the same experiment, except this time weigh the amount of paper (including newspapers) that your family uses weekly and puts out for recycling.

DID YOU KNOW... Most North Americans use more than 260 kg of paper a year? This means the paper that a family of 4 throws away in a year weighs as much as a car!

? If it takes 17 full grown trees to make a tonne of newspaper, how many trees would it take to make the paper your family throws out in a year?

What can you and your family do to reduce your garbage impact?

Make sure you are reducing, reusing, recycling and composting. Be green shoppers and buy things that last a long time. Don't buy throw-away items or things with extra packaging and shop with cloth bags so you don't accumulate lots of non-biodegradable plastic. Buy in bulk and make sure the lunches you take to school are "litterless."

Can you think of other ways to help?