THE FOOD WASTE SYSTEM

About **one-third** of all the food in the world is never eaten.

1 **ON THE FARM**

Crops left in the field

2 **AT THE FACTORY**

Peels and scraps cut away

3 **ON THE MOVE**

Food spoils on the way

4 **AT THE STORE**

Unsold food thrown out

5 **EATEN?**

Leftovers thrown away

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

BEST CHOICE → LAST CHOICE

Eat it

Share it

Compost it

Recycle the packaging

Landfill

makes greenhouse gas

HOW WE CAN HELP

- Take only what you'll eat
- Eat odd-shaped fruits and veggies
- Save leftovers for later
- Compost your scraps

Nourish Curriculum © WorldLink (Lesson 4: Food Waste)

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On the Farm 1

Stores want fruits and vegetables that look perfect. Farms throw away food that's too small, too big, or shaped funny, even when it tastes great.

CARD 1.1



On the Farm 2

Sometimes farmers can't pay to pick all their crops: it would cost more than they'd earn selling them. So healthy food stays in the field.

CARD 1.2



On the Farm 3

Weather, bugs, or plant diseases can damage crops on farms. The damaged food often can't be sold.

CARD 1.3



On the Farm 4

Farmers grow extra food in case some doesn't make it. If everything grows well, they may end up with more than stores want to buy.

CARD 1.4



At the Factory 1

When food is cleaned and cut at factories, the peels, ends, and misshapen pieces often go in the trash, even though they're still food.

CARD 2.1



At the Factory 2

Machines can break, packaging can tear, or food can get mixed up on the factory line. Food that isn't packaged right can't be sold.

CARD 2.2



At the Factory 3

Factories make food to strict shapes: perfect cookies, straight pretzels, oval crackers. Anything that comes out wrong gets thrown away.

CARD 2.3



At the Factory 4

Making food into packaged snacks and meals uses lots of energy, water, and materials. When that food is wasted, everything used to make it is wasted too.

CARD 2.4



On the Move 1

Food travels far, sometimes across countries or oceans. On long trips, fruits and vegetables can bruise, wilt, or spoil before they arrive.

CARD 3.1



On the Move 2

Trucks and ships carrying food need to stay cold. If the refrigeration fails, whole loads of food can spoil.

CARD 3.2



On the Move 3

Keeping food cold from farm to store takes lots of energy. Powering refrigerated trucks, ships, and warehouses adds up.

CARD 3.3



On the Move 4

When food is dropped, stacked wrong, or packed poorly, it can get crushed or damaged in transit, and it can't be sold anymore.

CARD 3.4

At the Store 1

Grocery stores often throw away food right before its “sell-by” date, even when the food is still safe to eat.

CARD 4.1

At the Store 2

A bruised apple or a dented can might get thrown out, even though it's still good. Shoppers usually pick the pretty ones.

CARD 4.2

At the Store 3

Stores order lots of food to keep shelves looking full. If shoppers don't buy it in time, it may go to waste.

CARD 4.3

At the Store 4

Some stores now sell “imperfect” produce at a lower price. This helps use up food that would have been wasted.

CARD 4.4



Eaten?

Schools, homes, and restaurants

1

Sometimes lunchtime is too short. Kids throw away food just because they don't have enough time to eat it.

CARD 5.1



Eaten?

Schools, homes, and restaurants

2

Vegetables, fruit, and leftovers sometimes get pushed to the back of the fridge, and forgotten until they spoil.

CARD 5.2



Eaten?

Schools, homes, and restaurants

3

Restaurants often serve big portions. If you don't finish your meal, the leftovers usually go in the trash.

CARD 5.3



Eaten?

Schools, homes, and restaurants

4

Some kids throw away lunch food they don't like, or they're already full from snacks before lunch.

CARD 5.4



What happens next?

Share, compost, or landfill

1

When food rots in a landfill, it makes a gas called methane. Methane traps heat and helps warm the planet.

CARD 6.1



What happens next?

Share, compost, or landfill

2

If food waste were a country, it would be the third-biggest source of greenhouse gases in the world, after only China and the United States.

CARD 6.2



What happens next?

Share, compost, or landfill

3

Best choice first: extra food should be shared, with people through food banks, or eaten later as leftovers. This keeps food doing its job.

CARD 6.3



What happens next?

Share, compost, or landfill

4

Next best: composting turns food scraps into new soil that grows new food. Sending food to a landfill should always be the last pick.

CARD 6.4

ACTIVITY: FOOD WASTE

Waste Audit Data Sheet

Sort the cafeteria waste into the four trays. With your partner, count how many items go in each tray. Write down what kinds of things appear most often.

PARTNERS _____ DATE _____

TRAY	HOW MANY ITEMS?	WHAT KINDS OF ITEMS DID YOU SEE MOST?
Compostable Food and plant materials that can become compost		
Recyclable Paper, glass, certain plastics that can become new products		
Edible Food that could still be eaten, shared, or donated		
Landfill Trash that goes to the dump, buried underground		

TOTAL ITEMS SORTED _____

Notice anything?

1. **Which tray has the most items? Why do you think that is?**

_____

_____

2. **Which tray was the smallest? What does that tell us?**

_____

_____

ACTIVITY: FOOD WASTE

Solo Journal

Each partner writes on their own. Use the prompts below to reflect on what you discovered.

Partner 1

Name _____

Today I learned that we waste _____ most often.

I think this happens because

_____

_____

A solution could be

_____

_____

Partner 2

Name _____

Today I learned that we waste _____ most often.

I think this happens because

_____

_____

A solution could be

_____

_____