



OVERVIEW Investigating Your School

WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL DOING ABOUT ITS WASTE?

Your school is a living laboratory for the study of waste. With quantifiable data, students can diagnose problems, identify opportunities, and ground solutions in school-based research. In this section of *Waste Deep*, students will learn about cases when citizen scientists used groundbreaking data to expose environmental issues and drive positive social change. **Students will select and prepare a research tool** to investigate the waste-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of themselves, their peers, and the adults in their community. Students can analyze their findings, present summaries to their peers, and use their research to guide their action plans. Included here are several research templates for students to use as citizen scientists:

Waste Journal

WASTE JOURNAL

Name: _____ Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Item thrown out	Location of Disposal (School/Home/Street)	Which bin did you put it in? (Blue/Green/Brown/Black)

Handwritten journal page showing drawings of waste items and disposal bins.

Cafeteria Observations

ACTIVITY Collecting Quantitative Cafeteria Data

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____ School: _____

Menu Items: _____

Task 1: Inventory - List all items on the menu and categorize them by type (e.g., meat, dairy, produce, grains, etc.).

Task 2: Observation - Record the number of items served and the number of items discarded in the trash.

Task 3: Analysis - Calculate the percentage of items that are compostable or recyclable.

Photo of students in a cafeteria standing near recycling bins.

Schoolwide Bin Tally

BIN TALLY SHEET

This will help you assess the need for any additional bins your school needs to become a Recycling Champion.

Bin Number/Location	Teacher	Bin Type		
		Recycling Bin	Compost Bin	Other

Photo of students in a classroom setting, one holding a bin tally sheet.

Student Survey

Student Survey Template

Name: _____

Question	Response

Photo of students in a classroom, some wearing green vests, engaged in an activity.

Recycling Inspections

RECYCLING INSPECTION Rating Chart

Use this chart to assess the quality of recycling bins in your school. Record the number of bins that are clean, full, and properly labeled.

ROOM	GRADE	PREPARED

INSPECTION RATING SCALE:

- A** - Bin is clean and full.
- B** - Bin is clean but not full.
- C** - Bin is not clean or not full.

Photo of students in a classroom, one holding a recycling bin, being inspected by others.

Waste Investigation

GUIDE Classroom Waste Investigation

What is a Classroom Waste Investigation?

How to conduct a Classroom Waste Investigation:

1. Form a group of 4-6 students.
2. Choose a classroom to investigate.
3. Identify what items are in the classroom.
4. Identify what items are in the trash can.
5. Identify what items are in the recycling bin.
6. Identify what items are in the compost bin.
7. Identify what items are in the landfill bin.
8. Identify what items are in the other bin.
9. Identify what items are in the other bin.
10. Identify what items are in the other bin.

Photo of students in a classroom, some wearing white lab coats, conducting a waste investigation.