

# Can We Do Without The Can?



## Contact Information

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## Grades

K-5

## Objectives

Making students aware of the large amount of paper a class throws away and teach informed decision making that can significantly reduce a class's paper waste.

## Materials

Wastebasket, chart, graph materials

## Vocabulary

Environment, litter, non point source pollution, trash, waste

## Procedure

1. Pre and Post-test questions:
  1. What percentage of the waste we produce in this classroom is paper?
  2. How can we reduce the amount of paper we throw away?
2. Place the following chart on a bulletin board or wall near the basket for waste paper at a height easily accessible to students. No food wastes should be disposed of in the baskets. Provide a small container for food wastes.
3. Ask students to write their initials and what they discarded in the appropriate space every time they throw something away. Do not discourage students from using the wastebasket(s).
4. At the end of the week have students form small groups and respond to the following, drawing a bar graph from the results.
  - What types of things were thrown away?
  - Approximately what percentage of what was thrown out was reusable or recyclable paper?
  - What additional uses could be found for this paper?
5. Have students, working in groups, draw large butcher paper graphs plotting days on the horizontal axis and the number of visits to the wastebasket on the vertical axis.
6. Discuss and compare the results as reflected on the bar graphs. Emphasize the effect awareness and informed decision making can have on the reuse or recycling of paper and on "doing without the can."
7. With the cooperation of a custodian, remove wastebaskets for a week. Explain to the class that no classroom trash will be disposed of inside or outside the classroom. Point out that many counties and cities across the United States are faced with this situation of producing waste but having no place to put it. Ask students to develop a plan for storing classroom waste for a week. Explain that at the end of the week students will separate and quantify the waste.
8. At the end of the week, weigh the amount of accumulated waste to come up with a per-day and per-person average.
9. Separate materials and recyclable.
10. Discuss ways to reduce the volume of waste the class produces.

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Insert children's names on this row

Monday											
Tuesday											
Wednesday											
Thursday											
Friday											