



LifeSmarts

Learn it. Live it.

Getting Involved in the Classroom:

A LifeSmarts Guide to the *FoodSpan* Curriculum, Unit 13: “Our Wasted Food”

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future has developed a comprehensive [FoodSpan](#) curriculum that connects well to the LifeSmarts focus on food waste audits. Educators are welcome to utilize the full curriculum, which covers the entire food system. For the LifeSmarts Food Waste Challenge we recommend coaches refer to [Unit 13, “Our Wasted Food.”](#)

Below is a quick breakdown of “Our Wasted Food” and suggested critical thinking prompts. Educators are encouraged to create additional activities and adapt the materials to their classrooms.

Warm-Up: The Problem of Food Waste

The lesson begins with a warm-up exercise asking students to reflect on their role and responsibility as informed consumers and consider where waste might occur throughout the food supply chain.

Main Activity 1: Why Food Waste Matters

This activity asks students to look at the many impacts of food waste. The activity covers mostly *environmental* and *financial* impacts. The breakdown is thorough and will provide many ways for educators to prompt students to make connections to LifeSmarts.

Main Activity 2: Reducing Food Waste

This activity reviews the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Food Recovery Hierarchy. Politicians and food waste experts often use the hierarchy to assess the effectiveness of national waste reduction efforts. The lesson includes a great critical thinking activity asking students to address one of the five levels of the hierarchy and to propose a waste reduction plan within their assigned area.

While completing this activity we encourage students to think about LifeSmarts five key topic areas and consider where there may be overlap. For example, students may propose a program solution to “Reducing Food Waste at the Source” that utilizes new or innovative *technology*. Or students may reflect on the public *health* benefits of recovering excess food for those in need.

LifeSmarts Critical Thinking Questions

Q What is the consumer's role in the supply chain?

A Deciding what foods to buy (using a list, overshopping), storing food properly, eating what I have before buying more, etc.

Q Can I, as the consumer, impact the behavior of *other* stakeholders in the chain to prevent or reduce waste? What are some of these ways?

A Yes; insist retail outlets offer 'ugly' produce at a reduced price; take leftovers home from restaurants, ask restaurants to serve half portions.

Q In what ways could I become a more informed consumer to reduce food waste?

A Understand how to read date labels and expiration dates; understand laws and protections around food donations, ask retailers and restaurants to donate uneaten / unserved food; look into composting at home or in the community.