

How to Conduct a Waste Audit

Materials You Will Need

- Yesterday's garbage and recycling
- Nitrile or Latex Gloves
- 10'x10' Dustpan
- Scale (Fish scales work best)
- Transparent bags
- 10 Buckets (optional)
- Clipboard and paper

Recycling Categories:

- Mixed paper (mail, magazines, newspaper)
- Metals
- Rigid plastic (containers)
- Cardboard

Special Recycling Categories:

- Paper napkins
- Glass
- Film plastic (bags, wrap)
- Books
- Compostable food

Trash (all sorted together):

- Paper towels, milk and juice cartons, candy wrappers, straws

Steps:

1. Collect trash that you will audit and bring it to a large area
2. Keep trash from different areas separate (classroom trash should not be mixed with cafeteria trash)
3. Lay out a large plastic sheet or tarp, and put the trash from your first area in the center
4. Sort the items into transparent bags or buckets on the tarp, as labeled above (metal, plastic, etc.....)
5. Record weight and estimate volume (picture how much would fit in a ½ gallon milk jug)
6. Use the attached spreadsheet to analyze your group's trash from that area
7. Repeat the process for all areas

