

Teacher's Guide

This module is an opportunity for schools to gather data to begin a school recycling program or to improve an existing recycling program. The module will focus on conducting a school waste audit and analyzing the data collected. The module provides approximately 10 hours of curriculum for a high school grade, and can be adapted to fit the needs of your class.

Prior to teaching the lessons, students need to take the pre-assessment test online (to be graded by CUSP with the results sent back to you). It is the same test they will take for the post-assessment. The assessments are very important to CUSP because they are the only way we are able to determine if students are learning from the modules. We would greatly appreciate it if students had encouragement to take the assessments seriously.

Use the PowerPoint presentation to introduce the concept of recycling to your students. The presentation describes the importance of recycling and information on different recyclable materials.

The main activity in the module will be the Waste Audit. Conducting a waste audit at your school is an excellent way to determine how to improve your waste disposal process. It is important to have administrative support with this task, because the goal of the audit is to make school-wide changes to your waste disposal process.

Conduct the "Vendor Information" activity prior to beginning the audit if you are interested in finding a new recycling vendor for your school or starting a new recycling program.

The actual waste audit begins with sorting through the garbage and recycling at your school. Weight and volume will be collected for each type of material and attention will be paid to whether or not the materials were in the correct bins/cans.

An analysis of the data collection needs to occur once the audit is complete. The Individual Site Analysis sheets need to be completed by the students and then the School-wide Analysis can be completed as a class.

The "Cost Analysis" will be conducted after the waste analyses of the audit. Students will need to research the current fees for recycling and garbage disposal at their school for this activity as well as the fees for potential new vendors if applicable.

An excellent way to incorporate lower grades and give the students an opportunity to teach others is to pair the older students who conducted the audit with younger ones during the Improvements Discussion. Together, they can come up with various ways to improve waste disposal.

Students will play different roles in the Outreach aspect of the audit. Some students will prepare a presentation about the audit findings and suggestions for improvements in waste disposal at their school. They will present this information to the principal and school administrators to gain approval of changes for waste management. Other students will create an article on their findings and suggestions to be published in the community newspaper. Some students will create signage and posters to place around the school, and others will design a webpage for the school recycling program. Finally, other students will meet with the grade level below to explain what was done, data, analysis, and future plans so that the incoming class will be prepared to conduct an audit next year.

For the service day, students will visit their local recycling center to spend time volunteering learning what happens to recyclables after they are placed in recycling bins.

At the end of the classroom curriculum student will be administered the post-assessment test (to be graded by CUSP and results given back to teacher).