



Trash-

“It ain’t heavy...until I have to carry it!”

Orca Scientists,

We live in a disposable age. Things quickly break down and are quickly discarded. We do it so often that sometimes we forget how much of what we buy ends up going back out the door to the landfill. All of those lost resources end up affecting the habitat and food chains of our neighborhood orca friends. In this exercise we are going to get a real life experience of exactly how much we toss out and how we can reduce that amount

Supplies:

Bathroom Scale
A full indoor home trash can
A child’s back pack or bag
Something “weighty” like a bag of flour, bean bags, 2 liter bottles of water, etc...

Preparation:

With the help of their parents/guardians, have the students weigh their home garbage cans, right before they send them out to the curb or dumpster. Have them report those results to the class.

Hands on:

Have the students add the results together to get a total weight for the class. Record that number in a conspicuous place and in a place that it will be easy to see.

Next, help the students divide that number (total lbs. of trash) by the number of students in class. (For example 150 lbs divided by 30 students= 5 lbs per student).

For homework that night, they must create a backpack or bag that weighs as much as the class average. (Using our example, each child would need to have a bag for the next day of school that weighed 5 pounds). Use bean bags or water bottles to simulate the weight.

The following day have each child wear that bag the whole day, or as much as possible.

Journal and record their observations. How does it feel, does it help or hinder their movement? etc.....

Following the experiment, brainstorm some ways that they could reduce that amount of weight. Could they recycle? Buy items with less packaging? Re-use items.

The following week, after the brainstorming, have them once again weigh their trash cans and report that number back to class.

Did they end up with less garbage than they had previously? Do the math and compare!