



Fast Food Wasteland

1. Choose a fast-food restaurant to study. Arrange to spend 1 hour at the restaurant with 2 to 4 of your classmates to gather data.
2. Throughout this study, be as quiet and as unobtrusive as possible, and avoid aggravating the restaurant management or customers.
3. At the restaurant, observe how **food is packaged** as it is served. Make notes about the **type of packaging used**, paying particular attention to the following questions:
 - a. What are the packages made from?
 - b. How many layers of packaging are used for **each food item**?
 - c. Do servers provide utensils, condiments, and napkins, or do customers help themselves? How are the condiments packaged?
4. Choose a centrally located trash container and observe it for 30 minutes. Count the number of people who deposit trash in the container in that time. Make notes about how frequently you see items other than empty packaging (*food waste, unused napkins, condiment packages, etc.*) go into the trash container.
5. Estimate the ***total number of customers per day*** as follows:

Take the number of people who visited your trashcan in 30 minutes. Multiply this number by 2, and then multiply it by the number of hours per day the restaurant is open.

Multiply this result by the number of trashcans per restaurant.

Finally, assume that each person deposited trash for an average of 2 customers, and multiply by 2 to obtain the total to obtain the total number of customers per day.

6. Estimate what waste items--cups, straws, tray lines, etc.--are thrown away, by the average customer. Based on this estimate, how many of each item would be thrown away each day?
7. Are separate recycling containers provided for the customers? If so, do signs on the container make it clear which waste items are supposed to go into the recycling containers and which go to the trash?
8. Summarize your findings. **Create a table that shows your statistical data** and include a description of the types and amount of waste generated at the restaurant you visited. Based on your findings, suggest ways in which the amount of trash could be reduced. Be sure to include the following:

Conclusion:

- * Fast-food restaurant, date and time of your visit along with your classmates.
- * Ways to avoid producing certain types of waste altogether
- * Ways to replace disposable items with reusable ones
- * Discussion of what waste items could be recycled or composted
- * Ways to replace non-recyclable, non-compostable items that can be recycled or composted