

## Taking out the trash

In the United States we produce more than 160 million tons of municipal waste each year. That's 3 to 5 pounds per person per day!

Approximately 10 percent of that amount is recycled, 10 percent is burned, and the remaining 80 percent is landfilled.



### Activity 1

This week, count the number of garbage bags your family fills.

Was this an ordinary week? Figure out how much garbage you'd have after a year. Where does the garbage go, and what happens to it? What do you think might happen when there's no more space for our garbage?

Next week, collect all the organic garbage in a separate pail or bag. It will start smelling before the end of the week, so keep the container closed when you aren't filling it. At the end of the week, count and weigh the regular garbage bags that your family has filled. Compare the results to last week's garbage. Is there a difference?

### Activity 2

Ask someone in your school cafeteria, if you can count the number of garbage bags your school fills each day.

Make a chart to record the number of garbage bags produced on each day of the week

How many garbage bags would you have after a year?

Find out where the garbage goes and what happens to it.

### Activity 3

For one week, put all of the paper your class is throwing out in one bag and all the garbage in another. What do you find out? How much paper does your class throw away in one week? How much garbage?

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Adapted from *Backyard Magic: The Composting Handbook* website, constructed by Communications and Environmental Education of the New Brunswick Department of the Environment.