



Food Waste

Why do we throw so much away?

A third of the world's food is never eaten — and the cost is far greater than it seems.



Listen to the article

Scan the QR code or visit the link.



Perfectly good food is discarded daily while millions still experience hunger worldwide.

WARM-UP

Discuss the questions with a partner.

1. How much food do you think your household throws away each week?
2. Whose job is it to reduce the amount of food we waste?

Every evening, in kitchens and restaurants around the world, a quiet waste takes place. Perfectly good bread, bruised fruit, and half-eaten meals are scraped into the bin without a second thought. It feels harmless — but multiplied across billions of homes, it becomes one of the planet's largest and most overlooked problems. Roughly a third of all the food grown for people is never eaten.

The scale is hard to picture. About 1.3 billion tonnes of food are lost or thrown away every year, while hundreds of millions of people go hungry. Some is lost on farms or in transport, especially **perishable** items like milk and vegetables that spoil quickly. But in wealthier countries, most waste happens at home, where families routinely **discard** food they simply forgot to eat.

The costs reach far beyond the dinner table. When food rots in a landfill it releases methane, a gas far more powerful than carbon dioxide. If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest source of greenhouse gases on Earth. It also throws away the water, land, and fuel used to grow it — a single wasted apple represents about 125 litres of water.

Yet this is a problem almost anyone can help solve. Some shops now sell **surplus** stock cheaply instead of binning it. Restaurants donate leftovers, and many families turn scraps into **compost** that feeds a garden rather than a dump. Others simply plan meals and remember that a slightly ugly vegetable is still perfectly **edible**.

If a third of our food is wasted, how much could change if each of us wasted just a little less?

VOCABULARY

A. Match the words (1–5) with their meanings (A–E).

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|---|
| 1. perishable | _____ | A. more than is needed |
| 2. discard | _____ | B. safe or good to eat |
| 3. surplus | _____ | C. likely to go bad or rot quickly |
| 4. compost | _____ | D. decayed food and plants used to enrich soil |
| 5. edible | _____ | E. to throw away something you no longer want |

TRUE OR FALSE

Read the statements and circle T (True) or F (False).

- | | | |
|--|----------|----------|
| 1. About a third of the food grown for people is never eaten. | T | F |
| 2. Food rotting in a landfill releases methane. | T | F |
| 3. In wealthier countries, most food waste happens on farms. | T | F |
| 4. Some shops sell surplus food cheaply instead of binning it. | T | F |
| 5. Food waste has almost no effect on the climate. | T | F |

DISCUSSION

- 1 Do you throw away much food at home? What kind, and why?
- 2 How was food treated in your home when you were growing up?
- 3 Why do you think people in wealthier countries waste more food?
- 4 Should supermarkets be allowed to throw away food that is still edible?
- 5 Is it ever acceptable to waste food? Where would you draw the line?



01 CRITICAL THINKING

BUDGET CHALLENGE

Your city has received a government grant to reduce food waste. There is enough funding for only **THREE** projects. As a group, decide which projects should be funded and explain why.

☐ Food banks

☐ School education

☐ Better supermarket technology

☐ New food donation laws

☐ A discount food app

☐ Community composting

☐ Smaller restaurant portions

☐ Community fridges

AFTER CHOOSING Which idea would have the biggest impact? · Which would be hardest to implement? · Which did your group disagree on most?

02 LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

USE THE LANGUAGE

Complete each line so you can use it in the discussion.
Change the form if you need to.

surplus **edible** **perishable** **compost** **discard**

1 Milk and fresh vegetables are _____, so they spoil quickly.

2 The shop sold its _____ stock at half price.

3 Please don't _____ bread that is still good to eat.

4 We turn our vegetable scraps into _____ for the garden.

5 A bruised apple looks ugly but is still _____.

04 WRITING

YOUR OPINION

Should supermarkets be banned from throwing away food that is still edible?

Write 150–200 words, using ideas and vocabulary from the article.

03 SPEAKING CHALLENGE

ROLE • TASK • PRESENT

In small groups, work through the three steps below.

ROLE You run a busy café that throws away food every night.

TASK Agree on three ways to cut your waste without losing money.

PRESENT Share your plan and explain how it helps people and the planet.