For families — all ages

Home Waste Challenge

One week, one bin diary, a few small changes that stick.

FOR THE ADULT

A one-week challenge to notice what your household throws away and try a few easy changes. Younger children can draw and tick; older ones can count, compare and lead the family promise. It works in apartments and villas alike.

Time: Five minutes a day for a week, plus one weekend activity

YOU WILL NEED

- The printed diary and worksheets (stick them on the fridge)
- A pencil kept next to the bin
- Ten minutes at the weekend to talk it through
- Clean, safe materials for the 'second life' activity

LEARNING GOALS

- Notice what our household throws away and why
- Cut food waste with simple planning and storage
- Give at least one item a second life
- Agree family actions we can keep up

SAFETY FIRST

- Children record what goes in the bin — they don't dig through it
- Batteries, light bulbs, medicines, chemicals and electronics are handled by adults and taken to the right collection point
- Only clean, safe items are used for crafts; no glass or sharp metal
- In hot weather, food waste goes out promptly in a closed bag to avoid smells and pests

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Our bin diary

- Each evening, make a mark for roughly how much of each type went in the bin today.
- Use 1 mark for a little, 2 for a fair amount, 3 for a lot.
- In the last column, write anything you saved from the bin — passed on, repaired or reused.

Day	🍎 Food scraps	📦 Packaging	📰 Paper and card	❓ Other	⭐ Saved from the bin!
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Which column filled up fastest?

Which day had the most waste? Why do you think that was?

What is one thing we could change next week?

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Food waste detective

- Whenever food is thrown away this week, write it down.
- Be honest about why — there are no wrong answers.
- Together, think of a simple fix for next time.

What was thrown away?	Why?	How could we avoid it next time?
Half a loaf of bread	*Went mouldy in the heat*	*Keep half in the freezer and toast slices straight from frozen*

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Food waste detective — think about it

What was the most common reason?

Which fix will we try first?

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Give it a second life

Your brief: As a family, choose one thing that was heading for the bin and give it a second life — repair it, reuse it, give it away or repurpose it into something useful.

STEPS

1. Pick the item together. Check it is clean and safe.
2. Decide: repair, reuse, pass on, or repurpose?
3. Do it! Take a 'before' and 'after' photo or drawing.
4. Decide who will use it now.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- The item is being used again
- It is safe and clean
- Everyone helped decide

Sketch, photo or notes

REFLECT

What would we have bought instead?

What else in our home could have a second life?

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Our family promise

From this week, our family will...

- [ ] Plan meals and write a shopping list before we shop
- [ ] Store leftovers in the fridge or freezer and eat them first
- [ ] Carry reusable bottles and shopping bags
- [ ] Repair things before we replace them
- [ ] Pass on clothes, toys and books we no longer use
- [ ] Check what our building or area collects for recycling
- [ ] Take batteries and old electronics to a proper collection point
- [ ] Say no to things we don't need, like extra straws and free gifts
- [ ] My own idea: _____

Family signatures

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Notes for teachers and parents

- Schools can send this pack home after the classroom packs, so children lead the conversation.
- Apartment tip: if your building has shared bins, ask building management what is collected separately.
- Hot-climate tip: freeze bread and leftovers in portions, and keep bananas apart from other fruit, because they make it ripen faster.
- Celebrate progress, not perfection: one lasting change is a real success.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Repeat the bin diary in a month and compare.
- Organise a swap morning with neighbours or friends.
- Start a balcony or garden compost bin (adult-managed).

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