

GREENER

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Do you ever wonder how much waste you actually produce? Well, you're about to find out!

- **For 24 hours, carry a bag everywhere you go and collect everything that you would otherwise throw away. Don't hide it! Carry your bag of waste proudly and invite conversations with classmates and community members.**
 - Because I've been committed to leading (or always attempting to, at least!) a zero-waste lifestyle for the past two years, I decided that I wouldn't sacrifice my efforts towards ZW in my own life and turn back towards my formerly bad habits of using single-use disposables every day.
 - Instead, however, I decided that I would approach people around me who were consuming the wasteful versions of what I usually consume (example: I get my coffee in my reusable mug; they take theirs in a Styrofoam cup or in a disposable cup) and collect it as though I had consumed it myself to see how much waste my lifestyle currently *avoids*.
 - I also took my time to pick up some trash which I saw littered along my commute around campus between classes, because although it's not my garbage, I wanted to make an effort to showcase the rampant wastefulness where I live, study, and work – the waste I *could have* produced if I didn't already make zero-waste efforts and changes in my daily life.
- **Show us the story of your day and include:**
 - Pictured is the bag I carried around with me, from class to class, all day today:



- **A conversation you had with one person. Include who you interacted with, what they said, and how they reacted when they knew what you were doing.**
 - An acquaintance of mine, Sam K., recognised me as I was picking up trash from along the sidewalk today, stopped, and asked me what I was doing.
 - I straightened up, holding a crumpled snack bag that I'd picked up from behind a bush, and explained to him about the Project Green Challenge and the day's Zero Waste Challenge.
 - He was actually very interested in the different challenges and asked me how I incorporated sustainability in my life every day, and was also impressed that anyone would even remotely consider picking up anyone else's trash, let alone carry it around all day to categorise and properly dispose of it later.
 - Sam's asked me some more questions, many of which actually ended up being even more far-reaching than just about the challenge; he asked me about the origins of my environmental zeal and passion, and by hearing about the changes I'd made in my own life over my past 5-6 years being interested in sustainability, he even asked me about some of the things he could do in his own life to reduce his footprint. To my IMMENSE pleasure, he was very receptive to some of my advice for him! He even joined me in picking up a few pieces of the trash, and said that if I ever organised a (fun) group clean-up on campus, he'd be glad to get involved and help out! I felt really happy with his openness and interest, and our interaction left me feeling much more confident about the waste-collection challenge for the rest of the day.

- A photo of everything you collected at the end of 24 hours, separated into recyclables, non-recyclables, and food waste/compost.



- Consider some reusable options for each of your piles. Pick two items in each pile. Tell us how these items might avoid ending up as waste in the future.

- RECYCLABLE:
 - Some reusable alternatives to the many single-use snack/sandwich bags which I picked up today are to have reusable cloth bags for food to bring take-aways. With regards to the drink and food containers which were also included in the Recyclable pile, reusable water bottles and/or mason jars can always be carried around to hold beverages or leftover/to-go foods.

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- Receipts also made up a large proportion of the recyclable items I picked up. There are now more and more available ways for us to digitalise our personal finances and avoid printing off paper receipts (which will, obviously, get thrown away and littered pretty quickly!), so that is an accessible option for avoiding paper waste in the future.
- **COMPOSTABLE:**
 - At the cafeteria, there are options for students to eat their chia seed puddings in either the reusable bowl or in the biodegradable plastic containers. One eco-friendly and reusable alternative to wasting a container, when eating the puddings on the spot, is to eat it from the reusable bowl rather than from the single-use disposable container. That way, we can avoid having so many containers taking up place in our compost system.
 - Another wasteful product I picked up today which has a reusable and more sustainable option is napkins and tissues. Although it requires a bit more vigilance in keeping them hygienic, handkerchiefs and reusable napkins are a highly sustainable and environmentally-efficient alternative to regular disposable paper napkins, despite their biodegradability. If more people turned back to the good ol' hanky, we could reduce demand for disposable napkins!
- **LANDFILL:**
 - I noticed some cling wrap and aluminum foil (coated in food) among the litter I collected today. I use cloth bags, reusable beeswax wraps, and reusable containers as sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic wraps to keep food fresh.
 - Also among the items being sent to the landfill was a package of trail mix which had been bought at the supermarket. Because I live in a part of Montreal which has good access to bulk stores, I'm lucky in that I have the opportunity to get bulk trail mix and snack foods without packaging. In that case, a waste-free alternative is to bring a cleaned jar, container, or reusable bag to the bulk store and fill it there instead of buying a pre-prepared disposable pack of trail mix.
- **REUSABLE:**
 - Someone lost their umbrella case on the street today, and, seeing as I lost mine a few weeks ago, I can use theirs!

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- **What is something you could change in your own lifestyle today that will contribute to a zero waste world?**
 - Since embarking on a journey towards becoming zero-waste in 2016, I have made my own fabric snack bags which I always take with me to avoid using disposable paper/wax/plastic food bags; I have gotten into the habit of always bringing my reusable mug with me wherever I go, in case I want water or a coffee during my day; I carry around a set of my own reusable metal cutlery, including a straw, fork, knife, spoon, and chopsticks, which ensures that I will never have to use a single-use utensil again! I also usually have a small, compact tote bag stashed somewhere in a coat pocket or at the bottom of my backpack, so I don't have to take a plastic bag for groceries or anything at a store.

SUBMITTED AT: 8:40 p.m. Eastern time, 4 October