

Weighing Your Paper Use

The American consumer uses many products from the rainforest. Some are replenishable resources while others are not. Many of the products we use come from trees. Although it is true that not all paper products originate in the tropical rainforests, many do.

Try the following experiment to demonstrate the use of forest products.

Materials:

One trash bag per student

Bathroom scale

1. Each student receives a bag to collect all the paper that would normally be thrown away in one day at a home. This includes, junk mail, newspapers, magazines, cardboard boxes, paper towels (it they're not too soiled).
2. The teacher uses a bag to collect all the paper that would normally be thrown away in the classroom in one day.
3. The bags are then weighed at the end of the 24 hour period. This figure can be used as the average paper waste for one day.
4. Calculate how much paper one family discards during a week, a month, a year.
5. The current population in San Francisco is 775,000. The US population is estimated at 273,000,000. Calculate the amount of paper discarded by these populations each week, month and year.

Discussion Questions

How does this information relate to the deforestation of the tropical rainforests?



Do you feel that you could use less paper? How?

How could the average American family use less paper?

How does your family's paper consumption compare to other people's in your class?

How does your class's paper consumption compare to other classes' paper consumption?

Activity taken from The Rainforest Extended Thematic Unit, Teacher Created Materials, Inc.

