Is Rubbish a Problem?

You need
- ★ a computer spreadsheet/graphing program
- ★ classmates
- ★ protective gloves (if handling rubbish)

Activity

At discussion time, the Room 4 students are talking about rubbish.

> After lunch today, I threw out 2 pieces of plastic wrap, 1 muesli bar wrapper, 1 raisin box, 1 banana skin, 1 mandarin peel, and 1 yoghurt pottle.

> And that's just from *your* lunch!

> I wonder how much rubbish we throw out every day at school? Are there better ways to dispose of it?

The students decide to find out how much rubbish their class makes.

> For 1 week, we could all put our rubbish into our classroom bins. Then we could weigh each day's rubbish and record our results.

> Or we could each record our rubbish and add it to a class tally chart.

MY RUBBISH
Banana skins IIII
Yoghurt pots II
Plastic wrap
Orange
Card

ROOM 4'S RUBBISH
Banana skins
Yoghurt pots
Plastic wrap
Orange peel
Cardb

1. a. What would the students find out from each of these two methods?
   b. Discuss with a classmate other ways to find out what rubbish a class produces.

2. **a.** As a class, design and carry out a 1-week investigation into rubbish from your class.

b. With a classmate, decide what kind of graph would best represent the data you get. Make the graph.

> You could use a spreadsheet to record your daily rubbish amounts and then make and compare different types of graph to see which shows your results best.

c. What does your graph tell you?

d. Compare your graph with those of other classmates. What do their graphs say that yours doesn't? Discuss the best way of showing the information collected.

e. Based on your graph, how much rubbish would your class generate in a month or year?

3. If every class generated the same amount of rubbish, how much rubbish would the students in your school create in a year?

4. What school rubbish is not accounted for in your investigation? How could you include this in your whole-school results?

5. Create a graph that shows how much rubbish you estimate your school produces in a year. How accurate do you think your estimate is likely to be?

> Most of your school's rubbish may end up in a landfill.

PLASTIC MART