



Module 2: Waste-to-Resource Strategies in Agri-Food Systems

Think-Pair-Share Activity A: Dear Principal, Reimagining Waste

Lesson A

Grouping: Pairs or small groups (3–4)

Time: 25-30 minutes

Materials:

- One worksheet per student (or one per pair) — this page.
- Pens / markers; whiteboard or chart paper for class synthesis

Objective:

Students will learn to reimagine waste at their school by exploring five possible waste-to-resource pathways. They will identify potential benefits, anticipate challenges, and propose solutions. Students will then collaboratively draft a short persuasive letter to the principal, practicing evidence-based communication and civic engagement.

Instructions:

1. Each student chooses one waste pathway and jots notes on its potential benefit, one challenge, and a possible solution.
2. Groups share their individual notes, decide on one idea (or a combination), and prepare a short pitch with key parts (opening, proposal, obstacle, solution, closing).
3. Using the group pitch, students draft a short persuasive letter to the principal explaining their idea, its benefits, and how to address challenges.
4. Each group posts or reads their letter aloud. The teacher synthesizes common themes and highlights innovative ideas.

Your Task:

Your task is to select, refine, and communicate one waste-to-resource solution for the school. Work together to build a strong argument and draft a persuasive letter.

Step 1: Choose a Pathway (Individual Notes)

Circle one: Compost | Bokashi | Anaerobic Digester | Biochar | Insect Bioconversion

1. Benefit for our school / community:

2. Challenge we might face:

3. Possible solution:

Step 2: Group Pitch (Discussion)

As a group, discuss how the pitch should be formulated.

Part of Pitch	Notes
Opening (Why waste is a problem at school)	
Proposal (Our method + benefit)	
Obstacle (One challenge)	
Solution (How to overcome it)	
Closing (What we want the principal to do)	

Step 3: Letter to the Principal

Use your group notes to draft a persuasive letter to the principal.

Sentence Starters (Optional):

- Dear Principal [Name], our school produces a lot of waste every week...
- We believe this waste could be turned into [energy/fertilizer/animal feed/etc.] instead of going to the landfill.
- The benefit of this approach is...
- One challenge we might face is... but this can be solved by...
- We ask you to consider trying this idea at our school because...
- Sincerely, _____

Dear Principal _____,

Sincerely,

Reflection:

1. Which waste pathway do you think would make the biggest difference at your school, and why?
2. If you were the principal, what evidence would convince you to try this idea?
3. How does turning waste into a resource connect to larger sustainability goals beyond school (e.g., community, climate, food systems)?

Skills You'll Use:

- Systems thinking (connecting school waste to community solutions)
- Problem-solving (identifying challenges + solutions)
- Persuasive communication (pitch + letter writing)
- Collaboration & synthesis (moving from individual ideas to a group product)

Example:

Dear Principal Lopez,

Our school produces a lot of food waste every week, and most of it ends up in the trash. We believe this waste could be turned into fertilizer through composting instead of going to the landfill. The benefit is that compost would improve our school garden's soil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One challenge we might face is space for compost bins, but this can be solved by starting with a small pilot project near the garden. We ask you to consider trying this idea at our school because it will save money on fertilizers, engage students in hands-on learning, and show our community that sustainability is possible.

Sincerely,

The Green Team