

## At-Home Garbology Waste Audit

Holden Village invites you into the practice of Garbology at your own home! Multiple times per week, Villagers gather, sort, and weigh the waste that has accumulated at Holden in order to maximize the amount of waste that can be repurposed, recycled, or composted. We also take measurements and note areas for improvement and communicate this back to the community to further reduce our waste and inform our purchasing decisions. This activity is designed for your home but you can adapt it to organize a waste audit at your school, congregation, workplace, etc.

### Materials:

- Tarp or old sheet
- Indoor or outdoor location to sort waste that can get messy and easily be cleaned up
- Gloves
- Containers for collecting waste (your regular trash bins, recycling containers, compost containers, etc. will work just fine)
- Containers for collecting biowaste (buckets or yogurt containers)
- Optional: luggage scale or bathroom scale

### Process:

1. Determine the amount of time you want to conduct a waste audit. A week is a good amount of time for many people, as it coincides with your garbage and recycling pickup. Schedule your waste audit for a time when your waste disposal patterns will reflect typical habits.
2. Label containers for biowaste and place them next to your regular waste containers. Biowaste includes anything that has touched your body (floss, tissues, band aids etc.). Explain to all household members instructions to keep biowaste separate so that you don't have to sort through materials that are a health hazard. Also, separate out glass or any other items that could be a safety hazard to sort through.
3. Dispose of waste as normal during the designated time. Practice paying attention to what you dispose of, especially if you are disposing of waste outside of your household. Notice if or how the knowledge that your waste will be sorted and analyzed at the time frame changes your habits.
4. Set a time at the end of the audit to sort through everything that has accumulated. Set out a tarp or old sheet in a location that can easily be cleaned (outdoors recommended) and put on gloves. Sort through each container. Optional: weigh the contents of each container before you begin sorting, then reweigh once sorted into categories (i.e. paper, cardboard, landfill, food waste, etc.) and make graphs!
5. Note any items that were misplaced or improperly sorted (i.e. recyclable paper in the landfill container, food wrappers in your recycling bin, etc.) and discuss with your household members how to make improvements for the future. If you are unsure whether something can be recycled in your area, do some research on recycling guidelines in your community.
6. Have a conversation about what you learned and how your household can change purchasing habits and improve sorting to minimize waste going to the landfill.