

## Campus Cleanups



**Goal:** Host a campus cleanup to educate students on litter in their local community, promote community service, and increase campus cleanliness.

**Number of Students:** 20-100 (can be organized as a classroom, a grade, or as a school-wide event)

**Time:** 1 hour

**Supplies:** gloves, trash bags or reusable buckets, data cards (optional; found at end of lesson plan)

### Background:

- On average, Southern Californians create 5 pounds of trash per person per day, or 1,825 pounds of trash in a year – more than the national average. Some of this trash finds its way into our environment as a result of littering, overflowing trash cans, and natural forces such as wind and rain. Once this trash is picked up by rainwater, it can travel into rivers and down storm drains, eventually making its way to the Pacific Ocean. Marine debris can affect ecosystems both locally and globally as the trash moves in ocean currents. It can be extremely harmful to marine organisms that may ingest or become entangled in the trash. Preventing trash from entering our environment, by reducing overall waste production, being conscious of our actions, and removing it from our environment in a cleanup, protects both flora and fauna and preserves the beauty of our natural world.

### Vocabulary

- **Landfill:** a designated area where trash and other refuse is disposed of by being piled and buried under layers of soil
- **Marine Debris:** trash that is found in the ocean
- **Recycle:** to take something old and make it into something new
- **Reusable:** to use an item repeatedly without disposing of the item
- **Zero waste:** a philosophy that mimics natural cycles in eliminating waste by recapturing resources; closed-loop system

### How to Dispose Items You Collect

- **Recycling**
  - **Paper:** any clean paper white paper, lined paper, envelopes, cardboard, cartons
    - Paper towels, napkins, and paper plates are NOT recyclable
  - **Glass:** any glass that is not broken (bottles, etc.)
    - Broken glass is placed in the trash
  - **Metal:** any metal that is not too rusted (cans, foil, etc.)
  - **Plastic:** any hard plastics (bottles, yogurt containers, etc.)
    - Plastic grocery bags, sandwich bags, and other soft plastics are NOT recyclable
- **Hazardous waste:** electronic waste (cell phones, batteries, etc.), chemicals (household cleaners), tires
- **Landfill:** all other debris

### **Pre-Cleanup Questions:**

1. What items do you anticipate will be the most common? Why?
2. How much trash do you predict you will be able to collect (as a class)?

### **Cleanup Instructions:**

1. Divide students into groups of 3. Instruct students that they must stay with their group at all times. Each group can share a trash bag or bucket to minimize supplies needed and waste created.
2. Provide each student with 1 glove. Direct students to pick up trash with their gloved hand.
3. Read safety talk, which can be found at the end of the lesson plan, to kick-off the cleanup.
4. Set boundaries for the cleanup area and designate a time to return for trash collection and debrief.
5. Once your cleanup is winding down, ensure the trash you collected has made its way into nearby dumpsters or trash/recycling cans on site.
  - Optional: Weigh trash
6. Discuss experience and/or write a reflection.

### **Debrief Questions:**

1. What observations did you make during the cleanup?
2. What was the most common item you found? Why do you think this was most common? How can we reduce the use of this item?
3. Were you surprised by where you found litter? Why or why not?
4. Why do people litter? What can be done to change that?
5. Brainstorm 3 actions to promote a cleaner campus.

### **Further Application:**

- Use the debris to create an art piece.
- Graph the results – bar graph, pie chart, etc. Compare to county-wide and state-wide cleanup data, found at <http://www.coastalcleanupdata.org>.
- Consider hosting a campus cleanup 3 times throughout the year. Compare results and look for trends/patterns.
- Create an infographic showcasing the changes made to improve campus cleanliness and significant results.
- Use the cleanup as a launch for a year-long project. Identify one item or material of focus; create campaign to raise awareness of harms and reduce use on campus.
  - Ex. item of focus: plastic straws
  - Campaign can include combination of classroom presentations, posters, “spirit week”, video for morning announcements, social media posts, etc.

## Safety Talk

- Always stay in groups and don't wander off on your own.
- Be mindful of footing. If you are cleaning up near a parking lot or streets, be aware of cars around you and always cross at crosswalks.
- If you are cleaning up at a canyon or open space area, always stay on designated paths and never stomp through brush or plant life.
- Always pick up trash with either a grabber or your gloved hand, and never reach where you can't see.
- If you see any dead or injured wildlife, do not touch it! Let a park ranger or lifeguard know, and they will be able to properly take care of it.
- If you see anything that could be hazardous or unsafe, like chemicals, syringes, motor oil, etc., do not touch it! Let a park ranger or lifeguard know, and they will be able to dispose of it.
- Be mindful of how far you've walked out from your meeting point to be sure to allow yourself enough time to return on time.
- And don't forget to have fun!

For further ideas, questions or assistance with your cleanup, contact I Love A Clean San Diego's education department at [education@cleansd.org](mailto:education@cleansd.org).

### Campus Cleanup Data Card



Names:

Date:

	Item:	Tally	Total
<b>Plastic</b>	Grocery Bag		
	Sandwich Bag		
	Bottles		
	Straws		
	Bottle Caps		
	Plastic Utensils		
	Styrofoam		
	Other Plastics		
<b>Paper</b>	Paper		
	Cartons (Juice, Milk)		
	Cardboard		
<b>Metal</b>	Cans (soda, soup)		
	Aluminum foil		
	Wire		
<b>Other</b>	Wrappers		
	Balloons		
	Cloth		
	Glass Bottle		
	Cigarette Butts		
	Other		

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