

Research planning and notes

Worked case: food waste in our school canteen, a global problem studied locally.

- ☐ I can write a focused, measurable question. ☐ I can plan ethical primary research.
☐ I can judge how credible a source is. ☐ I can turn evidence into a solution.



NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

1 Define the problem

Think global, act local

State What is the problem, where, and for whom?

Start: "At lunch in our canteen, ..."

Why Why does it matter, locally and globally?

Think: money, staff time, energy, water, landfill.

2 Sharpen the question

Weak to strong

Strong questions are Focused, Researchable and Measurable. Compare each pair, then improve the last.

WEAK QUESTION	STRONGER QUESTION	WHAT IMPROVED
Why is food waste bad?	Which parts of a school lunch are most often left uneaten in our canteen?	F One place, one meal, one group
Do students care about food waste?	What reasons do Year 12 students give for leaving food at lunch?	R A short survey can answer it
Is our canteen wasteful?	How much plate waste, in kilograms, does our canteen collect each lunchtime for one week?	M Weighed, so days compare
What should schools do about waste?	YOUR STRONGER VERSION _____ _____	☐ F ☐ R ☐ M

3 Write your questions

Main + 3 sub

Main MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

CHECK IT ☐ F ☐ R ☐ M

Sub SUB-QUESTIONS: ONE PER METHOD

a _____

b _____

c _____

Collect evidence fairly



4 Plan primary research

Model row first

Primary data: you collect it. **Consent:** people agree, knowing why. **Anonymity:** no names.

METHOD	WHAT I WILL COLLECT, HOW AND WHEN	ETHICS CHECK
Weigh plate waste for one week Model	Weigh the plate-waste bin after each lunch, Monday to Friday, on the same scales. Record kilograms in a daily table, with that day's menu.	Catering manager's permission first. No pupils named or photographed.
Short survey 8 to 10 questions		☐ Consent ☐ Anonymous ☐ Can stop
Interview with catering staff About 15 minutes		☐ Consent ☐ Anonymous ☐ Can stop

5 Write a fair survey question

LEADING OR FAIR?

LEADING "Don't you agree that wasting food is wrong?" *It pushes people to say yes.*

FAIR "How often do you leave food on your plate at lunch?"
Never, sometimes, often, always.

Your turn

Ask why students leave food. Add answer options.

6 Source log

Secondary research

Secondary data: others published it. Log each source; tick the checks it passes.

NO.	SOURCE: TITLE, AUTHOR OR ORGANISATION, WHERE FOUND	W	D	E	P	C	VERDICT
S1	A supermarket blog post, "Ten ways to waste less food", found online	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒	Use with care: it also sells
S2		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
S3		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
S4		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Model rows are examples, not real data

1 QUESTION

2 METHODS

3 NOTES

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From notes to a solution



7 Take notes

Own words only

One point per row. Close the source first, so the words are yours. Trust: **H** high, **M** medium, **L** low.

NO.	KEY POINT IN MY OWN WORDS	PAGE OR LINK	RELIABILITY
S1	Offering smaller portions, with seconds if wanted, can mean less food is scraped into the bin.	Tip 3 on the post	M: seller's site, no data shown
			☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
			☐ H ☐ M ☐ L
			☐ H ☐ M ☐ L

8 Pull it together

Link

Where do your sources and your own data agree or disagree? Why?

"Most sources suggest ... but our canteen data shows ..."

9 Next steps

Two actions, each with a date.

1

2

10 Propose a solution

Judge it on 3 criteria

Idea	MY SOLUTION, AND THE EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS IT

IMPACT

What changes? How measured?

COST

Money, time, effort.

WHO ACTS

Who agrees? Who does it?
