Trash Talkin’ Activity – Let’s Talk Trash Worksheet

I. Prediction
I predict that our class generated ______________________ of trash this week. I think ___________% of it will be reusable, ___________% of it will be recyclable, and ___________% of it will be non-recyclable.

Prediction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>MASS OF TRASH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-usable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
II. Analysis
How much total garbage did your class create this week? ______________
Calculate the percents in each category and record them in the table below.

*Example*
Your class produced 19 pounds of trash this week. Of this, 2.5 pounds was re-usable paper.

\[
\frac{2.5}{19} \times 100 = 13.2\% \text{ of the trash was re-usable paper.}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL MASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-usable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Create a pie chart of these results.
III. Discussion Questions

1. Which of the categories has the most re-usable items (by mass)? _____________________
   Why do you think this is? __________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

2. Which of the categories has the most recyclable items (by mass)? ____________________
   Why do you think this is? __________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

3. Which of the categories has the most non-recyclable items (by mass)? _________________
   Why do you think this is? __________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

4. Was your prediction for the total amount of trash close to correct? ____________________
   Are you surprised by how much trash your class generated? Explain why or why not.
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

5. How many classes of students are there in your school? ____________________________
   How much trash do the classrooms in your school generate every week? _______________
   (Assume all the classes generate about as much trash as yours does and show your work
   below.)
IV. Conclusion
Make some suggestions for that you think happens to the waste from your school each week. (Do not forget that in addition to the classroom waste, there is waste from the school office, the restrooms, the lunch room, special activity rooms, etc.)

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Based on the results from this investigation, suggest some ways that your classroom can reduce its solid waste. How might an engineer work to reduce solid waste?

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