

Learning about Recycling

Turn Blue Jeans into Pencils!

Recycling turns something old into something new. Tee shirts, combs, and even computer casing can be made from recycled plastic bottles, while old soup cans might be turned into car parts! Even worn out paper money and blue jeans can be recycled into brand new pencils. When we recycle things, we help protect nature.



Recycling Protects Nature

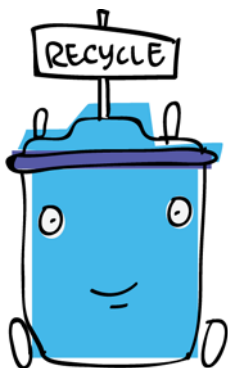
We all know we're supposed to recycle, but do you know why? Recycling protects nature! For instance, recycling soda cans helps save the rainforest. This is because aluminum cans are made from bauxite, which is a mineral in our Earth's crust that is mined in places like the tropical rainforests of South America. In order to dig up bauxite from the ground, rainforest trees and other plants must first be cut down, and animals like the three-toed sloth and spider monkey, who live in these trees, end up losing their home. By recycling aluminum we can help protect rainforest plants and animals!

First Reduce, Then Reuse

Reducing the stuff we use is the best way to protect nature. In fact, recycling should be the last thing you consider. First, try to use less. Next, find ways to reuse the stuff you do use. Finally, if you can't do either, see if you can recycle what you've got. For example, we can choose to buy reusable metal water bottles and traditional cameras instead of disposable ones. We can also reuse our wrapping paper again and again. But, if we don't reuse the paper our journal's written on (for obvious reasons!) it should be recycled.

Recycling Protects People

Would you want everybody's garbage in your backyard? Often, landfills are put in neighborhoods where people of color or with low incomes live. These people then have to deal with the unpleasant and



unhealthy effects of dumps in their neighborhood, and it's not fair. Environmental Justice means that all people—regardless of race or income—should be able to live, work, and play in healthy places. When we reduce, reuse and recycle things, we help keep stuff out of landfills and help protect people. We also use fewer natural resources like trees, oil, bauxite and coal. When we log or mine natural areas all over the world for the things we use, it can hurt communities that live nearby. For instance, indigenous peoples in the Ecuadorian rainforest often suffer great damage due to oil mining that contaminates their land, rivers and streams with poisonous chemicals. And, in the Southeastern United States, Appalachian communities can suffer from flooding caused by coal mining. So as we can see, reducing, reusing and recycling protects both people and nature!

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What Can We Recycle?

In many areas, curb-side recycling will pick up:

- All paper products:
 - Old homework, cereal boxes, junk mail, phone books, magazines, wrapping paper, paper bags, newspapers, copy paper
- Glass bottles and jars:
 - Food jars and drink bottles
- Metal cans:
 - Soup cans, pet food cans, empty paint cans, empty aerosol (spray) cans, Band-aid cans
- Aluminum products:
 - Soda cans, aluminum foil, and pie tins.
- All plastic bottles and jugs:
 - Milk and juice jugs, water bottles, soda bottles, vitamin bottles, bubble bath and shampoo bottles
- All hard plastics:
 - Yogurt and salsa tubs, straws, plastic utensils, plastic toys, plastic cups, coffee cup lids.
**Plastic wrap, Styrofoam, and plastic bags cannot be recycled curb-side.

To recycle the items below, you'll need to take them to a special drop-off location, or arrange for a special pick-up at your home:

- Batteries
- Cell phones
- Computers
- Motor oil
- Paint
- Fluorescent light bulbs



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