

## Learning about Reusing - Get Creative

### Reusing Protects Nature

Since everything originally comes from nature, we can protect nature by reusing things! Just think about all the stuff you use—especially throwaway or disposable items—and ask yourself if there's something else you can use instead. For example, during meals, most of us use napkins. While disposable paper napkins are very convenient to use, they are made from trees that once stood in forests. If we want to protect the forest—which is home to animals we care about—we can help by using less paper napkins, and using napkins made from cloth instead. Rather than throwing the cloth napkins away, wash them when they're dirty and reuse them. By reusing everyday items, we can do a lot to help protect nature and reduce our use of natural resources!



### Be a Detective

Many people like the idea of reusing but they often don't know where to begin. Be a detective and identify all the things you use that are usually thrown away. Make a list of these items and figure out ways you can switch them for something else that can be reused.

*Some hints to get you started:*

#### Instead of Using This

Paper Cups  
Paper Towels  
Paper Napkins  
Plastic Bottles  
Grocery Bags  
Writing Paper  
Sandwich Bags

#### Use This

Reusable Cups  
Cloth Towels, Sponges and Rags  
Cloth Napkins  
Bottles made from Metal or Glass  
Reusable Cloth Bags  
Reuse Other Side  
Reusable Containers



### Let Others Reuse your Stuff

Many of us have a lot of things we rarely use: clothes that don't fit, books we don't read, and music we don't listen to anymore. Rather than keeping these things, put them back into the world for others to reuse. Hold a garage sale where people can buy these items at a much lower cost than if they were new. Not only that, but they will be doing a good thing for nature by reusing these items you don't want anymore! You can also donate all unwanted items that are in good condition to thrift stores, which often use the money they earn for charity.



And, while you're at the thrift store, take a look around. You never know when you'll find that jean jacket you've been thinking of buying, or that picture frame you've wanted for your desk. Buying items secondhand is a great way to reuse stuff, save money, and help protect nature!

For more classroom resources, visit:

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## Creative Reuse

There are millions of things we can reuse with a little imagination. For instance, some people have figured out a way to make a bird feeder out of a reused milk jug while others use old shoes as flowerpots!

A lot of people love to shop at antique stores and flea markets to find old or vintage furniture that they use to furnish their home. Many of these vintage finds create a one-of-a-kind look and cost less than new furniture.

Some people even make artwork from old buttons, fabrics and decals! Plastic flowers, beads, post cards, shells, and just about anything else can be used again as art. In some cities, organizations exist that do this. People donate all kinds of things that they don't use anymore, artists reuse them in creating artwork, and other people like artists and teachers buy these things to turn into art projects!

## Carry Your Own Spoon

Much of nature is wasted whenever we use throwaway products such as plastic forks, spoons and disposable chopsticks. For instance, millions of people use disposable wooden chopsticks every day. This is destroying forests around the world at a very quick rate. One way to help these forests is to use reusable chopsticks made from bamboo, metal or hard plastic. We can also protect nature by using other reusable utensils. One simple trick is to carry a metal spoon in your backpack. That way you can always use it when eating out or at school. Think about it...a spoon can act as a fork and can even cut some foods! Try to also use reusable cups and plates whenever you can, as well as cloth towels, cloth napkins and cloth bags.

## Avoid Plastic Water Bottles Whenever Possible

Although water is needed for survival, drinking water out of disposable plastic bottles is a big waste of nature! Here in the United States, most of us have perfectly good and safe drinking water right out of our tap. Rather than buying expensive water in plastic bottles (a gallon of water ends up costing \$21.00 if you buy it in small bottles!), put a filter on your sink and fill a metal or glass bottle with water from your tap to take to school or to work. If you do buy water in a plastic bottle, recycle the bottle when empty. Don't reuse it because the plastic in that bottle isn't meant for using more than once, and it can break down over time, putting harmful chemicals into your water.



## If it's Broken, Try to Fix it

In the old days, when people had less money and less access to stuff, they valued the things they had and tried to keep them around as long as possible. If something broke, they fixed it. If it ripped, they mended it. Nowadays, many people just throw the item away and buy a new one. This includes items like television sets, cell phones and shoes. Try to extend the life of the product you have by fixing it, mending it or doing what you can to use it for as long as possible.

## Fun Ideas for Reuse!

Buying items secondhand like bicycles, clothing, books and games is a great way to reuse stuff. Here are other fun ideas to prolong the life of our things:

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- Sew colorful patches onto a pair of jeans, a jacket or a backpack that has a hole in it.
- Hold a clothes-swapping party. Invite friends to come over with clothes they no longer wear. Put all the clothes in the middle of the room and start swapping! Donate unwanted items to charity.
- Decorate cloth napkins for each member of the family. Get a set of plain, white, cotton napkins or tea towels (if you can find these secondhand, all the better, or else cut out squares from old, cotton tee-shirts!) and decorate each napkin with permanent markers, buttons and patches you can make from old fabrics. Make one for each member of the family and have this be the napkin they use at home during meals.

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