

## Seven Simple Ways to Reduce



### Ask yourself if what you are buying or using is a "want" or a "need".

Often, when we realize that it's a want, and not a need, we don't feel so compelled to actually buy or use something. Next time you say you "need" a new pair of sneakers or a new video game, think about it. It's okay to fulfill our wants, but if we also want to protect nature, then we should be aware of our choices and maybe hold off on buying everything we want.

### Slow down the rate that you buy new stuff—especially electronic items.

Every time we buy a new cell phone, music player or computer, we're taking something that requires a lot of natural resources to produce. By slowing down the rate that you buy an electronic item, not only will you help protect nature, but next year's upgrades will be better anyway!

### Only take what you need.

For instance, instead of taking a stack of paper napkins at a restaurant, remember that one or two napkins will do the job. It's the same with paper towels in the bathroom. Think about what you really need and try to use only that.



### Learn to say "no thanks."

Often, companies like to give away free stuff with their advertising on it—things like key chains, whistles and paperweights. Many of these things end up filling our drawers creating clutter and waste. Say "no thanks" to free things you don't need, don't really want, and therefore won't use.

What do you do however when someone wants to give you something useful like a reusable mug and you already have one? Do you really need another one? Learn to say "no thanks" to the good stuff too, even if it's free. Since you don't really need it, let someone else who doesn't have one get it instead.

### Take bags only if you need them.

When buying a single item like a bottle of juice, a candy bar, or a magazine, tell the clerk you don't need a bag. Let them know you're trying to help protect nature so that they can learn from your positive example. If you're buying more items, bring your own reusable bag with you.

For more classroom resources, visit:

[Garbology.org/teachers](http://Garbology.org/teachers)



Activity provided by:

**SF Environment**

**Our home. Our city. Our planet.**

A Department of the City and County of San Francisco

### Pay attention to packaging.

When you buy something, like an apple or a toy, you're not just buying the item—you're buying its packaging, too. This makes the product cost more and it also creates garbage; just think of the Styrofoam trays and plastic wrap used to package apples at some stores! The next time you go shopping, pay attention to packaging. Is it compostable or recyclable, or does it have to get thrown away? When choosing what to buy, less packaging is best. At some grocery stores you can buy many items in bulk to reduce packaging; this costs less for you and also helps protect nature!

### Try to not buy anything new!

There is a growing movement of people who are not buying anything new at all except for things like food and medicine. They agree that for a one-year period, they will meet all their needs and wants with used goods that they collect from friends, flea markets, thrift shops and internet swap sites. By not buying anything new, most people enjoy the challenge of finding what they need secondhand, plus they get the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping protect nature, and saving money too!



For more classroom resources, visit:

[Garbology.org/teachers](http://Garbology.org/teachers)



Activity provided by:

**SF Environment**

**Our home. Our city. Our planet.**

A Department of the City and County of San Francisco