

Trash Talk!



A Newsletter of
**Southeastern Indiana
Recycling District**

Fall 2022



Credit: xavigm | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Learn From the Pros

What does an average day look like for you? You probably spend most of it at home or school. Maybe you play on a sports team or belong to a club after school, too. On a good day, you probably hang out with friends at a local park or community center. The chores you do at home, the work you do at school, and the activities you do in your free time all affect our environment. We can help you figure out how to take better care of the Earth, no matter what you are doing.

We can answer your questions and even visit your school, club, or group and bring fun activities, workshops, or lessons. Here is a list of some of our most popular programs:

- Reducing waste
- Reusing
- Recycling
- Buying recycled
- Preventing and cleaning up litter
- Disposing of household hazardous waste
- Crafting with reused materials

To schedule a visit to your school, club, or group, ask an adult to contact our office at 812-574-4080.

Uncle Sam Says... Recycle

With America Recycles Day coming up, let's talk about how we're doing as a country when it comes to recycling. In the United States, we are recycling and composting about 36% of our trash. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that we could be recycling and composting as much as 75% of our trash. This means that a lot of the trash going to landfills could be recycled or composted. We can do better!

When we recycle, we save energy, conserve natural resources, and help create jobs. When we landfill, we put a lot of good resources to waste. Did you know that people have been recycling for thousands of years? In ancient civilizations, people would melt down broken metal items to make new things. It was the smart thing to do back then, and it is the smart thing to do now!

One of the goals of recycling is to move toward what is called "circularity," or closing the loop. To understand, think about the three chasing arrows in the recycling symbol. We use an item, recycle it, make something new from it, use that item, recycle it, and so on. When new products are made from recycled products, we don't need as many new materials from the Earth and reduce the amount

of trash put into landfills. This is a win for people, the economy, and the environment.

If your family or school has not yet begun to make recycling a daily habit, start now. If you already have a recycling habit, set a good example and show others how easy it is. Simply place a recycling bin (or bag or box) near the trash can. Make a list of what can be recycled and post it on the refrigerator or near the recycling bin. To learn more about recycling, visit www.SEIRD.org.

To show that you are serious about recycling in your community and the United States, you can take the America Recycles Day Recycling Pledge. To join over 87,000 others who have pledged to learn about recycling and to share their knowledge, visit <https://KAB.org/programs/ard/pledge>. This site is also filled with fun ideas for celebrating America Recycles Day on November 15, 2022.

Make this our best year for recycling yet!



Dare to Compare

Instructions: Use the clues to find the correct answers. Show your work.

The letter B stands for the number of plastic bottles that Carrie recycled last week.

Clues:

- A. $B + B < 40$
- B. $B > 10$
- C. B is an odd number.
- D. 5 is a factor of B.

1. Based on the first two clues, make a list of all possible answers. _____
2. Using the last two clues, cross out the numbers that cannot be the answer. _____
3. What is B? _____

The letter C stands for the number of cans that Javier recycled last week.

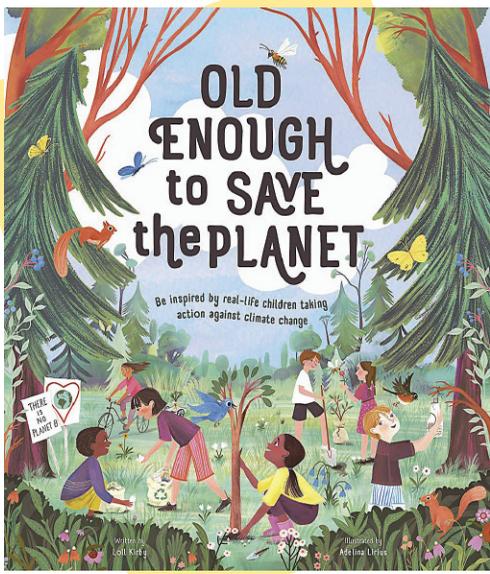
Clues:

- A. $C < 10 + 8$
- B. C is not an odd number.
- C. $C > 9$
- D. 6 is a factor of C.

1. To find C, which clue would you use first? _____
2. Which clue would you use second? _____
3. What is C? _____
4. How did you figure out the answer? _____



Credit: FatCamera | E+ | Getty Images



You Are Old Enough to Save the Planet

With a little inspiration, you can achieve great things from an early age. Loll Kirby seeks to provide this inspiration in *Old Enough to Save the Planet* (Magic Cat Publishing, 27 pages). This book begins with a foreword from Kallan Benson, who started her environmental journey at just nine years old. From there, Kirby offers examples of children around the world who have made changes to benefit the environment around them.

With each new story, we see not only the change the child made, but why they wanted to make it. Answering the question of “why” will show that these children may have some of the same concerns that you do. Since you are starting with the same “why,” you also have the power to achieve great things.

Old Enough to Save the Planet ends with ways that you can help save the planet, as well as make your voice heard. This last piece of encouragement serves as a great starting point for anyone who wants to help but still doesn't quite know how.

The advice is simple, such as turning off the tap when you brush your teeth, but that's the point. To make a big change, you must start by making small changes. Starting small helps you build confidence to take on bigger challenges, and this book is all about building confidence.

Old Enough to Save the Planet will inspire you to start small, dream big, and work hard.

What's Wrong?

In a food web, living things can be classified as producers, consumers, and decomposers. Producers use sunlight, air, and soil to produce their own food (energy). Consumers get their energy by eating other living things. Decomposers get energy by breaking down dead plants and animals. Sarah was supposed to correctly identify producers, consumers, and decomposers on this list, but she was in a hurry and didn't check her work. Six of her answers are wrong!

Instructions: Look at the answers. If an answer is not correct, cross it out and write the letter of the correct answer.

- | | | |
|-------------|---|-------|
| 1. Cat | P | _____ |
| 2. Worm | D | _____ |
| 3. Lettuce | C | _____ |
| 4. Hawk | P | _____ |
| 5. Bush | D | _____ |
| 6. Bacteria | P | _____ |
| 7. Human | C | _____ |
| 8. Rose | P | _____ |
| 9. Mushroom | D | _____ |
| 10. Grass | C | _____ |

P Producer C Consumer D Decomposer



Credit: May Lim | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Where in the World?

Instructions: Using the clues below, find out which country ranks #3 for recycling the most per person. This country's rigorous recycling laws and economic investments have helped it reach a 95% food recycling rate.

1. I am south of Russia and Southeast of Mongolia.
2. China is bigger than me.
3. I am at the south end of a peninsula.
4. I am just west of Japan.

Answer: _____



Wikivoyage. Licensed: CC BY-SA 4.0. Author: Cacahuete with adaptations

Don't Forget the Third Arrow!

Kids and adults all over the world recognize the chasing-arrows recycling symbol. Many of us are great with the first two arrows! Our families reduce waste by only buying and using what we need. We keep paper, plastics, glass, metals, and other items out of landfills by recycling. But sometimes we forget about that third arrow, the one that closes the loop. The way to close the loop is to reuse recycled materials. We do this by buying and using products that were made from materials we tossed into our recycling bins.

It's easy to find out whether an item is made from recyclables — just check the label. If you see the words “made from post-consumer recycled content,” you know that if you buy this item, you are closing the loop. To make recycling work, the materials that you put into the recycling bins must be used to make new stuff to buy and use.

The next time you go to the store, remember to help close the loop by checking labels. Look to see if the packaging or the item you are buying was made with post-consumer recycled content. If you look closely, you will probably find many, many items, such as cereal boxes, water bottles, paint, floor coverings, napkins, tissue paper, backpacks, and even furniture, that have been made from recycled material. Plus, some items, such as metal food and drink cans, are always made from recycled material.

So don't forget the third arrow! Remember to buy items made from recycled materials whenever possible to be an all-around recycler.

No Need to Rake? What a “Re-Leaf”!



Credit: gbh007 | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Fall is truly a beautiful season. Across many parts of the country, leaves turn from vibrant green to flaming orange, red, and yellow before falling to the ground. They dry out, and we enjoy the crispy crunch of walking through them with that familiar fall fragrance all around us. The changing leaves make autumn beautiful — and maybe even your favorite time of year — until it’s time to rake. If your yard is large and you have older trees, raking can be a big job. What if you didn’t need to rake all those leaves? Well, “be-leaf” it! Leaves can be reused to improve your garden and yard for spring.

Instead of raking, bagging, and having the leaves picked up, you can leave them on the ground to make your soil and grass healthier. Here’s how you can leaf-cycle:

- If your family has a mulching mower, run it over the leaves a couple of times to chop them into small bits. If you don’t have a mulching mower, simply remove the bagger attachment that catches grass and have a grown-up insert the safety cover on your regular lawn mower. Then mow over the leaves. Your lawn should now be “dusted” with leaf bits. They will break down into the soil by spring to “feed” your lawn and will protect the grass roots from the harsh winter weather.
- With the bagger attached to the mower, mow up the leaves. When you’re done, empty the leaf bits from your lawn onto your garden. This leaf mulch will keep the soil moist for plants in the spring. It will also protect insects and bacteria that help plants grow. In the spring, fluff up the broken-down leaf bits, and mix the material into the soil as a fertilizer. If you have a compost pile or bin, you can mix the leaf bits into the compost.

You may have heard older folks talk fondly about the “smell of burning leaves.” That may sound like a nice memory, but we now know that burning leaves is dangerous. Fires from burning leaves can burn out of control and cause a lot of damage to both nature and your property. The National Park Service estimates that 85% of wildfires start from people burning leaves and other trash. Also, burning leaves releases several different greenhouse gases and air pollutants. People, especially young children and those with allergies and breathing difficulties, can suffer serious health issues from the effects of burning leaves. Because of this, burning leaves is illegal in many communities.

This autumn, when your parents or grandparents hand you a rake, share the benefits of leaf-cycling. Maybe you will make “be-leafers” out of them!

Reducing Lunchtime Trash

Lunch is one of the best parts of the school day. It’s great to have a break to talk with friends, refuel our bodies, recharge our brains, and relax before heading back to class. Unfortunately, it is also when the school creates the most trash. Unless you bring your own lunch in a reusable lunch bag with washable containers, you probably create an average of about 67 pounds of lunchtime trash per year. For an average elementary school, this is about 18,000 pounds of trash per year. Across America, schools throw out about 530,000 tons of food every year. Much of what goes into the trash could be composted or recycled. Of all the garbage in the school lunchroom, about 12% could be recycled, while 57% could be composted.

Here are some tips to reduce waste in the lunchroom:

- If you buy school lunch and are allowed to choose your foods, do not take too much. Only take what you will eat and eat what you have taken.
- If you bring your own lunch, use a reusable container, like a lunch box or insulated lunch bag.
- Use washable containers instead of plastic baggies for items you bring. You can even wash out and reuse tubs from dips, spreads, or deli food items.

- Bring your drink in a refillable bottle from home or a recyclable bottle. Don’t forget to recycle the empty bottle at school or at home.
- Use washable silverware from home, not throw-away plastic. If your school requires plastic, use heavy-duty utensils that are washable.
- If you use single-serving containers, make sure the packaging is recyclable and remember to recycle it.
- If you do have leftovers, place them back into your reusable containers and take them home to eat later.



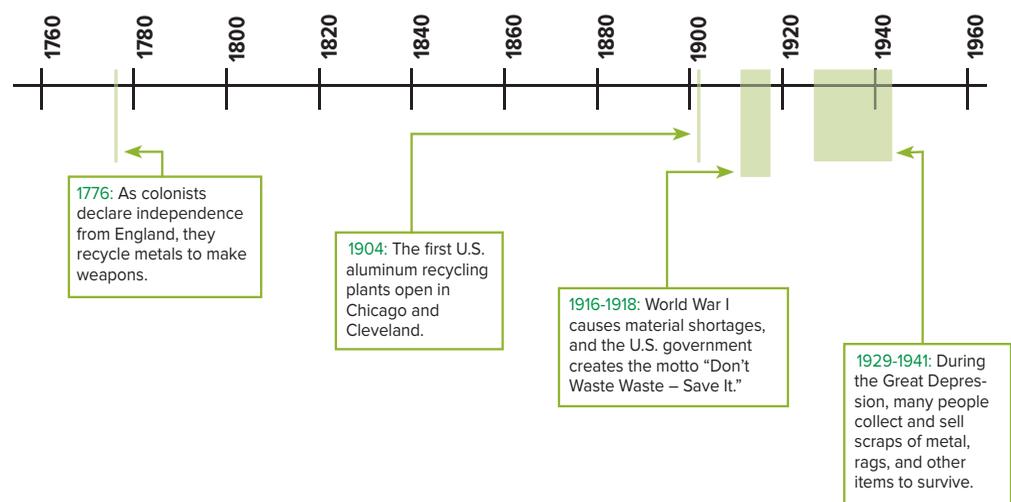
Credit: ferrantraite | E+ | Getty Images

Just in Time

A timeline is a graph that is used to show the passage of time in a straight line. Timelines are especially useful in showing historical events in relation to each other.

Instructions: Below is a timeline showing a small part of the history of recycling in the United States. Use the timeline to answer these questions.

History of Recycling in the United States From 1776-1941



1. In what year did the first aluminum recycling factories open in the U.S.? _____
In which cities? _____
2. During the period shown on the timeline, what were the major reasons that caused Americans to recycle and waste less? _____
3. Why is there a big, empty part in the middle of the timeline? _____
4. What was a U.S. government motto in World War I? _____
5. How much time passed between the end of World War I and the beginning of the Great Depression? _____

Single-Use Plastics?

How smart kids can help

Plastic straws are getting a lot of attention these days — and not in a good way. People are starting to think that maybe we should be using fewer of them. Plastic straws are an example of something that is used one time and then thrown away. Plastic takeout containers, shopping bags, spoons, forks, cups, and lids are also made to be used once and then tossed into the trash. All these disposable items are called “single-use plastics” because they are made of plastic and used one single time.

In today’s world, there are many things we use just once. However, a lot of them break down easily in nature or can be composted or recycled. Plastic straws cannot do any of these. For this reason, they are a symbol (or example) of all the plastics that people have grown used to using one time and throwing away.

The good news is that smart kids like you can help! All you need to do is remember that it is always better to refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle than to use something once and then throw it away. You don’t have to do something huge right away. Start by remembering to make simple changes each day. And just like lots of small straws can add up to be a big problem, lots of kids can work together to help fix it. Start with a goal of changing one plastic habit per week or month and then add new changes throughout the year. Talk to your friends and family about making these changes, too!

Here is how you can be part of the solution:

- Stay away from using plastic straws or stir sticks at restaurants or places where they are offered. If you really like using straws, consider buying a reusable metal one and taking it with you.
- When you go shopping, take your own reusable bag. (Like any reusable item, reusable bags should be washed and properly stored after each use.)
- Try to use fewer disposable items. At fast food restaurants, take a refillable water bottle or cup and use it instead of a throwaway cup. When buying fruits or vegetables at the store, use reusable bags or consider not using bags at all.
- Make your own takeout kit. You can carry your own reusable containers instead of asking for single-use carryout containers.
- Did you know that many of our groceries have a bulk food area? You can bring reusable containers from home to fill with food instead of using the plastic bags provided. (Not all stores allow personal containers, so ask a manager or customer service person if it is OK.)

After you have refused and reused all that you can, you should recycle all the plastic that is recyclable. Plastic straws, forks, spoons, cup lids, loose bottle caps, and other small single-use plastic items are too small for us to recycle! Place bottle caps back on the bottles to recycle. Other small, single-use plastics go into the trash. Learn more about recycling right at www.SEIRD.org.



Credit: Mstudiolimages | E+ | Getty Images

Beginnings and Endings

Instructions: Add a prefix or suffix to each word and then put each word into the correct sentence below. (Hint: Change the “y” at the end of a word to an “i” before adding a suffix.)

_____ cycle _____ water
compost _____ _____ uses
rich _____ healthy _____



Credit: Renata Angerami | E+ | Getty Images

1. In November, we celebrate how much we _____ as a country.
2. Ashley decided to mix compost into her family’s garden to make the soil _____ for the plants.
3. Putting food scraps in a compost bin _____ food waste.
4. Microorganisms in compost help make the soil _____ in nutrients.
5. By _____, Marty’s family threw away less food waste and reused more materials.
6. If you _____ your compost pile, it won’t get enough air.



Southeastern Indiana Recycling District

Jefferson Proving Ground, Building #534
6556 N. Shun Pike Road
Madison, IN 47250

812-574-4080 • www.seird.org