



# Let's Learn to Recycle!

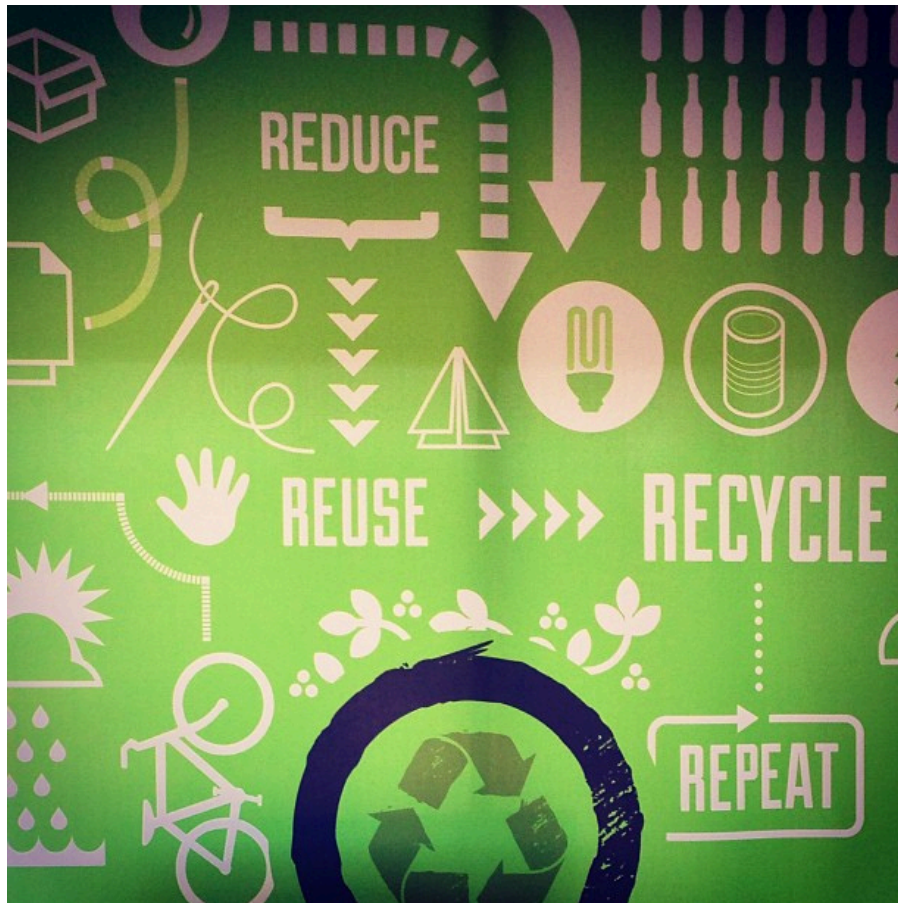
Make the Earth a better place!



by Mallory Scott

Why is recycling so essential? It helps to minimize landfills, protect our climate/wildlife, and most importantly, it helps to preserve our planet for future generations! With such a big population on Earth, it's great to reduce our waste that goes into landfills, that trash doesn't just go away like we think it does. Think that recycling is too complicated? You can make a difference! Just remember the 3 R's.

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!



**Reduce:** There are many ways you can reduce the amount of waste you create. Show your parents a thing or two when you go shopping with them, lead by example as you take these steps to cut down on waste:

- Say no to disposable shopping bags. Bring your own reusable ones instead.
- Choose products that have the least amount of packaging.
- Buy in bulk when purchasing items like laundry detergent, shampoo, pet food, cat litter, and other household items.
- Buy unpackaged items in loose bins when available, such as tools and produce.
- Use what you already have instead of buying something new whenever possible.
- Buy liquid products that are concentrated.
- Avoid single serving foods that require extra packaging.

**Reuse:** To reuse means to continue using the things you have, instead of getting rid of them and buying new stuff. You can get in the habit of reusing by adopting these habits:

- Purchase reusable, rather than disposable, products such as mugs, dishes, cloth napkins, and metal flatware instead of paper cups, plates, and napkins, and plastic utensils.
- Use refillable containers, like water bottles and soap containers, whenever possible.
- When you must use them, show your kids how to take only as many single-use items, like paper napkins, as they need.
- Mend clothing and repair appliances and other products so that they can be reused, and have your kids help you sell or donate their used clothing and toys instead of throwing them out.
- Find creative ways to reuse items you might otherwise throw away. For example, find craft projects for used paper towel rolls, linens, boxes, packaging, and/or empty containers. Or donate them to your child's school to use.
- Use both sides of paper when printing from your computer.

**Recycle:** Many things your family buys are recyclable, meaning they can be made into other products. Place all recyclable items, such as glass, aluminum, steel, paper, and plastic, in the appropriate containers around your house. If you aren't using some things around the house any more, donate them! Here are some other ways to recycle:

- Participate in local environmental initiatives, such as recycling drives.
- Work with your local environmental officials to establish a recycling program in your area if you don't already have one.
- Find local retailers that accept products like used batteries, antifreeze, motor oil, paint cans, plastic bags, and cell phones, and take these items there when you are finished using them.

Still think that recycling's too hard? That's okay! Try to take one thing from this list and incorporate it into your everyday life—show your parents how it's done! You can try other fun things too: start a garden, make a compost bin, you can even recycle your old cans for money! Just one change can make a difference in the world around you, so let's get to it!



### Fun Facts about Recycling:

- Recycling 1 ton of paper can save 17 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 2 barrels of oil, and 4,000 kilowatts of electricity. The energy that you save can power 1 home for 5 months.
- The average family uses 6 trees worth of paper each year.
- If every American recycled 10% of the newspapers they buy, we can save 25 million trees every year!
- Recycling 1 aluminum can saves enough energy to light a 100 watt light bulb for 20 hours and a TV for 2 hours. That's just from 1 can.
- If we gathered all the plastic bottles thrown away by Americans, it can encircle the world 4 times!
- For every ton of recycled glass, you prevent 315 kilograms of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere.
- Your unwanted clothes might be needed by someone else. Recycling textiles and fabrics means less land, water and fertilizer is needed to grow Cotton.

Photo of "Kids Recycling": Cpl. Thomas Bricker

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Photo of "We Recycle":

<https://pixabay.com/en/recycling-bin-sign-empty-symbol-307684/>

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