

Recycling – what can you do?

Can one person help to make the world cleaner? Can you do anything about the mountains of rubbish that are getting bigger every day?

The answer is yes. You can help. There are things that everybody can do. But where do you start?

Perhaps the best time to begin is when you go shopping. Before you leave your house, pick up some bags to take with you. If you take some bags to the shop, you will not need to bring any more bags home with you. Did you know that most people bring home at least ten new plastic bags a week from their visits to the shops? It is a good idea to take plastic bags to the supermarket with you, but it is an even better idea to carry bags made of stronger material. They do not break easily so you can keep them for a long time. Also bags made of cotton and other natural materials are much better in landfill sites than plastic.

So after you have arrived at the shopping centre with your own bags, what else can you do? The answer is to choose carefully. Try to buy things that you can keep for a long time. Do not buy things that are used once and then thrown away like cheap cameras and plastic cups. Look for glass bottles instead of plastic ones.

Think about clothes in the same way. Fashions change very quickly, and something which is fashionable this year will look out of date next year. Cheap clothes are often made of cheap material too, and you have to throw them away more quickly. It is better to buy a few well-made clothes than a lot of cheap, badly-made ones.

When you buy fruit and vegetables, it is not worth paying for a lot of plastic packaging. Do bananas need to be in a plastic bag? Bananas already have a coat their own banana skin. What about apples? Do they need to be in a group of four on a black plastic plate with a plastic cover? It is better to choose the apples you want and put them into your own bag. In Britain 33 per cent of the rubbish that people throw away every week is packaging.

Finally, look for recycled paper and other recycled things when you go shopping. When you buy things made of recycled paper, plastic and other materials, you are helping to pay for recycling.

So you are careful with your shopping, and you try to avoid packaging, but there are still things in your house that you need to throw away. Or do you?

Maybe there are other things that you can do. Remember, something that you don't want any more may be useful for somebody else. Perhaps you can sell it in a shop or on the Internet. Maybe you can just give it away. There are shops that will sell your old clothes and books and use the money that they get to help poor or sick people. Old clothes are also fun for children to use in their games. They like to wear adults' clothes and shoes

Think about using things in a different way. A big bed sheet can be used again to make smaller sheets for a baby's bed. Even very old and damaged clothes can still be used for cleaning your furniture and windows. And when you cannot find anything useful to do with old clothes, make sure that you put them in recycling bins, not in ordinary rubbish bins. Then they can be used to make other clothes or paper.

Paper can also be used more than once. Keep a box beside your computer at work or at home and put used paper into it. Make sure that everybody uses both sides of the paper before they recycle it.

Plastic bags can be used many times for shopping, and you can also use them in other ways. Put some in your suitcase when you go on holiday. They will be useful when you buy presents. You can also use them to put dirty clothes in at the end of the holiday. Push several bags inside big envelopes when you are posting things that could break. And a plastic bag inside a bin will keep it clean.

You can fill up plastic bottles and use them again many times, but you must wash them well. In hot weather you can make ice in them. You can put bottles of iced water in a bag to keep your sandwiches cold if you are going on a long journey or eating on the beach.

If you enjoy growing plants, there are many things that you can do with plastic bottles. For example, when you go on holiday, you can fill plastic bottles with water, make very small holes in them, and then put them near your plants. They will give water to the plants while you are away.

Cut large plastic bottles in half. You can use them in the garden to cover plants when the weather is cold. Or you can grow very small baby plants inside them. You can also do this with plastic cups.

If you have a garden, you can tie big empty plastic bottles onto trees or sticks, and they will move in the wind and frighten the birds. This will keep the birds away from your fruit or vegetables. But if you like the birds and want them to visit your garden, you can make a wooden bird table and cut the plastic bottles to make small cups. Put food for the birds inside these cups and tie them to the bird table.

Finally, remember that schools can use a lot of the things that people call 'rubbish'. Big boxes, small boxes, egg boxes, birthday cards, magazines, pieces of material and shiny paper can all be fun for younger children. They are often used to make pictures and strange animals and extraordinary machines. If you live near a school, ask the teachers what kind of things they need.

So perhaps you cannot save the environment by yourself, but there are many things that one person can do. More and more people are talking about these things and making changes in their lives. Perhaps in this way we can help to make the rubbish mountains smaller.

1. Read the text and choose True or False.

1. Plastic bags should be thrown away after a single use. True / False
2. It is better to buy cheap, poorly-made clothes than fewer, well-made ones. True / False
3. Bananas and apples need to be wrapped in plastic packaging when bought from the supermarket. True / False
4. Buying products made from recycled materials helps support recycling efforts. True / False
5. Selling or donating unwanted items is a good way to reduce waste. True / False
6. Old clothes can be repurposed for cleaning furniture and windows. True / False
7. Paper should only be used once before being recycled. True / False
8. Plastic bottles should never be reused for storing water or making ice. True / False
9. Plastic bottles can be repurposed as watering devices for plants while on vacation. True / False
10. Schools can use recycled materials for arts and crafts projects. True / False

2. Put the sentences in the correct order to get a summary of the text.

	Additionally, it is a good idea to repurpose and recycle items, for example, donate unwanted goods, reuse plastic bottles, and creatively use materials for arts and crafts projects.
	First, it is important to make conscious choices while shopping, such as bringing reusable bags and opting for durable, long-lasting products.
1	There are different ways how individuals can help reduce waste and protect the environment.
	Overall, everyone can contribute to environmental sustainability and reduce the accumulation of waste.
	Then, people should avoid excessive packaging and choose items made from recycled materials whenever possible.

3. Complete the tips with the words from the box.

single-use	recycled	second	materials
donate	watering	cotton	sides

1. Bring bags when you go shopping to minimize the use of plastic bags.
2. Choose things that can be used for a long time rather than disposable or items.
3. Look for products made from materials to support recycling efforts and reduce the demand for new resources.
4. Sell or unwanted items instead of throwing them away.
5. Repurpose old clothes and household items for cleaning or crafting projects to give them a life.
6. Use both of paper before recycling it to maximize its use and minimize waste.
7. Reuse plastic bottles for storing water, making ice, or plants to reduce plastic waste.
8. Support schools and community organizations by donating recyclable for arts and crafts projects, reducing waste while promoting creativity and education.

4. In your notebook:

Write a letter (about 50 – 70 words) to your classmates about how they can help protect the environment:

- ✓ encourage them to take small steps to reduce waste in their daily lives;

- ✓ share 2-3 tips and ideas from the text you read, such as using reusable bags, recycling paper, and repurposing old items;
- ✓ explain (in 2-3 sentences) why these actions are important for the environment and how everyone can make a difference.