

The Environment - how can you help protect it?

Our planet is changing. We need to help it change for the better and we're asking for your help to do that! There are a lot of things that affect our planet in a bad way but the good news is that everyone can help to reduce them and do their bit for the environment.

1. Electricity

How to help

- **On or Off?** - Leaving televisions, stereos and computers on standby with the little red light showing still uses up electricity, even though they might look like they're turned off. To stop this you can turn them off at the wall. Simple!
- **Lights out!** - Turning lights off when you're not in the room (make sure no-one else is too!) can save a lot of energy.
- **Putting the kettle on** - Britons drink an amazing 60.2 billion cups of tea a day according to The Tea Council. That's why it's important to only boil as much water as you need in your kettle
- **Brrrr** - The fridge is an important part of the kitchen, it keeps food fresh, cool and healthy! But it takes a lot of energy to keep cool, so help it by not leaving the fridge door open or putting hot things inside.
- **Shopping** - Many products are now helping you to reduce your energy use and your parents' energy bills! Check new products for their efficiency grade and rating and keep an eye out for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo.
- **Harness the sun's energy** - An increasing number of people are fitting solar panels to their houses. Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels create electricity from sunlight, which can then be used to power their homes.

2. Pollution

How to help:

- **Don't drop litter** - Birds and animals can mistake litter for food. Litter can end up in rivers and block drains, or in the sea and be eaten by fish. Also, some litter will stay around for thousands of years!
- **Save it!** - All of the electricity saving tips in the above section will also help reduce pollution.
- **On your bike** - Instead of taking the car get your bicycle out or take the 'shoelace express' - also known as walking.
- **Pleasing products** - Many household cleaning products contain harmful chemicals which are washed down the drain. Encourage your parents to buy eco-friendly products or even make your own from natural substances like vinegar and lemon juice.
- **Detectives** - If you spot pollution, such as oil on the beach, report it to the local council. If you suspect a stream is polluted, report it to the Environment Agency.

3. Food

How to Help:

- **Reduce your mileage** - Eating food and drinking drinks produced in your own country reduces the carbon footprint of your diet. This means that you are helping to reduce pollution!

- **Meat Free Mondays** - are an easy and effective way to cut down on meat. Make one or even two of your days meat-free.
- **Eat organic** - Organic foods have had no insecticides and pesticides added to them which makes them that bit more natural and healthy. Eating organic food reduces how many chemicals are made and spread across the countryside.
- **Get worms!** - Food waste is an important issue as 7 billion of us munch our way through millions of tonnes of food. Give your leftovers to worms in your very own wormery and they'll turn it into rich and healthy compost for your vegetable garden and flowers!
- **Washing** - Always wash your hands before eating to prevent the spread of invisible bad stuff like bacteria and chemicals. It's also good to wash fruit and vegetables before eating or cooking.

Water

How to help:

- **Get your teeth into it** - We brush our teeth twice a day and by turning the tap off while we brush we can save 5-10 litres of water. If every adult in the UK did this then we'd save enough water for 500,000 homes.
- **Bottle in your loo** - What? Put a bottle in your loo? That's right. If it will fit, fill up a lemonade or cola bottle with water and pop it into your loo's water tank. Then when you flush and the water fills back up you'll save a bottle's worth every time.
- **Rain Gain** - Collecting rainwater in a water butt in your garden is a great way of collecting and reusing the water to keep plants healthy in the summer.
- **Reuse** - Share bath water with your family to reduce costs and water use. Or, set yourself a challenge to cut down your shower time by 1 or 2 minutes.

Rubbish

How to help:

- **Sort it out!** - Not all of our recycling is taken by helpful dustmen. Unwanted or leftover food such as tea bags and potato peelings can be added straight to a compost heap. Many local councils now include compostable waste in their recycling collections.
- **Recycle Bank** - Some councils don't collect plastics or cardboard but there is always somewhere nearby with big recycling banks where you can take them.
- **Save trees** - Save trees by recycling your own paper. Paper with a clean side can be made into notepads with a simple staple or a hole to tie a piece of string. These are great for doodles and notes. If you are buying paper, buy recycled paper.
- **Fashion Statement** - Give any unwanted clothes to charity shops or to a Salvation Army recycling bank. A lot of our unwanted clothes go to the homeless to keep them warm or alternatively, the clothes are sent to developing countries.
- **Would you like a bag?** - If you can carry your shopping home without a bag then carry it home. If you can't why not take a bag you already have with you.
- **Packaging** - Packaging is a big problem for the environment because once the product is open you don't need it and it's thrown out or, if it's lucky, recycled. So avoid buying products that have a lot of paper and plastic around them.
- **Shout out** - Tell Friends of the Earth what products or companies you think highlight the problem of our trashed planet.