

Name: _____

A Little Recycling Goes a Long Way



It turns out that much of what we throw away as garbage that eventually ends up in landfills can be recycled. This includes paper and cardboard, glass, and cans that can be recycled and yard clippings that can be composted.

What's in a Bag?

When a person buys something at a store, a cashier usually puts it in a bag, paper or plastic. Did you know that plastic bags are generally not degradable? If we throw them in a landfill and waited 200 years, or even 2000 years from now, and dig them up, most plastic bags would still be there as plastic bags.

Paper sacks are reusable and recyclable, but they cost more than plastic. It takes a 15-20 year old tree to create 700 grocery sacks! Almost everyone goes to the store and buys something. If each of our families decided that once a month we would not take a bag at the store (use one less bag than normal), would that be much work? Would it make much of a difference?

1. For your class, how many bags would you "save" in year?
2. How long would it take for your class to "save a tree"?
3. Suppose you get each student in your school to do this for a year. How many trees would your school save?

4. Now suppose that this became a habit for the people in your school. Sort of like brushing your teeth. And everyone in your school did this for the next ten years. How many trees would the students from your school save?

The News About Papers!

Even with all our technology, we still use a lot of paper.

5. In 1996, the U.S. mills recycled 34.3 million tons of paper. This represents about 45% of the total paper produced. How much paper was produced in 1996?
6. In 1989, it was estimated that on average each U.S. citizen used about 580 pounds of paper a year. The U.S. population in 1996 was about 265.2 million. Given these figures, is the average person using more or less paper in 1996 than in 1986? On average, how much paper did each person use in 1996?
7. Estimate how you can figure out how much paper your school uses per person.

8. Estimate how you can figure out how much paper your school recycles.

Resources:

[The EPA: Recycle City](#)

50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save The Earth. Berkeley, CA,. The Earth Works Group, 1989.