

NATURAL RESOURCES FACTSHEET

There are lots of ways we can use fewer natural resources, and many of them are things we can do really easily at home or at school.

ENERGY

We all know we should be saving energy, but why? A lot of our energy come from coal, which is a natural resource. However, making energy from coal creates pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change. There are things we can do to use less energy, meaning we create less pollution and greenhouse gases. We can also create energy from renewable resources, like wind, sun and the sea.



Some things we all do about saving energy:

- Replace your old-fashioned light-bulbs for the eco-friendly compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Chargers and other devices with standby power still drain energy while not in use. If it's plugged in it's using power. Unplug chargers and devices when you're not using them.
- A computer left on all day, every day will use a lot of energy even if you're not using it. Remember to turn them off when you're not using them.
- Switch to renewable resources, like wind power or solar power (you might not be able to do this yourself, but your school might be doing it, or you might be talking about it at home).
- Water heating is the second largest source of household greenhouse gas emissions. Go easy with the hot water as it takes energy to heat the water. Ask your parents or guardians to turn down the thermostat, and if you can, install a solar hot water system.
- Make your fridge more efficient by making sure the seals actually do seal and aren't letting out cold air. The more cold air that escapes the harder the fridge has to work to make cold air and the more energy your fridge will use. The same applies to your freezer.
- Think about your heating and cooling. Everyone can reduce their energy consumption by changing how heaters and cooling units are used in the home. Make sure your home is draught free and put on a jumper and slippers BEFORE you put on a heater. Likewise, take some clothes off BEFORE you put the air conditioner on.
- Many electrical products now come with an energy rating. Check any product you are about to buy and get as close to a five-star rating as possible.
- Thinking about how we get around and the transport we use is also important to our energy use as many of the fuels we use come from nonrenewable sources:
 - Try walking or riding the bike around your neighbourhood whenever you can.
 - Take public transport for longer trips.
 - If using the car, try to share your trip with other people (for example, giving your friends a lift on the way to or from school).

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WATER

Fresh water is the most precious resource on Earth. It is the essential ingredient for life on Earth. We use it in almost everything we do. We depend on it for drinking, eating, energy and transport. Although water covers three quarters of our Earth's surface, the freshwater that so much of life depends upon only makes up 1% of this water – just a tiny sliver scattered on this earth to support us all. And that's why we need to look after our water.



What can you do?

- Use water tanks to catch rainfall. Currently most of rain gets washed down the drain.
- Make sure you've got a full load of laundry before you hit the 'start' button on the washing machine. Likewise, make sure the dishwasher is full before turning it on.
- Fix any dripping taps or leaky toilets. A leaking tap can waste as much as 20,000 litres of water a year.
- Encourage your friends and neighbours to be part of a water-conscious community. Promote water conservation in community newsletters, on bulletin boards and by example. Encourage your friends, neighbours and coworkers to "do their part."
- Whether you use the simple 'bucket' method to collect grey water, or have a complete grey water system installed, reusing this valuable resource can greatly reduce your water use.
- Buy efficient appliances. New appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers have water ratings labels on them that tell you how much water they use.
- While we're being short but sweet, take shorter showers. And turn off the tap while your brushing your teeth.
- Insulate hot water pipes. This avoids wasting water while waiting for hot water to flow through and saves energy.
- Older style toilets use around 18 litres of water per flush! The latest ultra-low-flush toilets can use as little as 4.5 litres for a full flush and 3 litres for a half flush.
- Keep a container of water in the fridge so that you won't need to run the water down the sink until it's cool enough to drink.
- Washing fruit and veggies in a half-filled sink instead of under running water is a great way to cut back on water wastage.
- Try to use phosphate-free, eco-friendly detergents and cleaning products - there's a great range to choose from these days and they're much better for our environment.

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WASTE AND MATERIALS

We send more and more rubbish 'away' to landfill every year. But there is no away; everything ends up somewhere and we are all responsible. Throwing stuff away is not just a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'. Most of the stuff that we throw away takes quite a while to decompose. In fact, some of the stuff that we throw away will be around for much longer than any of us.

What can you do?



Paper and wood

- Reuse sheets of paper that have been used on one side for: drawing paper for young children; rough drafts of stories, letters, etc; student study; shopping lists; telephone messages; games. Recycle all paper that can't be reused.
- Put up a NO JUNK MAIL notice on your mailbox.
- Print and photocopy on both sides of the paper. Recycle all paper that can't be reused.
- Buy and use recycled office paper, preferably the unbleached variety.
- Proof read all your work on the computer before printing to reduce wastage of paper.
- Use e-mail whenever possible.
- Reuse envelopes by sticking a label over the old address. This will save money as well as reduce the amount of envelopes that would be thrown away.
- Take your own mug to places where tea/coffee is served in disposable paper cups (cafes, school functions, theatre nights, conferences, work etc.).
- Buy FSC wood products such as timber, hardboard, charcoal and paper. The Forest Stewardship Council logo (FSC) ensures that the forest recovers after timber extraction.

Metals

- Recycle empty aluminium and steel cans.
- If you are on an outing or a holiday where there is no recycling bin, take your bottles and cans home for recycling.
- If you are renovating, ask your trades person to resell or reuse items.

Glass

- Recycle glass bottles and jars.
- If you are on an outing or a holiday where there is no recycling bin, take your bottles and cans home for recycling.
- If you are renovating, ask your trades person to resell or reuse items.

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Plastic

- Stop buying plastic water bottles. Take your own refillable plastic bottle and go back to the tap.
- Don't bring anymore plastic #3, vinyl or PVC into to your life. PVC, or polyvinyl chloride, creates dioxins during manufacturing, use and disposal. Dioxins are known carcinogens that can also disrupt hormonal systems and may cause reproductive and immune system damage.
- Refuse plastic bags. Each plastic bag can take hundreds of years to break down, and they usually end up in landfill or our oceans, contributing to the deaths of marine creatures. If you leave a calico bag in your car or backpack, the next time you have to pick up bread and milk you won't need a plastic bag.
- Recycle plastic bottles and tubs.
- Reuse small plastic bags for small purchases.
- Keep a few used plastic shopping bags or cardboard boxes in the car for shopping on the way home from work or an outing. Keep a spare plastic shopping bag (rolled up and secured with a rubber band) in your bag.
- If you are on an outing or a holiday where there is no recycling bin, take your bottles and cans home for recycling.
- If you are renovating, ask your trades person to resell or reuse items.
- Use a ballpoint pen that takes refills, or a fountain pen with a refillable cartridge.



OTHER

- Avoid waste as much as possible, starting by using everything you own until it is completely unusable, finished or broken. Then when going to replace it, ask yourself; "do I really need it?" If yes, is there an environmentally friendly alternative? Or can you buy it second-hand or can you borrow it from someone who already has one? The best solution to waste is to avoid it in the first place.
- Buy vintage everything. From electronics to furniture to fashion, vintage is the most eco-friendly choice you can make.
- Repair clothing, appliances and toys, rather than buy new ones.
- Give old clothes, toys, furniture and appliances to charity.
- Recycle your mobile phones, batteries and printer cartridges. Find out where to recycle your mobile phones with Mobile Muster (<https://www.mobilemuster.com.au/>) and your printer cartridges and batteries with Planet Art (<https://planetark.org/>).
- Computers and printers: There are numerous companies and charities that resell or recycle computers.
- Have a garage sale instead of dumping items at the tip.
- Use your green waste. On average 50% of rubbish sent to landfill is food and garden waste. Invest in a worm farm or a compost bin and turn your food and green waste into something glorious.