

REDUCE

You can find ways to reduce the resources you use every day at home. It might be as simple as becoming a “water monitor” to watch the amount of water your parents and siblings use. Or, you can help your parents make wise decisions at the store.

Check packaging. Try to buy items that use the least amount of extra packaging or at least use packaging that can be recycled. Although extra wrapping might look fancy, it’s actually bad for the environment. These materials often end up in landfills, where they take a long time to break down. Some items, like Styrofoam, can lead to starvation in animals. When animals eat it, it can block their digestive tract.

Skip the plastic bag. When your parents go to the grocery store, bring along an extra backpack or canvas bag to tote the groceries. That way, you can cut down on harmful plastic bags which can harm animals and clog landfills. See if your store allows you to recycle your own bags.

Think compost. Start a backyard compost pile to transform household trash into rich soil for gardening. It’s a great way to reduce the amount of trash you put on the curb while helping plants grow.

REUSE

It’s always a good idea to think twice before tossing something in the garbage. Are you throwing something away that you or someone else could reuse? You can find a second home for almost anything in your house!

Reuse a cell phone Your old cell phone may not be much use to you anymore but someone else could use it. Manufacturers frequently refurbish phones and deliver them to low-income families or battered women for emergencies. You can bring your old phone to Noah’s Landing and help the nature center raise money for new habitats.

Donate your clothes. Kids toys and clothes don’t have to end up in the bin. Lots of charities, such as the Salvation Army, will take gently used clothes for resale. You can also sign up for programs like “Freecycle” that promote reuse.

Make a craft Turn your household items into crafts and gifts for your parents. You can find lots of ideas online at: <http://www.makingfriends.com/recycle.htm>. But you can also let your imagination run wild. A plastic coke bottle can become a bird feeder by cutting out a door and adding a “perch” with a dowel. Detergent bottles make great watering cans!

RECYCLE

You might be surprised to learn just how many items around your house can be recycled. Many Americans believe that only plastic, glass, and paper can be tossed in the recycling bin. But with a little research, you can recycle almost anything!

Here are some great sites to get you started:

- Batteries
www.batteryrecycling.com
- Clothes
www.dressforsuccess.org
- Flourescent Bulbs
www.ikea.com
- Ink Cartridges
www.recycleplace.com
- Oil
www.recycleoil.com
- Tennis Shoes
www.nikereuseashoe.com
- Toothbrushes and razor
www.recyline.com

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