

A-Z Blocks

Helping the Planet

Check out each letter of the alphabet and learn something new about the environment.

Avoid bagging clippings from lawn mowing



Clippings won't damage the lawn. In fact, mulching the grass clippings are good for lawns. And avoiding those bags of grass clippings will reduce the amount of trash that gets dumped in landfills.

Buy products made from recycled materials



Did you know that you can buy toilet paper, paper towels and stationery made from recycled paper, tile from crushed light bulbs, garden hoses from used tires and yard furniture from recycled plastic bottles? Look for the recycle symbol and buy smart.

Create a compost pile in your yard



Pick a corner that's out of the way and start your own "garbage garden." Put fresh soil over grass clippings and food scraps (egg shells, apple cores, coffee grounds, etc.). Then, once or twice a week, turn the whole pile over with a shovel. This lets air into the soil to grow rich and healthy composting material for gardens and lawns.

Discard plastic beverage rings ONLY AFTER cutting open all of the loops



These six-pack plastic rings are harmful to birds and other creatures that often get caught in the plastic loops. If you have a choice, buy soda six-packs made from biodegradable plastic.

Encourage adults to drive at posted speed limits



Driving at posted speed limits is not only safer, it saves gas. Using less gas helps reduce air pollution, called carbon dioxide emissions. Try to drive at a constant speed; pumping the accelerator pumps more fuel into the engine.

Fix leaky pipes and faucets



One tiny leak can waste up to 50 gallons of water a day! Save water by taking short showers and washing only full loads of laundry.

Grocery shop wisely



When your family shops, avoid buying things with layers of packaging. Buy the largest sizes possible. You won't have to shop as often, and you won't have as much to throw away.

Hang clothes out to dry



By hanging your clothes outside, instead of using gas or electric dryers, your clothes will last longer and you'll save energy that is costly and difficult to produce.

Invite a bird to lunch



Bring nature's beauty to your yard and get rid of insects by caring for the birds. Make birdfeeders from recycled milk cartons and plastic food containers. Once you start feeding them, feed the birds all winter long because they'll come to rely on you.

Join an environmental club or group



You can learn more, work toward helping the planet and sometimes make new friends in an environmental club. Look in the library for a list of groups.

Keep the refrigerator door shut



Only open it to take food in and out. Close the door while you're filling ice cube trays and while you're unpacking all your groceries.

Lower the heat



By turning the heat down just a few degrees, Americans could save more than 500,000 barrels of oil a day. If you're chilly, put on a sweater instead of turning up the heat!

Make every day Earth Day



Hang this A-to-Z checklist in your home to remind you of what you can do to help save the planet. There are way more than 26 ways to get involved, but this list is a great start.

Never throw toxic materials into the trash



Things like paint, household cleaners, and motor oil need special disposal. Call 1-800-CLEANUP or visit [Earth 911](http://Earth911.com) to learn where special disposal sites are located.

Organize a neighborhood clean-up



Suggest that your classroom, scout troop, Sunday school class, or neighborhood friends host a neighborhood clean-up day to pick up litter. It's a great opportunity to promote recycling in your community.

Properly inflate your car tires



Remind the drivers in your house to “check the air” each time they fill up with gas. Driving on under-inflated tires wastes gas and wears out tires.

Quit throwing away batteries



Used batteries from toys, tools and appliances leak dangerous chemicals into our water supply. Buy a battery recharger and rechargeable batteries and feel like a hero.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle



Remember the three R's and you'll have all the information you need to help the environment. Reduce your use of things like water and energy, reuse products before you throw them away and make sure you're recycling as much as you can.

Save energy in the bathroom



Turn off the water when you aren't using it! Take short showers instead of baths (showers use less H₂O), brush your teeth with the water off, and buy a "flush saver" for your toilet (or put a brick in the tank).

Turn the air-conditioning thermostat up or off



Save valuable energy by keeping AC above 75 degrees in your house. Turning off the AC in your car will increase gas mileage and save valuable energy.

Use and re-use cloth bags at the grocery store



Instead of carrying groceries in paper or plastic bags that get thrown away, take your own cloth bags to the store. Even paper or plastic bags can be used several times, and some stores offer a discount for re-using their grocery bags.

Visit the library or surf the Internet



The library has many books that are full of valuable information on the environment. Or check the World Wide Web. Once you've read about the environment, spread the word!

Wrap presents with imagination and recycled materials



Use the Sunday comics, samples from old wallpaper books, fabric remnants or recycled wrapping paper so you'll get more than one use out of this paper.

eXercise your rights



The first amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees all Americans the "freedom of speech." If you see something that is harming our planet, speak out. It is not only your right, it's your duty. Make phone calls and write letters.

You make a difference!



Anything you do can help. You can help prevent air and water pollution by recycling your soda pop cans. It takes less energy to recycle a product than to create one from scratch.

Zoom to the zoo



See who else lives on the planet! Animals have needs and rights too, so learn more about them and then spread the word about endangered species, the rain forests, and the importance of our friends in the animal kingdom.