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DIY Library Program

HOW TO HELP PLANET EARTH

MAKE YOUR OWN REUSABLE BAG

Recommended for All Ages

Earth Day comes around once a year, but its effect lasts year-round. One of those effects is the importance of recycling, reusing, and repurposing materials. In this program, you will learn to identify items that can be recycled, and you will learn how to reuse materials by turning an old t-shirt into a reusable bag.

The very first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970. Wisconsin Senator Nelson and activist John McConnell asked Americans to come together to create awareness about the environmental impact humanity has on the earth. On that date, 20 million concerned activists marched to protest climate change and demand protection for the planet. Earth Day led to many remarkable laws in the United States, including the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. Many countries also implemented similar laws, and in 2016 the United Nations chose Earth Day as the day to sign the Paris Climate Agreement.

Some of the ideas emphasized on Earth Day are the need to recycle, reduce, and reuse waste. While recycling is still crucial to helping the environment, reusing materials has become just as vital. Both recycling and reusing help reduce the amount of waste we generate each year. Reusing materials is particularly helpful in keeping trash from polluting land, rivers, and oceans.

Here are some other reasons why reusing and repurposing material is important:

- **It's less expensive.** New items cost companies, and people, money. By reusing and repurposing items, everyone saves money. Also, the items repurposed could be sold!
- **It uses less energy.** Manufacturing things like glass bottles, plastic bags, cardboard boxes, uses a lot of energy. Even recycling can use up a lot of power, water, etc. Reusing items uses less energy.
- **It causes less (or no) pollution.**
- **It's environmentally responsible.** Reusing and repurposing items helps us become more conscious of what we buy and what we throw away.
- **It's a lot of fun!**

Can you think of other reasons why reusing materials is important?

Questions for discussion:

- Why do you think it is important to celebrate Earth Day?
- What can you do to help the environment?

Activity #1 Recyclable, Reusable, or Not?

Think about all these typical household products. Can they be recycled? Yes or No?

1. Glass Bottle____
2. Cardboard Boxes ____
3. Plastic Juice Bottle ____
4. Soda Can ____
5. Styrofoam Container ____
6. Plastic Wrap ____
7. Leftover Spaghetti ____
8. Plastic Supermarket Bags ____
9. Old Jeans ____

Can any of these items be reused? Yes or No?

1. Glass Bottle____
2. Cardboard Boxes ____
3. Plastic Juice Bottle ____
4. Soda Can ____
5. Styrofoam Container ____
6. Plastic Wrap ____
7. Leftover Spaghetti ____
8. Plastic Supermarket Bags ____
9. Old Jeans ____

Here are some helpful recycling tips:

- Always check for the recycling symbol on an item to verify if it is recyclable.
- Rinse items that had food or liquids in it before putting it in a recycle bin.
- When in doubt, check with your local waste company for more information: https://www.wm.com/us/en/inside-wm/recycle-right/recycling-101

Answer Key A: 1) Yes 2) Yes 3) Yes 4) Yes 5) No 6) No 7) No 8) No 9) No

Answer Key B: 1) Yes 2) Yes 3) Yes 4) Yes 5) Yes 6) No 7) No 8) Yes 9) Yes

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Activity #2: No-Sew Reusable Bag
Learn to make a reusable bag out of an old t-shirt.

Materials:

- Scissors
- T-shirt
- Ruler
- Pen/Pencil

I. Lay your t-shirt flat on your work surface.
Turn the t-shirt inside out, so the design is on the inside. If you are able to, wash and iron it first to make sure the material is clean and unwrinkled.

I. Cut off the arms, neckline and bottom of t-shirt
Cut along the seam line, so you don't cut too much off.

II. Measure and cut out a fringe on the bottom
Using a ruler, measure out 1-inch wide and 2-inch tall fringes. Cut them into strips. You should have two rows of fringes; one on top and one on the bottom.

III. Tie your knots
Take the top and bottom fringe and tie them into a knot. Do that to all the fringe strips. Your t-shirt material will begin to gather and round at the bottom.

IV. Flip the bag
Flip your bag inside out so the t-shirt seams and the fringe are on the inside. You are all done!

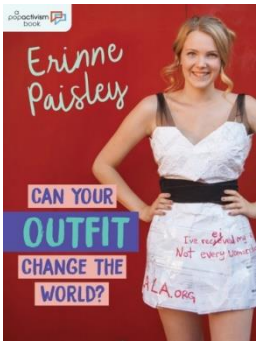
3 things to remember about protecting the environment:

1. Anyone and everyone can help protect the environment.
2. Reusing and repurposing items can have a big impact on helping the environment.
3. Earth Day is every April 22nd, but you can make a difference all yearlong!

DIGITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH LA COUNTY LIBRARY

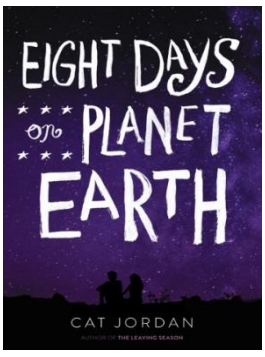
eBooks & Audiobooks

LA County Library offers numerous resources that can help you learn more about recycling, reusing, crafting, and sewing. Here are just a few, all of which are available as eBooks on OverDrive and Libby:



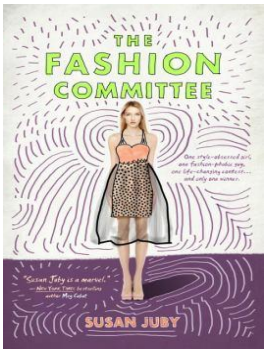
Can Your Outfit Change the World? **by Erinne Paisley**
Discover how and where clothes are made, how the people who make the clothes are treated, and how the companies who sell the clothes affect the health of our planet. Armed with information, you can follow the book's guide to spending your fashion dollars in a responsible and eco-friendly way.

Chaotic Good **by Whitney Gardner**
Seventeen-year-old Cameron loves two things: cosplay and her dream school, CalArts. When trolls go after her cosplay blog she decides to get even by dressing as a guy and pretending to be her brother whenever she goes into the local comic shop. After infiltrating the male-centered shop she plans to eventually reveal her true self, but when she unexpectedly falls for one of the guys in the local dungeons and dragons crew, she forgets all about her revenge and about her application to

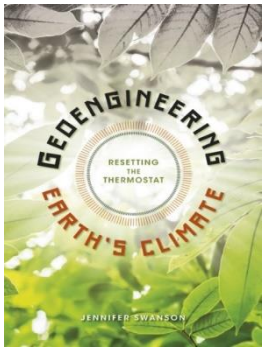


Eight Days on Planet Earth **by Cat Jordan**
How long does it take to travel twenty light-years to Earth? How long does it take to fall in love? To the universe, eight days is a mere blip, but to Matty Jones, it may be just enough time to change his life.

Eyes Wide Open **by Paul Fleischman**
Take a critical look at our world and how it has changed in the last 250 years from to historical events, to industrialization, global politics, and more. Fleischman encourages readers to think critically about all facets of the environmental issues facing the world today and to become part of the solution instead of the problem.



The Fashion Committee **by Susan Juby**
Charlie Dean is a style-obsessed girl who eats, sleeps, and breathes fashion. John Thomas-Smith is a boy who forges metal sculptures in his garage and couldn't care less about clothes. The two go head-to-head competing for a spot at an exclusive arts school where all their artistic dreams could come true.



Geoengineering Earth's Climate **by Jennifer Swanson**
Most scientists agree that Earth is warming rapidly. Glaciers are melting and rising seawaters are submerging islands and coastal cities. In the coming decades, millions will likely have to escape extreme weather caused by climate change. Is there a way for science to slow global warming? Learn about geoengineering and the intense debate surrounding its use in today's world.

Databases & Online Learning

- Learn more about the first Earth Day by checking out Salem Press. Click on the Digital Library tab, then under the History tab, click the Great Events from History: The 20th Century 1941-1970 link.

- Find some great documentaries to stream on Kanopy, including the PBS documentary *Earth Days* (part of the American Experience series).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- More information on why reusing and repurposing items is important:
    - **One Green Planet:** https://www.onegreenplanet.org/lifestyle/why-reusing-and-repurposing-is-better-than-recycling/

- More information about the history of Earth Day and ways to celebrate:
    - **Earth Day 2020**: https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/
    - **The Old Farmers' Almanac:** https://www.almanac.com/content/earth-day-date-activities-history

- Another way to make a repurposed bag via **YouTube**:
    - https://youtu.be/rYGaMcv7YAQ