



# You Can Help Protect the Environment in **10 Easy Steps**

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**Being Thrifty:** By purchasing pre-owned items like clothing, video games or books, you are conserving natural resources. When you outgrow your clothes, lose interest in a video game or get a new computer, consider donating them to a local charity or selling them to a thrift shop. Someone will then buy your used items, saving natural resources. By being thrifty and reusing things every day, you continuing to protect the environment. *Resource: <http://www.kidsecologycorps.org/how-you-can-help/environmental-action-checklist/population-development-and-consumption>*



**Educating Yourself & Spreading the Word:** When you understand how small changes like turning your lights off or taking short showers impact the environment, tell your teachers about it so they can teach this to others. Spread the word to your family and friends about how small changes can have a big impact in protecting the environment. Maybe you will consider studying sustainability or agriculture in college and continue to spread the word even more!  
*Resource: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/solutions/actions/more.html>*



**Conserving Water:** It is important not to waste water. There are millions of people in the world that don't have access to clean water every day. You can help conserve water by taking short showers and not letting the water run when you brush your teeth. By making sure that you wash only full loads of laundry and dishes, you can save gallons of water every day, which really adds up.  
*Resource: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/solutions/actions/water-use.html>*

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**Recycling:** It is very important to recycle in order to stop trash from going to the landfills which produce greenhouse gases that are very bad for the environment. Recycling help stop the use of natural resources that are used to make new products. Plastic, glass, aluminum and paper can be easily recycled. Just remember to find out what can be recycled and what cannot. Clothing, computers and even school supplies like paper, pencils, book bags and paper clips are now made of recycled materials.

*Resource: <http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/green-school-supplies-2010>*

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**Transportation:** A new government program that makes roads safer for kids to walk or ride their bikes to school instead of getting a ride, makes you healthier and helps protect the Earth from emissions generated by cars. When you do need to use a car, try to carpool. Talk to your parents about buying a fuel-efficient, electric or hybrid car that is better for the environment. If you're near public transportation, like buses or trains, use them as much as you can. *Resource: <http://ddot.dc.gov/DC/DDOT/On+Your+Street/Bicycles+and+Pedestrians/Pedestrians/Safe+Routes+to+School>*

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**Re-use:** It is important to use re-useable bags and water bottles. Plastic bags and bottles clog our sewers and end up in the ocean which can be deadly for fish and harmful to the environment. Even paper bags can be reused as book covers. When you buy products made from recycled materials, you continue to protect precious resources.

*Resource: <http://www.kidsecologycorps.org/our-environment/natural-cycles/water-pollution>*

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**Conserving Energy :** Turning off lights every time you leave a room will save a lot of energy. Energy is expensive, so by saving energy, you save money and protect natural resources. Unplug appliances and chargers from outlets when they're not being used. Also, turn off televisions and video games when you're done and set your computer to "sleep mode" that will shut it off after a period of time. *Resource: [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=kids.kids\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=kids.kids_index)*

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**Not Littering:** Trash is very dangerous to the environment if not properly disposed. By littering, you can clog storm drains which can force sewage into our clean water supply during heavy rain. And, like plastic bags and bottles, trash that ends up in ocean can kill fish and harm the environment. By not littering, you help keep Earth beautiful and clean. And remember, if your trash is recyclable, make sure you recycle it!

*Resource: <http://www.kidsecologycorps.org/our-environment/natural-cycles/waste-disposal>*

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**Food:** It is important to eat locally-sourced foods that are in season and grown or raised close to home. Not only is this food healthier, it helps to keep local farmers in business. When you buy local foods, you reduce damage to the environment caused by gas emissions when food is shipped from far away. Local food usually tastes better too! Why not try to grow some of your own food in a small garden at home, and when you are at school, choose a nutritious piece of fruit instead of candy?

*Resource: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/activities/moreactivities/garden/>*

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**Participating in Environmental Activities:** When you participate in environmental activities such as Teens for Planet Earth, Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, you learn about nature and why it is important to protect our environment. Why not consider volunteering some time to a stream clean-up event or helping at an Earth Day booth? By being involved in nature and in your community, you will continue to learn and inspire those around you to do the same. *Resource: <http://www.teens4planetearth.com/>*

## Resources:

*US Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/students/index.html>*

*National Geographic Kids: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/stories/spacescience/green-tips>*

*Living Simply: <http://www.livingsimply.org/sustainability-for-kids/>*

*OEQ's Kid's Corner: <http://alexandriava.gov/tes/oeq/info/default.aspx?id=3700#KidsCorner>*

*Eco-City Alexandria: <http://alexandriava.gov/Eco-City>*



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