

Reduce, reuse, recycle

What are the 3 R's?

Reducing creates less waste by cutting back on the amount of rubbish we make. For example, you could buy unwrapped fruit and vegetables rather than those wrapped in plastic. It's the best way to help our planet because, if we make less waste in the first place, there's less to clean up. Reducing also helps the planet because making things uses energy so if we make less, we use less energy.

Reusing is finding a new use for items that could be rubbish so that we don't have to throw them away. For example, you could use old packaging to make fun crafts such as using old deodorant rollers for painting. Reusing helps when it isn't possible to reduce. Remember, just because something is no good to you any more, it doesn't mean that it's rubbish. Somebody else could find a very good use for that item so even if you aren't going to reuse it yourself make sure you give your old things to charity rather than throwing them away.

Recycling uses rubbish to make new things that can be sold again. For example, an aluminium can may be made into a new can or even a bicycle. When you are shopping make sure to check if the packaging of your items can be recycled.

Your task

What would you do with the following items? Remember it is usually best to reduce but this isn't always possible.



Paper towel



Tin can



Aluminium can



Plastic bag



Plastic bottle



Newspaper



Glass bottle



Cardboard box



Cotton t-shirt

Now write down the top 3 things you can do to reduce waste

1.

2.

3.

Answers

Paper towel – Reduce – Use a washable cloth instead. A cloth can be used many times without creating any waste. Although paper does biodegrade quickly, creating it costs a lot of energy which also has a negative impact on the planet.

Tin can – Recycle – While it is possible to reduce the amount of tin cans you buy you will always need some. Make sure that those you do buy are properly recycled so that the material can be used to make something new.

Aluminium can – Reduce – Reducing the amount of fizzy drinks not only improves the planet's health but yours as well! If you do buy an aluminium can, make sure that you recycle it as rainforest is often destroyed when mining more aluminium, destroying the animal's habitat and pushing them closer to extinction.

Plastic bag – Reduce – Plastic bags are responsible for the deaths of turtles who mistake them for jellyfish and try to eat them. You should use a reusable 'bag for life' instead.

Plastic bottle – Reduce – Using a water bottle that can be refilled over and over creates a lot less waste than buying single-use plastic bottles.

Newspaper – Reduce – You can use the internet to get all your news without creating any waste. If you do buy newspapers or magazines use them as wrapping paper rather than throwing them away.

Glass bottle – Reuse – Glass never biodegrades so try to find another use for glass jars, such as storing things in them. If you can't find a way to reuse them then make sure they get recycled.

Cardboard box – Reuse – You can have hours of fun with a cardboard box! Find a way to reuse them either for storage or crafts.

Cotton T-shirt – Reuse – Instead of throwing clothes away when you outgrow them, give them to a younger family member or donate them to charity. If they get damaged don't throw them away either, repair them or use them as cleaning rags.

