

Really Recycled



Objectives

Students will be able to recycle newspaper into their own conservation message.

Materials

per student group:

- newspaper
- blender
- 3" deep square pan
- pieces of window screen to fit pan
- measuring cup
- wood or cardboard the same size as the newspaper's front page
- small craft magnets (one per student)
- scissors
- pens
- water
- glue

Background

Everything we use is made from materials that come from the earth, so materials are still valuable, even when we don't need them anymore. One example is how we use paper. Americans use 85 million tons of paper every year—that's about 308 kg (680 lb.) for each person. To make all that paper, we use more than one billion trees. It takes many years for a tree to grow large enough to be harvested for use in making paper, and it takes a lot of forests to make all the paper we use and throw away each year. When areas are deforested, many species lose their homes. But if everyone in the United States recycled their newspapers, we'd save 500,000 trees every week.

Action

1. Discuss as a class our use of paper. How many different ways do students use paper everyday? Discuss how important it is to use the earth's resources wisely.
2. Tell students they will have a chance to practice recycling paper. Divide the class into student groups and distribute blenders, measuring cups, screens, pans, and newspapers.
3. Have students tear two single sheets of newspaper into tiny pieces. Direct them to drop the pieces in the blender, add five cups of water, put the lid on, and blend until the paper has turned to pulp.
4. Ask students to put about 2.5 cm (1 in.) of water and the screen in the pan. Pour about one cup of pulp over the screen.

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5. Have all group members use their fingers to spread the pulp evenly. One student should carefully lift the screen and let the water drain.
6. Direct each group to open a fresh section of newspaper to the middle. Demonstrate how to lift the screen with the pulp on it and place it on one side of the newspaper section, then fold the other side over it.
7. **IMPORTANT:** now help students carefully flip over the folded newspaper section so the screen is on top of the pulp.
8. Distribute the wood or cardboard piece. Place the wood or cardboard piece on top of the newspaper section and press to squeeze out the excess water. Open the newspaper and take out the screen.
9. Leave the newspaper section open and let the pulp dry for at least 24 hours. After it's dry, carefully peel it off the newspaper.
10. Have students use scissors to cut their paper so each group member has a piece.
11. Ask students to think of one thing they can do to help save endangered habitats and wildlife, and have them write it neatly on the piece of recycled paper.
12. Give each student a craft magnet to glue to the back of their piece of paper. Now they can post their craft on their family's refrigerator and everyone in the family can work toward fulfilling this environmental pledge.

Deeper Depths

As teams, have students go to other classrooms and demonstrate paper recycling.