

# WAYS TO GET TO KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT

**When it comes to living green, the 4 R's to follow are reduce, reuse, recycle, and reread.**

FALSE. The best ways to conserve the Earth's resources are to reduce, reuse, recycle, and REJECT.

**People in the United States use at least 100 billion plastic bags a year.**

TRUE. It takes about 12 million barrels of oil to make those bags.

**Most paper can't break down in modern landfills.**

TRUE. Paper can break down and be absorbed by the environment. But it needs water, oxygen, and light to do so. Most paper in landfills is buried under layers of soil where air and sunlight (and often water) can't reach it.

**It hurts the environment to toss fruit and vegetable scraps into a compost pile.**

FALSE. Composted fruit and vegetable scraps can be used to enrich the soil.

**A few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank can show you how to save water.**

TRUE. If the food coloring seeps into the toilet bowl, you know you have a leak. Fix the leak, and you might save more than 600 gallons of water a month.

**It's OK to keep a cell-phone charger plugged in all the time.**

FALSE. If you leave any charger or electronic appliance in an outlet, it continues to use power--even if you turn off the appliance.

**Frogs can give scientists an idea about how "green" things are.**

TRUE. Frogs react quickly to changes in their environments. That's why they may be called "indicator species"--they "indicate" the health of the surrounding environment.

**On a hot day on the highway, it's better to drive with the car windows open than with the air conditioner on.**

FALSE. When you're going fast and the windows are up, your car is more streamlined, which makes it easier on the engine and saves fuel.

**Burning coal and oil as fuel produces CO<sub>2</sub>, which is always good, because plants need CO<sub>2</sub> to live.**

FALSE. Plants do use CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide), and we can't avoid burning some fuels that produce CO<sub>2</sub>. But we are releasing too much of it into the air. This is causing global warming, which is harming wildlife and people. Besides, there are better ways for plants to get CO<sub>2</sub>.

## ★ FUN FACTS ★

- **Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours -- or the equivalent of a half a gallon of gasoline.**
- **During the time it takes you to read this sentence, 50,000 12-ounce aluminum cans are made.**
- **The amount of wood and paper we throw away each year is enough to heat 50,000,000 homes for 20 years.**
- **More than 20,000,000 Hershey's Kisses are wrapped each day, using 133 square miles of tinfoil. All that foil is recyclable, but not many people realize it.**
- **A single quart of motor oil, if disposed of improperly, can contaminate up to 2,000,000 gallons of fresh water.**