

Recycling 101



Participant Objectives:

1. Consider the amount and types of waste often produced in the US.
2. Cultivate motivation to recycle.
3. Describe what can and cannot be placed in your recycling bin.
4. Gain deeper understanding of how recyclables are processed and made into new products.

Materials:

- scratch paper for each participant
- writing utensil for each participant
- PowerPoint display capability and downloaded PowerPoint presentation (slide numbers corresponding to the content of this plan are noted throughout)
- recycling bin
- trash can
- example recycling/trash items

Introduction Activity: A Day in the Life

The goal of this activity is to give participants an idea of the amount and types of waste an individual might produce in a day. Give each participant a piece of paper and a pencil or pen.

I am going to read a short story aloud to you. As you listen, your job is to consider the trash that would be created over the course of this story. You'll need to think more deeply than just listening for times the

character throws something away. Each time you think of something, write it down on the paper I've just given you. At the end, we'll go back through the story together and see how many of the items you recorded.

Select the story most appropriate to your audience--Adult or Student. Both are included in the materials at the end of this document. Read the selected story slowly--pausing from time to time to ensure participants have time to record their thoughts.

Take a moment to compare the list that you made with the list of someone sitting near you. Did you record the same items or are there some ideas that you may have missed over the course of the story?

After giving the group a minute or two to look over their lists, read the story aloud once more, this time stopping at each of the bolded words to explain the waste that was created. If you are using the PowerPoint, you can display the pictures as you reread the story. **(Adult- slide 2, Student-slide 3)**. There may be some debate as to whether packaging needed to be recorded (the story doesn't say she opened a new toothbrush). Just explain that you want them to consider some of the waste we don't necessarily think about on a regular basis. In fact, the toothbrush itself could have been on the list as it will eventually need to be thrown out and replaced.

A Day in the Life- Adult

Joan's alarm goes off at 5:00. She rolls out of bed and heads to her closet to choose her outfit. Thumbing through her options, she finally lands on a pair of jeans and her favorite cashmere sweater (**dry-clean only**, of course). After getting dressed and making the bed, she heads into the bathroom to continue getting ready.

Joan quickly **brushes her teeth** and **washes her face**, preparing for the real work to begin. She curls her hair, applying a good coating of **hairspray** to ensure the style will hold. Hearing her stomach grumbling for breakfast, Joan applies her **makeup** and moves into the kitchen, ready to prepare her favorite breakfast--**oatmeal** with **milk**, **blueberries**, and **brown sugar**.

As she glances at the clock, she sees it is already 6—time to get the kids up and ready for the day. She starts with the baby—**diaper change**, outfit on, daycare bag packed, and happily playing. Next, it's the 6-year-old--bed made, school clothes on, face washed, teeth and hair brushed, and backpack packed. A feeling of true accomplishment washes over Joan as she slips the **field trip permission slip** into Jimmy's bag and empties out the handful of **worksheets** from the previous day. She sets out a bowl of **cereal** and a **banana** for Jimmy and opens a jar of **baby food** for Michelle's breakfast. Once the kids are fed, it's into the car and a smooth daycare drop off.

Feeling a little tired from the morning's activities, Joan decides to stop for **coffee** on her way to the office. Even so, she arrives at work 5 minutes early and heads to her desk. She spends the morning in meetings going over the latest **quarterly report**. She and a few colleagues grab **salads** to bring back to the office for lunch before she spends the remainder of her day responding to emails and checking off tasks on her to-do list.

After work, Joan swings by daycare to pick up the kids, helps Jimmy get started on his **math homework**, and prepares **spaghetti** and a **salad** for dinner. After numerous dinner time reminders for Jimmy to **wipe** the spaghetti sauce from his face and finish chewing before telling her the latest news from first grade, it's bedtime. The kids get a **bath**, are dressed in their PJs, listen to a few stories, and then lights out.

Joan throws in a load of **laundry**, picks up a few toys in the living room, and then settles down with a cup of **tea** as she reads a chapter or two of her novel. She brushes her teeth, washes her face, and changes into her pajamas before settling in to bed.

Additional Resources



[Green Chic](#)

by Christie Matheson

Christie's goal in this book is to share simple, straightforward choices that can help reduce your carbon footprint. Ideas such as washing clothes in cold water, shortening showers, and unplugging your chargers when not in use are listed along with a description of the impact each change can have on the environment.



[Garbology](#)

by Edward Humes

This text takes a look at the staggering amount of waste an individual produces over the course of a lifetime and investigates where all of it goes. The book moves from looking at the history of trash, to considering its path to its end location, to sharing stories of individuals, families, and organizations working to produce less trash.



[Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: An Easy Household Guide](#)

by Nicky Scott

This book is meant to be used as a quick reference tool to keep around your home. There are a few pages with general information regarding waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, but the bulk of the book is an A-Z index giving directions for ways to reduce, reuse, or recycle different products from your home.

Digital Resources

[The Recycling Partnership](#)

[Recycler Finder](#)

[Keep America Beautiful](#)

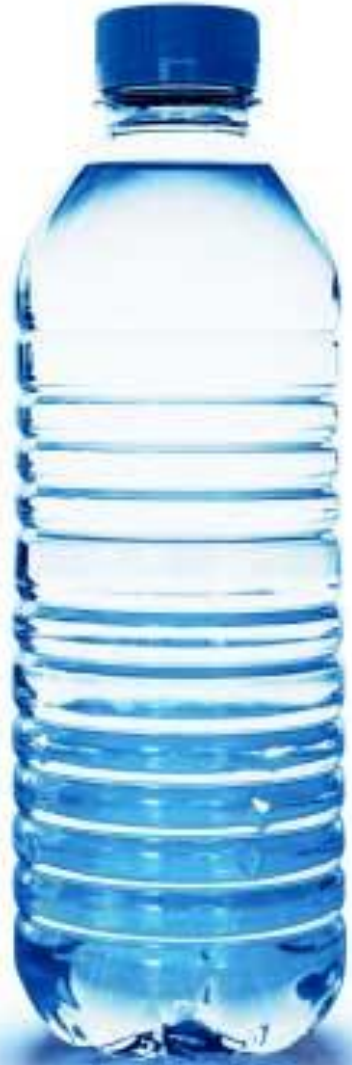
[Recycle More Minnesota](#)

[America Recycles Day](#)



A Day in the Life

Adult



Americans use 4 million plastic bottles every hour, but only half of these are recycled.

FALSE

Americans use 4 million plastic bottles every hour, but only 1 in 4 is recycled.

Twin Cities Metro

2015 Data

