



Recycle Your Holiday Tree!



Hot chocolate, yummy foods, holiday music, and family all around. At the center of it all is the tree. We all join in the excitement of placing our favorite ornaments, twinkling lights, and other special touches in just the right spots to make the tree unique and special. But as we ring in the New Year, it will be time to clear the tree away. Whatever type of tree your family enjoys, it can have new life after the season has ended.

If your family has a real, cut tree, recycle it. When the trees are recycled, they are turned into mulch and reused in gardens and landscapes. To recycle your tree, remove all ornaments, lights, and other decorations, as well as the tree stand. No matter where you live in Thurston County, you can recycle your tree for free! In some areas, trees will

be picked up at the curb. Trees being picked up must be cut into 3-foot sections.

Other residents will be able to drop off trees. Please visit ThurstonSolidWaste.org to find out where to recycle trees in your area. Tree limbs, boughs, or other greenery will be accepted ONLY at the Yard Debris Site at the Waste and Recovery Center at 2420 Hogum Bay NE in Lacey.

If you have a real tree attached to a ball of dirt and roots, replant it. Be sure to give your tree the best chance to thrive by digging a good-sized hole before the ground freezes.

If you have an artificial tree, carefully pack it up for next year. If you'll be replacing it next year, donate the old one to a charitable organization, like Goodwill. Or, keep the tree to make an extra room merry next year. You could decorate the extra tree in a fun theme or with special, hand-crafted ornaments made from reused items around the house.

Get the RRR Patch!

Thurston County Solid Waste's Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle Patch Program is designed to teach youth the meaning of "reduce, reuse, and recycle" by encouraging them to take better care of their environment and neighborhood. After completing activities and action projects, each individual or group fills out a patch requirement sheet. Thurston County Solid Waste will then send free patches to the group for practicing the 3Rs. For details, visit our website, ThurstonSolidWaste.org, or contact us at 360-867-2491 or SolidWasteYouth@co.thurston.wa.us.



Wrap Gifts Without Paper!

Think it can't be done? Think again! Make what you use for wrapping part of the gift. For instance, wrap your gift in a dishtowel, reusable bag, scarf, tablecloth, T-shirt, or pillowcase with reusable ribbon or yarn. You can also place gifts inside containers like cookie tins, flower pots, and baskets. Get really creative and wrap gifts in your own artwork or the Sunday Comics. Ribbons and bows can also be replaced with dried flowers or hand-cut snowflakes made from reused paper (of course!).



Every Litter Bit Hurts

Litter is stuff that ends up on the ground or blown into trees, lakes, rivers, or oceans that shouldn't be there. It could be juice boxes, plastic bags, food wrappers, cigarette butts, or other trash. Litter can cause people and animals to get sick, and it makes everything look ugly and messy. Sadly, littering has gotten a lot worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Single-use face masks, gloves, cleaning wipes, and takeout food containers now litter streets, beaches, parks, and store parking lots. Some people act like the "don't litter" rules don't need to be followed now. They are very wrong. To keep people, animals, and nature healthy, we need everyone to work together to place all trash and recyclables where they belong!

Unwanted, used, disposable face masks, gloves, and wipes belong in the trash can. If they are thrown on the ground or left in a shopping cart or parking lot, this trash is likely to stay there because people are concerned that it may contain COVID-19 germs. Disposable face masks and gloves are made of mostly plastic, with other materials mixed in, which is why they are not recyclable. Plastics break into smaller and smaller pieces in the environment and take hundreds of years or more to break down completely.

According to a study by Keep America Beautiful, an organization that has been working for 65 years to help reduce litter in our country, if an area already looks littered, people think it is okay to throw more trash there. So please do your part to put litter where it belongs, especially during these stressful times. If we all choose to stop littering, people and wildlife will be healthier and our roads, streams, and other areas will be more beautiful than ever before. Thank you for doing your part!



NEVER put masks, wipes, or latex gloves in the recycling bin.

Which Types of COVID Trash Are Recyclable?

The pandemic has changed a lot in our lives. Many students are attending some or all of their classes online, and some parents are working from home. We see people wearing face masks and gloves in stores, schools, and almost everywhere. Soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfecting wipes, and plastic bags are being used more than ever. Many families are choosing to have groceries delivered or to pick up takeout food instead of going to stores or dining inside restaurants. Boxes and shipping envelopes are piling up in homes due to increased online shopping. And, while we are keeping ourselves healthier by doing all of these things, we are also creating a lot of waste in the process. With all of this waste, it is important to know what to do with it.

Here are some tips to help you go green and keep people, animals, and our environment healthy:

- Don't litter.
- Choose *reusable* cloth face masks, gloves, and cleaning cloths when it is safe to do so.
- Refill soap and hand-sanitizer bottles instead of replacing them. This keeps more non-recyclable handpumps out of the landfills.
- Place all disposable gloves, face masks, and wipes into the trash, *not* the recycling.
- Flatten cardboard boxes before recycling them.
- Recycle all cardboard, paperboard boxes, paper and junk mail, clean paper bags, plastic bottles, metal cans, and glass bottles and jars. Remember to keep items clean, empty, and dry.
- Plastic disposable forks, spoons, knives, straws, cups, boxes, and lids are NOT recyclable. Throw them into the trash.
- Plastic bags do not belong in the recycling carts. Collect them and take them to the special bins for recycling in the front of many grocery and home improvement stores.
- When ordering takeout food to eat at home, tell the restaurant you don't need plastic forks, spoons, and straws. Just use what you have at home and create less waste!
- When possible, refuse plastic bags at the grocery store. Choose reusable bags, if permitted, or paper, which is more easily recycled.
- If someone in your home is sick, place all waste — including recyclables — into a plastic bag, tie it shut, and place it into the trash. This will keep the workers at our recycling sorting facilities safe and healthy.
- Not sure if something is recyclable? Visit our website at

ThurstonSolidWaste.org or call us at 360-867-2491. We are happy to answer all of your questions.



Say Goodbye to Plastic Bags in 2021

This year the state of Washington passed a law banning single-use plastic shopping bags starting on January 1, 2021. This means that once stores and restaurants run out of plastic bags, they won't be given to customers anymore. Paper bags will still be available, but the stores will charge 8 cents per bag. Using reusable bags is free!

Why did Washington State ban plastic bags? On the Washington Department of Ecology's website, they explain:

- Every year Washingtonians use 2 billion single-use plastic bags.
- Plastic bags are a big problem in the recycling system.
- Plastic bags contain toxic chemicals.
- Plastic bags cost retailers money.
- Plastic pollution poses both physical and chemical threats to the marine environment.
- Reusable bags or recyclable paper bags are a better alternative.

For more information, visit their website at: ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Plastic-bag-ban.



For information, reporting, and complete listing of law's requirements please visit: Ecology.wa.gov/Bag-Ban



- **REUSE** plastic shopping bags by taking them back to the store and refilling them with groceries where allowed. Make sure the bags are clean and dry.

- **REPURPOSE** bags around the house. Larger plastic bags can be used as trash liners for small waste baskets. Smaller bags, such as bread bags, can be used to store food or to pick up dog waste.

- **RECYCLE** empty, clean plastic bags and film, such as shopping bags, dry cleaning bags, shipping "pillows," bubble wrap, and plastic wrappers from cases of water bottles and other drinks when and where possible. Plastic bags are accepted for recycling in take-back bins in local retail stores, such as Fred Meyer, Albertsons, Walmart, and Kohl's. If you aren't comfortable walking into stores right now, save your plastic bags and wraps at home until events change. Plastic bags are super compressible and take up little space. NOTE: Never place plastic bags and wraps into your curbside collection cart or in the Recycling Center bins.

- **REPLACE** plastic bags with reusable shopping bags whenever possible. As always, reusable bags should be cleaned often and allowed to dry completely between uses. If your family doesn't have reusable bags, you can help. Search around the house for extra tote bags and store shopping bags. You can even make your own bags with old T-shirts; simply look for instructions to "make a T-shirt bag" online.



Still Got Plastic Bags?

Holiday shopping brings all sorts of delicious foods, special gifts, and excitement into the house. But it can also bring more plastic bags and product wraps into your home, too. Here are some great ideas to help make your holidays greener and our earth happier by reducing your family's plastic bag use.

- **REFUSE** a plastic bag if you don't need it. Carry one or two items in your hands. Or, when possible, choose paper bags, which are accepted in all curbside recycling carts.

How do I clean my reusable bags?

Keep your family healthy by washing your reusable bags regularly. Fabric bags can be placed into a washing machine or washed by hand with laundry detergent and then placed into the dryer or hung to dry. Reusable plastic bags can be wiped with a disinfecting wipe or spray or washed by hand with warm, soapy water. Air-dry indoors or outdoors in the sun.

For added safety, clean bags after each use and especially after bringing home meat or seafood.



Credit: mediaphotos | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Recycle Old Greeting Cards

St. Jude's Ranch for Children recycles used cards and creates new holiday and greeting cards for any occasion. The program is beneficial to everyone — old cards are recycled; customers receive fun, “green” cards that they can feel good sending; and the children at St. Jude's Ranch receive payment for their work and learn basic job skills. You can get more information on donating your used cards at: stjudesranch.org/contribute/recycled-card-program.

Meet Asvini, an environmental superstar

Do you think you are too young to help the environment? Think again! At the age of 11, Asvini Thivakaran has already received more environmental awards than most adults. Her work started when she was in second grade, after she received some battery-powered toys as a present. She wondered what sort of chemicals were inside the batteries in her toys and then wondered what happened with the batteries once they didn't work anymore.

Asvini was surprised to learn that even when batteries have lost their power, some still contain dangerous metals and chemicals that should not go into the landfill. Her parents urged Asvini to use rechargeable batteries when possible and to recycle all used batteries at the recycling center in her hometown of Round Rock, Texas. Asvini was concerned that many people in her town might not be able to take their batteries all the way to the recycling center, and she didn't want the chemicals from the used-up batteries to end up in the landfill. So, with her parents' and teachers' help, Asvini got permission to place special battery recycling bins in her school and at the local library. Asvini put up posters and urged people to recycle their batteries using her collection bins. In two years, she collected over 65,000 batteries for recycling!

Since then, Asvini has created lots of environmental videos and has given presentations at her school and around the United States. She has made videos about using less paper, cleaning up litter, recycling electronics, and more.

“I am very passionate about the environment,” she noted. “I really want to save all the living things on this planet earth.”

An example of this is Asvini's most recent project urging people to dispose of masks, wipes, and gloves properly. Her YouTube video, “COVID-19 Waste: Trash-Free Water,” is being promoted on the Keep America Beautiful website. You can watch her videos and learn more at the Asvini's Planet website at: asvinithivakaran.com.

“We all need to think about earth every day, not just on Earth Day only,” notes Asvini. “We kids are the future generation, and we all need to act now to save the planet. There is no other planet we have to live on. We don't need to wait for the adults to solve the problems or guide us.”

Asvini hopes her videos will inspire other kids to join her in doing small things to help care for the environment. What will YOU do?



COVID-19 Waste - Trash Free Water

COVID-19 has brought about a sudden change in our lives all around the globe. It has caused everyone to wear a mask and gloves and use hand sanitizer when we go out in public.



After using these items, please don't leave them behind. Dispose of them properly.

If you trash them improperly, they will end up in the water and eventually in the ocean.

Improper disposal will pollute the water. Animals will be harmed.

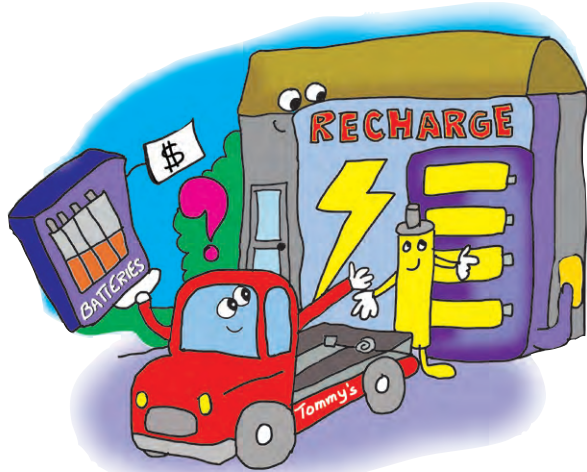


TRASH IN THE WATER IS HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT

THIS INCLUDES MASKS & GLOVES
Please don't leave them in a parking lot, or on a playground, in a park, on a beach or on the road.

Before COVID-19 waste such as masks, gloves or empty hand sanitizer bottles end up in the ocean, WE NEED TO THINK & ACT NOW.

Please dispose of COVID-19 waste properly.



Relax, Recharge, and Recycle

You finish your homework and pick up your game controller, but no matter how hard you press the buttons, it won't work. It's time for new batteries. When you find the new batteries you need, what should you do with the old ones? So much to do and think about when all you wanted was to sit down and play a video game! We count more and more on battery power to keep all of our favorite devices working. Here is what you need to know to make life with batteries easy and green.

Some batteries are single-use and some are rechargeable. Single-use batteries are "alkaline." These are like little pre-charged packages of energy. When you put an alkaline battery into a device, the metals inside the battery begin to create energy immediately. When the battery is out of energy, it can no longer be used, which is why we call them "dead batteries."

Rechargeable batteries are made so that when the energy is drained, they can be recharged in a special charging unit or be plugged in with a charging cable. They can be used again and again, and many can be charged up to 1,000 times before they need to be replaced.

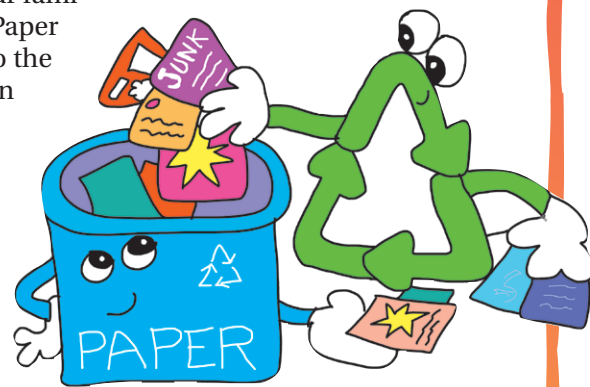
If you are using rechargeable batteries, it is best to recycle them when you are finished using them. Single-use alkaline batteries may be thrown into the trash. Rechargeable batteries, however, contain dangerous materials that shouldn't go into landfills. Be sure to recycle rechargeable and button batteries for free at the HazoHouse during normal business hours. Rechargeable batteries may also be recycled at Lowe's and Home Depot stores.

The next time you need new batteries for that game controller, remote, or other device, wouldn't it be nice to have exactly what you need all charged up and ready? With rechargeable batteries, you don't need to make as many trips to the store for new batteries. Keep two sets so you always have a set in use and another set charged and ready to go. You will feel great knowing that you are keeping our planet green by reducing waste and energy use.

Paper flood

Do you like to bring in the mail? It's fun and exciting to be the first one to see what is waiting in the mailbox. If you're lucky, maybe there will be something with your name on it! Some days, it can be disappointing when there is a flood of mail but none of it is anything you or your parents really want. This type of unwanted mail is known as "unsolicited" mail — or, as you probably call it, "junk mail."

Each day, the U.S. Postal Service processes and delivers 181.9 million pieces of mail. That's a lot of paper! You probably recycle almost all of the paper your family doesn't want or need. Help your parents remember to shred important bank account and similar documents to protect your family's privacy. (Paper shreds go into the trash.) You can also cut up magazines and catalogs and create a collage or use them for other art projects.



It would be even better to slow the flood of mail into our homes so that we have less junk mail in the first place. Your parents can ask to have their names removed from mailing lists by calling or emailing companies directly. They can also switch to email bills and notices instead of print mail. Your family can ask favorite charities to send fewer donation requests per year.

For more ideas and tips like this, visit <http://ecocycle.org/junkmail>.



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**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM
U!**



A SCRAMBLED MESS

Mia is trying to learn more about how electronics are made. But she needs your help because some of these words are scrambled. Unscramble the words in bold and use them to complete the sentences.

1. Cathode ray tubes (the picture tubes in older TVs and computer monitors) contain _____, so it is important to recycle them.

aeld

2. Metals like _____ and _____ are used to make circuit boards.

opcepr lodg

3. Cell phones and other electronics require several _____ elements.

earr raeht

4. In larger electronics, such as computers and televisions, _____ make up about one-fourth of these products by weight.

cistlaps

5. Newer _____ monitors and televisions weigh one-fifth less than older cathode ray tube monitors and TVs.

lfta esrcen



Turn Back Time

In 1987, the Mobro 4000 barge carried a load of garbage up and down the eastern seaboard of the United States in search of a landfill that would accept the waste. People across the country followed the barge's progress. How did the people know about the Mobro 4000? Circle the two items that don't belong. (**Hint:** Look at the date when this happened.)

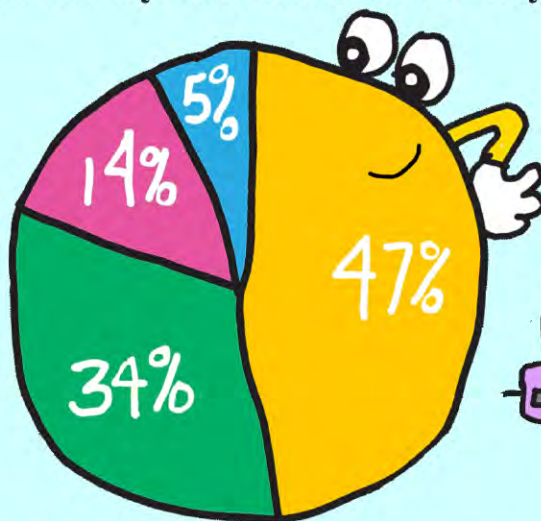
- A. National and local TV news stations covered the Mobro's progress.
- B. Video was uploaded each day to YouTube and shared on Facebook and Instagram.
- C. Newspapers reported on the ports where the Mobro tried to stop and unload garbage.
- D. People in each town where the Mobro stopped would tweet about it on Twitter.
- E. Time magazine published an article titled, "Don't Be a Litterbarge."

GRASPING GRAPHS

Graphs are an easy way to look at data (information). A pie graph (or pie chart) is a special graph that uses “pie slices” to compare amounts of things relative to each other.

Anytown, USA hosted an electronics recycling drive. Below is the pie graph representing the percentage of each type of item collected.

Items Collected at Anytown Electronics Recycling Drive



■ Televisions ■ Computers ■ Printers and Accessories ■ Other

Use the information from the pie graph to answer these questions:

1. What color is used to represent computers collected? _____
2. What items represented 47% of total collections? _____
3. Were more computers collected than televisions? _____
4. What percentage of total collections were printers and accessories? _____
What is this as a fraction? _____
5. What category of items is most likely to include smartphones? _____

Bonus: What other types of e-waste may have been collected and included in the “other” category? _____



Inspect to Detect

Homo means “same” and **Nym** means “name” (sound), so homonyms have the same sound.

Hetero means “different” and **Graph** means “writing” (spelling), so heterographs have different spellings.

Reading and writing can be a mystery. Some words are read out loud exactly the same but are spelled differently. Depending on the spelling, the words mean different things. You need to think like a detective looking for clues and read the entire sentence to figure out the correct way to use each word. The word sets in each sentence include special types of **homonyms**, called **heterographs**, which include words that are pronounced the same but have different meanings, depending on the spelling. Circle the correct heterograph for each sentence.

1. After the holidays, our family drops off our (**fur, fir**) tree to be chipped and turned into mulch.
2. Can I please have (**sum, some**) help repairing my backpack so I don't have to buy a new one?
3. The students picked up trash along the (**beach, beech**).
4. I think people buy (**to, too, two**) much bottled water because water from the tap costs less and tastes great.
5. Have you (**seen, scene**) my reusable shopping bags?
6. My parents dropped off the (**led, lead**) based paint at the Household Hazardous Waste collection.
7. Alexa made a gift (**four, fore, for**) her grandmother with recycled paper.
8. Mr. Chen (**tied, tide**) a knot in the trash bag before placing it into the bin.
9. Could you hand me a (**piece, peace**) of paper so I can write a poem about trees?

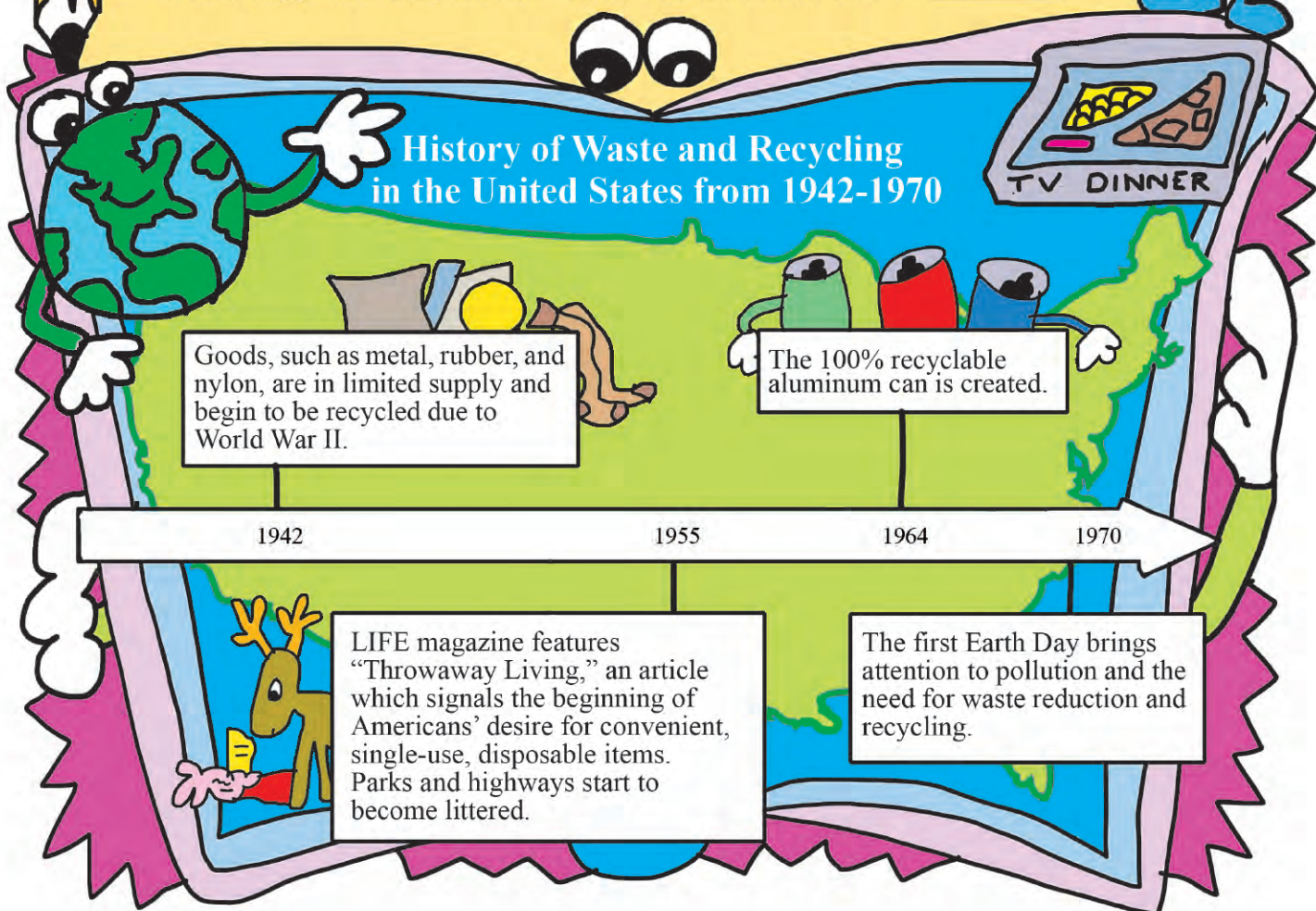
Bonus: Write one sentence using the heterographs “sun” and “son.” _____

JUST IN TIME

A timeline is a type of graph that is used to show the passage of time in a straight line. Timelines are especially useful in showing historical events in relation to each other. Below is a timeline showing a small part of the history of recycling in the United States. Use the timeline to answer these questions.

1. What year was the 100% recyclable aluminum can created? _____
2. During the time period shown on the timeline, what were the two major reasons that caused Americans to recycle more and waste less?

3. When did parks and roadways begin to get littered? _____
Why? _____
4. When was the first Earth Day? _____
5. Which happened first, the first Earth Day or World War II? _____

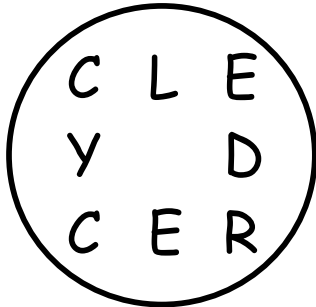


Roundabouts

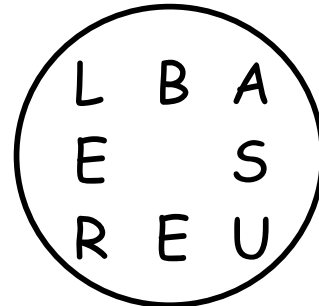
Name: _____

Directions: Each circle of letters spells a word or term about reducing waste this winter, but it's up to you to find out what the words are! For the first four, you start at one of the four corners and then follow the letters around in a circle. You will need to figure out which corner. Remember that the circle may go clockwise or counterclockwise. For the last four, the first letter might be anywhere, so you'll need to find it.

1.



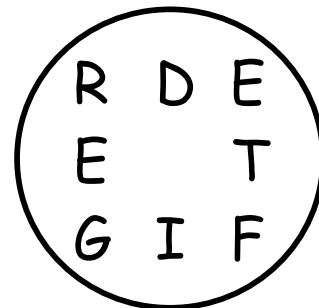
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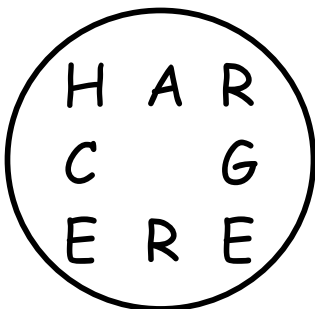
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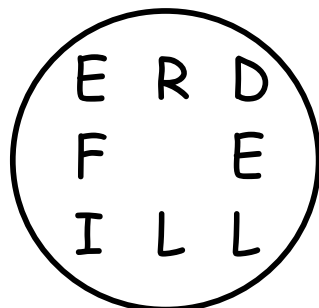
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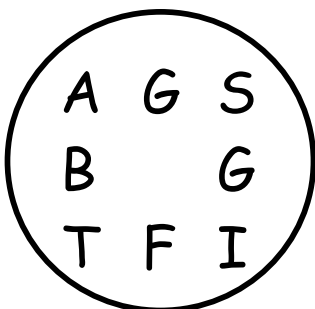
5.



6.



7.



8.

