



IT'S YOUR PLANET, TOO!

Global warming, air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, endangered species...these are the issues that are affecting our planet today. They are problems that, if left unchecked, could completely disrupt the way people live on this planet. Global warming in particular has the potential to wreak havoc on the planet as we know it.

The good news is that there are actually a lot of things that each and every one of us that shares this planet can do to reverse these dangerous trends and make our world a safer, healthier, and more balanced place to live.

As a teen, you may think that there is nothing you can do to save the planet. But that is just flat out wrong. There are hundreds of things that teenagers can do...in fact...there are hundreds of things that teenagers, just like you, *are doing right now* to protect the environment.


Let's face it...it is your generation that is really going to feel the effects of the environmental issues that are building today. Adults will not see the devastating effects of global warming that you and your children and your children's children will have to face head on. So while it's all well and good to enlist

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the help of adults in the environmental movement, it is really you and your generation that need to spearhead the charge to change.

Teens have the knowledge, the skills, and the POWER to save the planet. Use this book to show you how.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING



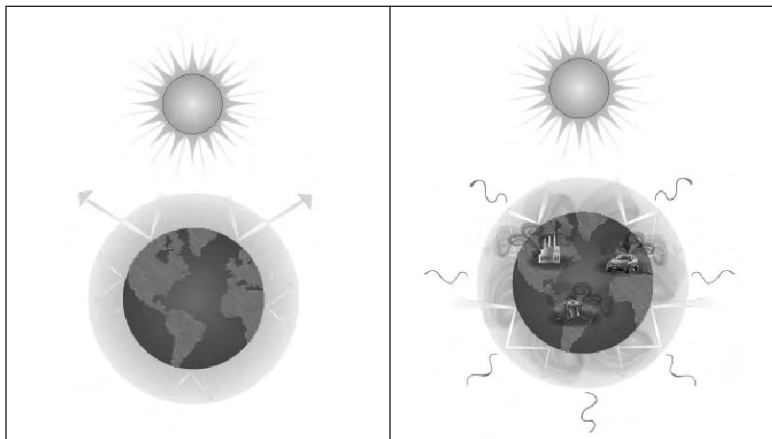
The Scoop: The greenhouse effect is a natural process whereby gases in the Earth's atmosphere trap radiation from the Sun and keep the planet warm. The greenhouse effect is a GOOD thing...without it...the planet would be about 60°F colder. The problem is that over the years we humans have sent too many extra gases into the atmosphere, and too much of the Sun's radiation is being trapped and sent back to Earth...warming the whole planet (hence, the name Global Warming). The temperature has already risen to a point where it is affecting the earth's climate.

The Cause: There are a number of human and natural activities that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The worst offender is the burning of fossil fuels like oil and coal (in factories, cars, power plants, etc.). Deforestation is another major cause of global warming as trees soak up greenhouse gases

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when they are alive but release them when they are cut down or burned.

The Effect: Even the slightest increases in temperature can have a drastic effect on the planet. Higher temps have already caused glaciers in the Arctic to melt, resulting in the loss of habitat for many animals as well as a rise in sea levels. If global warming continues unchecked, it can cause extreme weather conditions (droughts, floods, heat waves, hurricanes, and blizzards), a rise in the incidence of tropical diseases, and changes to the world's agricultural seasons. All of these effects can add up to



Under normal conditions, the greenhouse effect keeps the planet nice and warm

Human activities like manufacturing, driving, and deforestation send too many gases into the atmosphere, increasing the global temperature to dangerous levels.

What You Can Do About Global Warming

some serious problems for the economy and dangerous consequences for the health of humans, plants, and animals on the planet.

The Fix: The gases that are in the Earth's atmosphere now, and the ones that are being pumped out today, will remain in the atmosphere for the better part of the next century. So global warming will happen...and it is likely that you will see some of its effects your lifetime. But it is still possible to ensure that those effects don't become catastrophic, if we act now. Politicians have been arguing about global warming for years...without solving anything. The time has come to stop counting on politicians and start reversing this dangerous trend. Here's how:

1. Use Less Energy...in your home, at school, and on the go
 - ✱ Don't Drive (Chapter 5)
 - ✱ Flip The Switch (Chapter 7)
 - ✱ Shorten Your Shower (Chapter 8)
 - ✱ Put On A Sweater (Or Take One Off) (Chapter 7)
 - ✱ Hold The Beef (Chapter 2)
2. Plant A Tree...
 - ✱ At Home (Chapter 2)
 - ✱ At School (Chapter 13)
 - ✱ In Your Community (Chapter 15)

GREEN YOURSELF



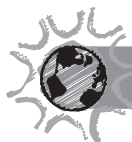
Want to go green? Start with yourself. You may not realize it but the decisions you make everyday, from what you have for breakfast, to what you will wear to school, to how you spend your free time, all affect the planet. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the books you read, the games you play, and even the text messages you send all require energy, use resources, and create pollution.

Fortunately, there are a ton of simple things you can do each and every day to make the world a better place. By making smarter decisions about the items you buy, the food you eat, the clothes you wear, and the way you get around, you can significantly reduce your environmental impact and improve your chances of getting others to do the same. You have the power to make the change. Use it!



AT THE STORE

Did you know that kids influence the spending of \$300 billion a year, or about 1 in 3 consumer dollars spent? That's why corporations target *you* to buy their products. And you may not realize it, but almost everything you buy can affect the environment. Fortunately, there is now a green option for just about any item on your shopping list. Using your green to buy green protects the planet, promotes fair treatment for workers, and sends a powerful message to businesses about the importance of environment. But the key is to know how to spot the eco-gems from the phonies. Here's what you need to know to shop green:



Top 5 Ways To Buy Green

1 The 24 Hour Rule: Keep the planet in mind when you are shopping and ask yourself if you *really* need each purchase. Can you get by without it? Is it possible to rent, borrow,

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or swap with a friend instead? If you really want it, try the 24 hour rule. Give yourself one day to think it over and if you still want it...go back and get it.

2 Learn Your Labels: Green labels are splashed on almost every product in the store. But beware...some of those labels may be just a meaningless attempt to get you to spend your money. Don't be fooled. Check out the tips in this chapter to learn which labels to look for when shopping.

3 Buy In Bulk: Save money and the planet by purchasing items in bulk whenever possible. Buying in bulk is cheaper than purchasing several smaller items and it will minimize the amount of packaging that you need to toss.

4 B.Y.O.B.: (Bring Your Own Bag) Plastic shopping bags are lame! They use a ton of petroleum based resources (contributing to global warming) and create a ridiculous amount of litter and waste. Pick up a snazzy, compact, reusable tote bag and carry it with you to hold your purchases.

5 Buy Recycled: Look for stuff that contains recycled content (to save on new materials.) There are lots of eco-friendly products now, from pencils to notebooks, jackets to sneakers, and even dog beds that contain recycled material. Purchasing these products reduces the consumption of new materials, reduces landfill waste, and supports the market for recycling.

Why Bother? Every item you buy affects the planet in one way or another, whether it's the clothes on your back that are made with pesticide laden crops; the hamburger on your plate that required a slew of energy, land, and grain to produce; or the cell phone in your pocket that may be made with illegally mined minerals that endanger animal habitat. The good news is that you have the power to choose what and how much you will consume. By using less stuff and selecting eco-friendly products you can make a huge difference in the impact your shopping will have on the planet.



g2g Green Tips

Minimize Packaging

It's hard to buy stuff that doesn't come layered in packaging... boxes, plastic, bubbles...you get the picture. Look for items that use the least amount of packaging or packaging that you know you can reuse.

Buy Local

After you check the label to see if your new found bounty is eco-friendly, check to see where it was made. Organic clothing that is shipped across the world will create enough pollution to negate its environmental benefit. Look for the Made in the USA label, and when possible, look for products that are made as close to your home as possible.

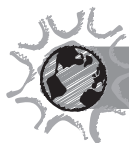
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Avoid Non-Recyclable Packaging

Choose products in containers that are easily recyclable. Check out Earth 911 (earth911.com) to find out what and where to recycle in your area. If your local center doesn't accept it, (for example, #5 Plastic) try to avoid buying it.

Skip Disposables

Disposable products take a toll on the environment twice. They use resources and create pollution and waste first in their production and again every time you have to return to the store to replenish your supply. Choose reusable versions of batteries, pens, cameras, coffee mugs, silverware, plates, etc.



Don't Get Greenwashed!

Green is “in,” and big manufacturers know it. Unfortunately, some companies try to cash in on the green movement by labeling their products with meaningless propaganda that may make it look eco-friendly, even when it's not. This is called greenwashing.

Here's a quick list of the labels to look for (the ones that mean a product is the real green deal). In the following chapters, look for the “CHECK YOUR LABELS” box to help you sort out the green from the greenwashed.

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**USDA Certified
Organic (Food)**

*Organic Label courtesy
of USDA AMS



**Leaping Bunny:
(Cosmetics,
Personal Care and
Household Products)**



**FSC Certified
(Wood, Paper Products,
and Furniture)**



**Energy Star
(Appliances)**



**Fair Trade Certified
(Food, Clothing,
Wood Products)**



Be A Label Lover

Want to know what all those labels really mean? Here's a quick and dirty guide to the green, the bad, and the ugly...

Look for these labels:

Cradle 2 Cradle: Cradle 2 Cradle certification analyzes the environmental impact of a product throughout its entire life cycle. Products that use this label are made with eco-friendly materials, are designed for reuse, use energy and water efficient technologies, and are produced under socially responsible conditions. The certification is found on a wide range of

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products from cleaning agents (Begley's Best) to surfboard wax (Wet Women Surf Wax).

Energy Star: There are more than 50 different types of products (battery chargers, dehumidifiers, ceiling fans, dishwashers, televisions, cordless phones, computers, printers, and even windows and doors) that can apply for the Energy Star label. The products that do wear it use less energy and less water than comparable models.

Fair Trade Certified: The Fair Trade label can be found on foods such as coffee, tea, chocolate, rice, sugar, and bananas to indicate that the items were produced under fair working conditions. When you see this label on a product, you'll know farm workers got a fair price for it, children were not forced to make it, and a limited number of chemicals were used in its production.

FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) Certified: The Forest Stewardship Council certifies wood and wood products that come from sustainable forests. Look for the FSC label on wood, paper, and wood products such as furniture, cabinets, and windows.

Greenguard: The Greenguard Environmental Institute is a non-profit organization that certifies products with low or no indoor emissions (and therefore fewer harmful chemicals). Look for the Greenguard label on building materials, furniture, household cleaning products, electronic equipment, and personal care products.

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Green Seal: Products labeled with the Green Seal minimize their environmental impact from manufacturing to disposal. Look for this label on paper, wood products, household cleaners, and personal care products.

Leaping Bunny: Look for the Leaping Bunny logo on cosmetics, personal care products, and other household products and you will know that it has not been tested on animals, nor does it use animal products in its ingredients.

Organic: Foods labeled organic (such as fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, and dairy products) must be produced without the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, antibiotics, genetic engineering, irradiation, and sewage sludge. Animals raised for organic meats must have access to the outdoors and must be fed 100% organic feed that does not contain animal byproducts or growth hormones. However, the USDA draws a distinction between chickens and other animals. So cows that are raised to produce organic beef or milk must have continuous access to the outdoors without confinement, whereas chickens are not guaranteed access and can be confined.



There are three different organic labels that you may see on the shelves:

100% Organic: Products bearing this label can only contain organically produced ingredients.

Organic: Products can use the “Organic” label if 95% of their ingredients are organically produced and the remaining 5%

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are non-organic ingredients that have been approved by the National Organic Program.

Made With Organic Ingredients: This label means that the product is made with at least 70% organic ingredients, at least three of which are listed on the back of the package. The remaining 30% of ingredients can be non-organic but they must be approved by the National Organic Program.

Processed Chlorine Free: Look for the PCF label on paper products to make sure they are processed without the use of environmentally damaging chlorine.

Rainforest Alliance Certified: This is similar to the FSC label.



Don't Get Greenwashed!

Beware of these labels:

Biodegradable: This is a popular greenwashing label, but in reality it means nothing. Most products will biodegrade, or break down, eventually, but that doesn't mean they are eco-friendly. In addition, there are no independent agencies that certify this label as accurate.

Cruelty-Free: Unless this label is accompanied by the Leaping Bunny label (see above) it doesn't mean a thing. This term is not legally defined and there is no agency that verifies the claim.

Free Range: The "free-range" label brings to mind animals roaming free in an open pasture, grazing in clean fields and drinking from fresh, cool streams. Unfortunately, this is rarely

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the case. For starters, the US Department of Agriculture has only defined the term for labeling poultry, not beef or eggs. So a “free range” label on eggs is completely meaningless. And the vague wording of the definition makes it meaningless for poultry as well. According to the regulations, in order for poultry to be labeled “free range” the chickens must “have access to the outdoors for an undetermined period each day.” This means that having the coop door opened for a mere 5 minutes each day is good enough to get a stamp of approval from the USDA (even if the chickens never saw that it was open).

Non Toxic: “Non-toxic” is another pointless label that is neither legally defined nor certified.

Recyclable: Just because a product is labeled “recyclable” does not mean that you will actually find anywhere to recycle it. Contact your local recycling center to find out what products and materials are accepted in your area.

Recycled: The term “recycled” is legally defined by the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) however, it is not verified by the FTC or any other agency. So what’s the point? Another problem with this label is that the FTC does not distinguish between pre-consumer and post-consumer waste. Post-consumer waste has already been used at least once and returned to the waste stream (i.e., yesterday’s newspaper). Pre-consumer wastes, such as shavings from a paper mill, have never been used. Your best bet is to look for products that uses the highest percentage post-consumer waste possible.