

Take Action on WASTE

Easy Things You can do to Achieve
a Waste-Free Lifestyle



THAMES REGION
ECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

www.trea.ca



Your Guide to Taking Action on Waste

The Thames Region Ecological Association (TREA) is a non-profit charity dedicated to educating the London community about sustainable practices through awareness and action. This booklet is part of TREA's program to inform local schools on the importance of a waste-free lifestyle.

Find out how you can reduce waste in your life by completing this guide. Every time you use a plastic straw, throw a recyclable in the trash, or avoid composting, waste is being sent to a landfill where it will take up space and release greenhouse gases as it breaks down. In fact, Londoners generate around 152,600 tonnes of waste each year! The easiest way to take action is to follow the suggestions in this guide to avoid wasteful habits and reduce the amount of waste we send to the landfill.

Reducing waste can be easy. It's all about making the right choices. So start today, take the first steps by working through this guide. Remember that by taking many small actions, we will all see countless local benefits such as cleaner sidewalks, a litter-free Thames River and a vibrant and more sustainable London.

This guide is an audit booklet of your home that will help you identify, highlight, and evaluate common household solutions to cutting back on waste.

Make sure to also fill out and return the last page of the booklet in order to discuss in class what your potential is!

How to use this Guide

This guide is meant to be completed with a parent or guardian. With their help, use this guide to investigate numerous solutions that can help your family reduce waste in and around the household. If you find an answer that your family is involved in or are planning on getting involved in, then place a ✓ in the provided box and record your score at the bottom of the page. Remember to tally your total score on page 12 of this guide to see how waste-free your family is.

This guide is separated into 4 sections:

“Take Action with Composting”

“Take Action with Recycling”

“Take Waste-Free Action”

“What is your Final Score?”



The first 3 sections illustrate various waste-reducing solutions in the following manner:

Question: Here you will learn about common household solutions to reduce the amount of waste your family sends to the landfill.

Answer: Here you will learn how these solutions are beneficial to you and your family as well as the environment.



Don't *leaf* these boxes unchecked if you and your family are actively involved.



Score—??

Take Action with Composting

What is Compost? It is a nutritious soil-like material created by the breakdown of organic matter such as plant leaves and vegetables.



Taking action on Climate Change:

As food waste breaks down in landfills, it releases greenhouse gases. Composting saves the day by reducing the amount of greenhouse gases that are released and makes soil healthier for plants.

Question: Does your family use outdoor composting?

Answer: Outdoor composting can be used to breakdown yard waste such as grass clippings, and it can also be used for food scraps. Outdoor composting tends to slow down during the winter which is why also doing indoor composting is important.



Score—10

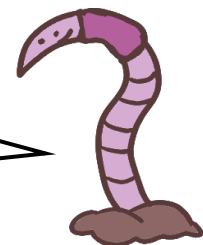
Question: Does your family use indoor composting?

Answer: Indoor composting, also known as vermicomposting, is using earthworms to help break down food scraps. These worms can help you to break down your leftovers year-round.



Score—15

Got some leftover food scraps? Not to worry, those are my favourite snack!



Don't compost us!
We stink!



Question: Does your family put the correct items into the compost?

Answer: Some items that may seem perfectly compostable are not, here are items to look out for: dairy products, pet waste, meat, oils, wooden yard waste, and diseased plants. These items often attract pests or can cause the compost to make you sick.

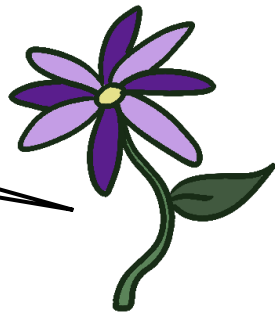
☐ Score—5

Question: Does your family use compost in the garden?

Answer: Compost is nutrient-rich and will help your plants grow. It also nourishes microorganisms and animals living in the soil which creates a happy and healthy food web.

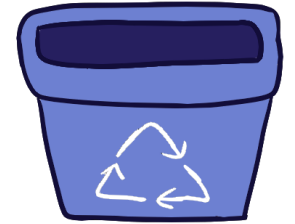
☐ Score—5

Nothing makes me happier
and healthier than a serving
of fresh compost.



Take Action with Recycling

What is Recycling? The process of breaking down materials such as cardboard and turning them into something new and useful.



Taking action on Climate Change: Recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions by giving single-use items a new purpose instead of sending them to a landfill.

Question: Does your family recycle?

Answer: Recycling is a key process in preserving the environment and reducing the amount of waste your family creates. If your family would like to begin recycling, bins can be purchased from your local hardware store.

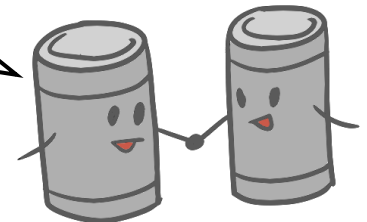
☐ Score—15

Question: Does your family sort your recycling bins?

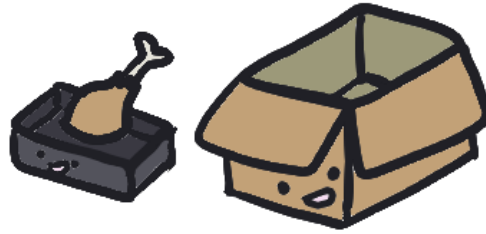
Answer: Every family should have 2 different recycling bins, one for paper and another for containers. Make sure you separate the items correctly as your items may not be recycled if there is too much cross-contamination.

☐ Score—10

With your help, we
can be recycled into
bicycles, airplane
parts and more!



Make sure there is no food on the items you recycle and that you flatten cardboard boxes!



Question: Does your family clean items before recycling?

Answer: Food waste on jars and containers interferes with the recycling process. Rinse them out beforehand so that they are nice and clean when recycled.

☐ Score—5

Question: Does your family dispose of electronics correctly?

Answer: Electronics such as phones and toasters cannot be thrown in the recycling bins, instead, find a local electronics drop-off station near you and recycle them there.

☐ Score—5

These materials aren't really my crowd. Make sure you don't put your electronics, like me, in the recycling bin with them!



Take Waste-Free Action

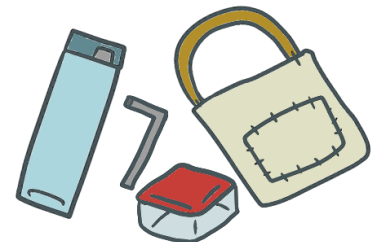
What does it mean to be Waste-Free? Finding ways to reduce the amount of waste in your home. Living a waste-free lifestyle also means consuming goods in a smarter and more efficient way, for example, if you don't need an item then don't buy it.

Taking action on Climate Change: Being waste-free reduces greenhouse gas emissions and conserves resources by avoiding the wasteful use of items.

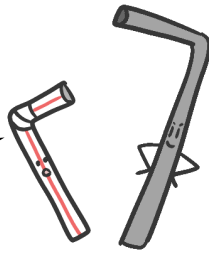
Question: Does your family use a:

- Reusable Straw ☐ Score—15
- Reusable Shopping bag ☐ Score—15
- Reusable Water bottle ☐ Score—15
- Reusable Sandwich bag/ Tupperware ☐ Score—15

Answer: Reduce the amount of waste you produce by looking for reusable versions of disposable items.



Wow, metal straw! I wish I could be as reusable and helpful to the environment as you!



Question: Does your family donate unused items?

Answer: Have clothes you never wear anymore? Perhaps a toy that is collecting dust? Instead of looking towards the landfill, donate used items to your local thrift stores where they can be rehomed.

☐ Score—15

Question: Does your family visit refill stations?

Answer: Refill your shampoos, conditioners, and/or body wash at these stations to cut back on plastic bottle waste.

☐ Score—15

Question: Does your family put out less than 3 containers of garbage on Garbage Day?

Answer: The City of London has a limit of 3 garbage containers on Garbage Day but think before you throw away and see if your family can reduce the number of garbage containers, they put out each Garbage Day.

☐ Score—10

Even this is too much garbage for me! Think before you throw away!



The Earth gives a waste-free lifestyle a 10/10



Question: Does your family shop at thrift stores?

Answer: Buying used goods from thrift stores is a great way to save money and the environment by giving used items a new home.

☐ Score—15

Question: Does your family shop for locally made food and goods?

Answer: Many items and foods are produced in other countries and must travel long distances to get to our stores. Long-distance transportation consumes a lot of energy and releases greenhouse gases. Finding locally produced goods is a great way to live less wastefully and support local businesses.

☐ Score—20

Thanks to you, there's less plastic waste in the oceans and I can swim around happy and healthy!



Help our planet by avoiding food items that have a lot of packaging!



Question: Does your family plan out their meals?

Answer: Planning out meals is an important way to prevent food waste. Although composting is always an option, the best way to cut back on waste is by only purchasing the groceries you need and ensuring little to no food goes uneaten.

☐ Score—15

Question: Does your family buy foods with minimal packaging?

Answer: Avoid purchasing foods with lots of packaging, especially if it's made of plastic. Purchasing more fresh fruits and vegetables are one solution to this, especially if they're local and organic.

☐ Score—10

Question: Does your family avoid buying things that they do not necessarily need?

Answer: One way to reduce waste is to buy only what we 'need' and not what we 'want'. For example, if you have a functioning cellphone then there is no need to toss it for the latest version.

☐ Score—20

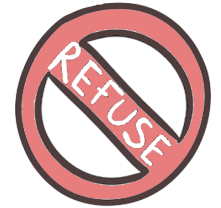
9 R's of Living an Eco-friendly Lifestyle



Reuse: Avoid throwing away items if they can be used more than once or **Repair** them. For example, take your own containers to the store.

Reduce: When using items, look for ways that you can use less of it so that it lasts longer. For example, when using soap, make sure you only use as much as you need.

Recycle: Stop those recyclables from getting thrown in the trash and put them in recycling bins so that they can be made into something new.



Refuse: If you don't need something, say 'No' to it or **Rent** it. Often these items will be thrown away or stored after getting them.

Repurpose: Sometimes you just can't reuse an item the same way, but you can find new and fun ways to make use of it! For example, turning plastic cups into plant pots. Or you can **Re-gift** to others.



Rot: Don't let those leftover food scraps go to waste, compost them so that they can be used to make your garden happy and healthy.

What is Your Total Score?

Page 3 = _____ Page 7 = _____

Page 4 = _____ Page 8 = _____

Page 5 = _____ Page 9 = _____

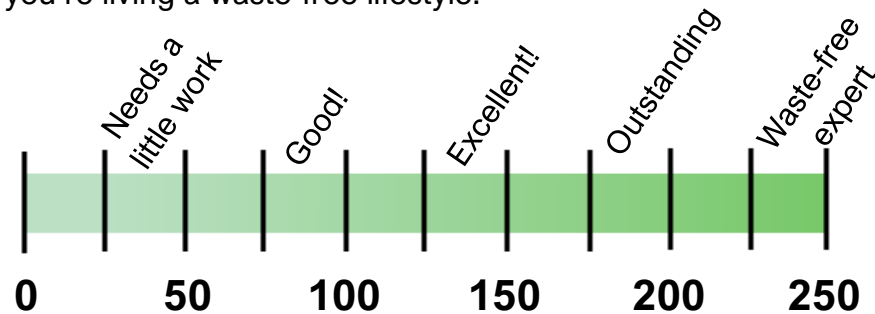
Page 6 = _____ Page 10 = _____

Total = _____

Name: _____

Are you Up for the Challenge?

Find where your score lands on the scale below and see if you're living a waste-free lifestyle.



You Can Do It!

Congratulations, you are now a Waste-Free Expert.

Now all you have to do is fill all the information on Page 14, cut it out, and bring it back to your teacher.

*All Information will be kept Confidential



Is Here to Help You Live a Waste-Free Lifestyle!

Since 1986, The Thames Region Ecological Association has been helping Londoners make wise environmental choices.

We can make living a Waste-Free Lifestyle EASY! That's what we're here for.

If you have any questions there are 4 easy ways you can ask them: in person, through the mail, by phone or even by e-mail.

1017 Western Road

London, Ontario

N6G 1G5

(519)-645-2845

www.trea.ca

Sign-up for the TREA Monthly Newsletter?

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

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Fill out and Return this Page to your Teacher

Given Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

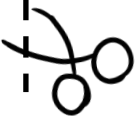
School: _____

Postal Code: _____ Total Score: _____

Thank you for your commitment to
living greener, recycling smarter,
reducing waste and preserving the
ecosystem.

Visit www.trea.ca

**REMEMBER TO CUT OFF THIS PAGE
AND GIVE IT TO YOUR TEACHER**



Once complete, bring this last
page back to your teacher.
Always remember that a clean
and healthy environment starts
with you and your actions!