

Recycling Initiative: Reducing Paper Usage

Objective:

Ever since recorded history, paper became a commodity that people highly valued. But even now, few people realize the tremendous environmental cost of producing it. The pulp and paper industry is the world's fifth largest industrial consumer of energy and uses more water to produce a ton of product than any other industry. Producing a tonne of paper requires two to three times its weight in trees. Newly cut trees account for 55 percent of the global paper supply.

Of course, this environmental rape is unsustainable and in conflict with the more important, life-preserving purposes trees serve: they are the lungs of the earth – filtering replenishing the world's supply of oxygen –, they provide shelter and sustenance for many organism, they draw up nutrients from deep within the earth and keep the soil fertile and safe. Given these reasons and more, it is our moral obligation to safeguard the world's trees. As consumers, we always have a choice.

Here are some tips on how to conserve paper:

Print Preview:

The print preview option, available on most word processing programs, is a helpful for checking the correct dimensions and that you are printing the right thing. Nothing sucks more than having to print a second time because of a silly formatting error.

Duplexing:

Print on both sides of the paper; many copiers and printers have this feature built in. If not, then you can always flip the page around and run it through the machine a second time! This practice can cut your paper usage in half and does not take much effort at all!

Formatting:

Making use of the white space on the page is important. To save paper, reduce your margins, font sizes and images. This strategy works well if you are printing out a draft document. But even if you are printing out a finished piece, you may get away with expanding the reducing your margins a fraction; no one will notice the difference and hey, you may save a page or two!

Reuse:

Use the back of a used sheet for rough work, reuse envelopes or use them as scrap. Here is a helpful tip: get a good-one-side bin put beside the printer (or recycling bin), so that anyone who was thinking of throwing away that piece of good paper might reconsider and put it in the bin instead. Other people who are looking for scrap may use it.

Recycle: Last of the three R's: convince your school to purchased post-consumer paper and always recycle discarded paper. The little extra money investment will go a long way environmentally.