

Recycling Fun Facts

This page is full of interesting and helpful facts about recycling. They can help you add some flavor to your reports, spice up your presentations, or be just for fun.

METALS

- ♻️ Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours -- or the equivalent of a half a gallon of gasoline.
 - ♻️ 350,000 aluminum cans are produced every minute!
 - ♻️ More aluminum goes into beverage cans than any other product.
 - ♻️ Once an aluminum can is recycled, it can be part of a new can within six weeks.
 - ♻️ Because so many of them are recycled, aluminum cans account for less than 1% of the total U.S. waste stream, according to EPA estimates.
 - ♻️ During the time it takes you to read this sentence, 50,000 12-ounce aluminum cans are made.
 - ♻️ An aluminum can that is thrown away will still be a can 500 years from now!
 - ♻️ There is no limit to the amount of times aluminum cans be recycled.
 - ♻️ Aluminum can manufacturers have been making cans lighter -- in 1972 each pound of aluminum produced 22 cans; today it yields 29 cans.
 - ♻️ We use over 80,000,000,000 aluminum pop cans every year.
 - ♻️ At one time, aluminum was more valuable than gold!
 - ♻️ A 60-watt light bulb can be run for over a day on the amount of energy saved by recycling 1 pound of steel. In one year in the United States, the recycling of steel saves enough energy to heat and light 18,000,000 homes!
 - ♻️ Every ton of recycled steel saves 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,000 of coal, and 40 pounds of limestone.
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PAPER

- ♻️ To produce each week's Sunday newspapers, 500,000 trees must be cut down.
- ♻️ Recycling a single run of the Sunday *New York Times* would save 75,000 trees.
- ♻️ If all our newspaper was recycled, we could save about 250,000,000 trees each year!
- ♻️ If every American recycled just one-tenth of their newspapers, we would save about 25,000,000 trees a year.
- ♻️ During World War II when raw materials were scarce, 33% of all paper was recycled. After the war, this number decreased sharply.
- ♻️ If you had a 15-year-old tree and made it into paper grocery bags, you'd get about 700 of them. A supermarket could use all of them in under an hour! This means in one year, one supermarket goes through 60,500,000 paper bags! Imagine how many supermarkets there are in the U.S.!!!
- ♻️ The average American uses seven trees a year in paper, wood, and other products made from trees. This amounts to about 2,000,000,000 trees per year!

- ♻️ The amount of wood and paper we throw away each year is enough to heat 50,000,000 homes for 20 years.
 - ♻️ When you smell a dump, what you actually smell is the paper in the dump!
 - ♻️ Approximately 1 billion trees worth of paper are thrown away every year in the U.S.
 - ♻️ Americans use 85,000,000 tons of paper a year; about 680 pounds per person.
 - ♻️ The average household throws away 13,000 separate pieces of paper each year. Most is packaging and junk mail.
 - ♻️ In 1993, U.S. paper recovery saved more than 90,000,000 cubic yards of landfill space.
 - ♻️ In 1993, nearly 36,000,000 tons of paper was recovered in the U.S.--twice as much in 1980.
 - ♻️ 27% of the newspapers produced in America are recycled.
 - ♻️ Each ton (2000 pounds) of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water. This represents a 64% energy savings, a 58% water savings, and 60 pounds less of air pollution!
 - ♻️ The 17 trees saved (above) can absorb a total of 250 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year. Burning that same ton of paper would *create* 1500 pounds of carbon dioxide.
 - ♻️ The construction costs of a paper mill designed to use waste paper is 50 to 80% less than the cost of a mill using new pulp.
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PLASTIC / STYROFOAM

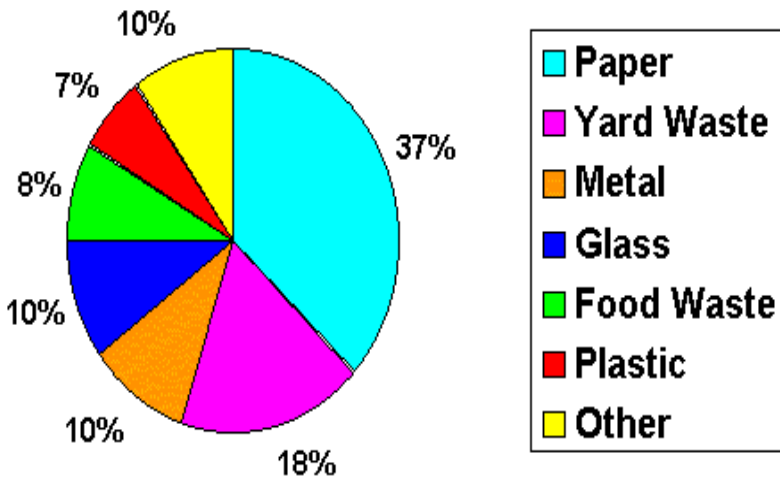
- ♻️ Americans use 2,500,000 plastic bottles every hour! Most of them are thrown away!
 - ♻️ Plastic bags and other plastic garbage thrown into the ocean kill as many as 1,000,000 sea creatures every year!
 - ♻️ Americans throw away 25,000,000 plastic beverage bottles every hour!
 - ♻️ Recycling plastic saves twice as much energy as burning it in an incinerator.
 - ♻️ American throw away 25,000,000,000 styrofoam coffee cups every year.
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GLASS

- ♻️ Every month, we throw out enough glass bottles and jars to fill up a giant skyscraper. All of these jars are recyclable!
 - ♻️ The energy saved from recycling one glass bottle can run a 100-watt light bulb for four hours. It also causes 20% less air pollution and 50% less water pollution than when a new bottle is made from raw materials.
 - ♻️ A modern glass bottle would take 4000 years or more to decompose -- and even longer if it's in the landfill.
 - ♻️ Mining and transporting raw materials for glass produces about 385 pounds of waste for every ton of glass that is made. If recycled glass is substituted for half of the raw materials, the waste is cut by more than 80%.
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TRASH / LANDFILLS

Compositon Of An Average Dump



- ♻️ Although 75% of our trash can be recycled, the EPA set a national goal of 25% for 1992.
- ♻️ The first real recycling program was introduced in New York City in the 1890s. The city's first recycling plant was built in 1898.
- ♻️ By 1924, 83% of American cities were separating some trash items to be reused.
- ♻️ About one-third of an average dump is made up of packaging material!
- ♻️ Every year, each American throws out about 1,200 pounds of organic garbage that can be composted.

- ♻️ New Jersey has the highest recycling rate of all the states--56%!
 - ♻️ The United States is the #1 trash-producing country in the world at 1,609 pounds per person per year. This means that 5% of the world's people generate 40% of the world's waste.
 - ♻️ The chart above shows the composition of an average garbage dump. Notice how much of it is recyclable!!
 - ♻️ The highest man made point in Ohio is said to be "Mount Rumpke," which is actually a mountain of trash at the Rumpke sanitary landfill!
 - ♻️ The United States population discards each year 16,000,000,000 diapers, 1,600,000,000 pens, 2,000,000,000 razor blades, 220,000,000 car tires, and enough aluminum to rebuild the US commercial air fleet four times over.
 - ♻️ Speaking of diapers, a cloth diaper washed at home costs 3¢ per use. A disposable diaper costs 22¢ per use. The difference can add up; a typical baby will use about 10,000 diapers!
 - ♻️ Between 5 and 15% of what we throw away contains hazardous substances.
 - ♻️ Out of every \$10 spent buying things; \$1 (10%) goes for packaging that is thrown away. Packaging represents about 65% of household trash.
 - ♻️ On average, it costs \$30 per ton to recycle trash, \$50 to send it to the landfill, and \$65 to \$75 to incinerate it.
 - ♻️ Americans generate and throw away 9 times as much waste as does a person in Africa or Central America, but we also generate two to three times the amount of waste as people living in industrial countries with a comparable or better standard of living as us.
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MISCELLANEOUS

- ♻️ More than 20,000,000 Hershey's Kisses are wrapped each day, using 133 square miles of tinfoil. All that foil is recyclable, but not many people realize it.
- ♻️ Every week about 20 species of plants and animals become extinct!
- ♻️ McDonald's saves 68,000,000 pounds of packaging per year just by pumping soft drink syrup directly from the delivery truck into tanks in the restaurant, instead of shipping the syrup in cardboard boxes!
- ♻️ The largest environmental organization in the world is the National Wildlife Federation. It has 5,600,000 members!
- ♻️ Rainforests are being cut down at the rate of 100 acres per minute!
- ♻️ One-third of the water used in most homes is flushed down the toilet.
- ♻️ A single quart of motor oil, if disposed of improperly, can contaminate up to 2,000,000 gallons of fresh water.
- ♻️ You can walk 1 mile along an average highway in the United States and see about 1,457 pieces of litter.
- ♻️ The Washington, DC-based Institute For Local Self-Reliance calculates that recycling creates 36 jobs per 10,000 tons of material recycled compared to 6 jobs for every 10,000 of tons brought to traditional disposal facilities.
- ♻️ A typical family consumes 182 gallons of pop, 29 gallons of juice, 104 gallons of milk, and 26 gallons of bottled water a year. That's a lot of containers -- make sure they're recycled!