

12 STEPS TO BEING A GOOD CARETAKER OF EARTH

1 Follow the “Three Rs” – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Reduce by buying only what you need and by using as little of everything as possible (e.g. buy quality products that will last a long time; wrap a T-shirt around a present so that the wrapping becomes part of the gift). Reuse everything as often as possible and avoid products that are used once and thrown away (e.g. use a lunch box instead of a plastic bag). Recycle materials that you can’t reuse (e.g. newspapers and other types of paper, cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic).

2 Conserve precious resources like water and energy. For example, can you bike where you’re going? Can you turn down the thermostat? How about turning off the water when you’re brushing your teeth?

3 Throw garbage into a trash can, not on the ground. If you see trash laying on the ground, take the time to dispose of it.

4 Avoid using chemicals that will pollute the environment. For example, try natural cleaners and body care products. Don’t spill liquids like paint or oil onto the ground; if no one can use them, they should be taken to a special waste depot.

5 Keep an eye out for the sky. Conserve energy to reduce global warming. Use a car that emits less pollution.

6 Watch for signs of pollution, like unusual smells, strangely-colored liquids, piles of garbage, sick animals, or dying plants. Don’t touch them; report them to officials.

7 When you’re in a natural area, take only notes and pictures and leave only footprints. For example, don’t disturb animals, pick up their eggs or young, pick flowers, strip bark from trees, or trample vegetation. Don’t leave any garbage behind.

8 Be on a wildlife alert. Don’t kill even the smallest of insects; all creatures have a job on Earth. Don’t buy pets taken illegally from the wild. Support your local zoo, if it’s a good one. Animals should have room to roam, should be healthy, and should be treated with respect by

zoo keepers and the public. If the zoo isn’t treating animals properly, write a letter to the zoo director.

9 Learn as much as you can about environmental issues.

Go onto the Internet. Join an environmental group or subscribe to an environmental magazine. Listen carefully and think about everyone’s point of view and then make your own decisions.

10 Write to local and national leaders telling them what you’re concerned about, why, and what you think should be done about it. Be polite, use your own words, and don’t forget to ask for a reply. Encourage other people to write letters too. More letters will get more attention.

11 Talk to other people about the environment. What do they think about certain problems? Can you give them any information they didn’t already know?

12 Take it slow! Learn to stop, look at, and appreciate the world around you.

