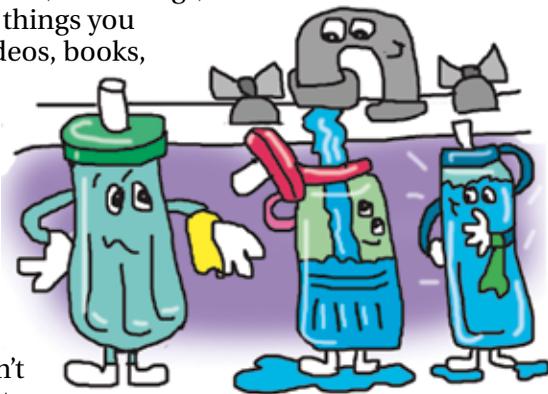


Keeping the loop closed

Nearly everyone recognizes the chasing-arrows symbol. When we see it, we think about recycling. But what about reducing and reusing? If you look at the three arrows, they form a closed loop. If we forget about reducing how much we use and waste, or if we forget to reuse everything we can, that loop will have gaps. When there are gaps, it means we're wasting things that don't need to become trash.

Here are some ways to keep the chasing arrows looping for a long time:

- ◆ Take good care of what you already have. For example, be careful with your phone or music player so you don't drop and break them.
- ◆ Mend torn clothing and fix broken toys.
- ◆ Find new uses for things you have finished using. For example, shoe boxes are good containers for your collections. Empty dip and spread tubs are great for holding small building block parts or craft supplies.
- ◆ Wash and reuse water bottles, lunch bags, and snack containers.
- ◆ Borrow instead of buying things you will only use once, like videos, books, and games.
- ◆ Trade toys, books, and games with friends to share and enjoy. (Make sure it is OK with your parents first.)
- ◆ Give away or sell usable clothes, furniture, books, sporting goods, and anything else you don't need. Someone else might love to have it!
- ◆ Buy used items whenever possible. You will save money while you help the environment. There are many shops and online sites that sell used items.



Locally, Stanly County Christian Ministry and the Habitat for Humanity ReStore accept donated items. They give away some of the items and sell others to raise money to help people in our community. Visit or call for more information:

- Stanly County Christian Ministry, 1324 East Main Street, Albemarle, 704-982-0246
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore, 1506 West NC 24/27 Bypass, Albemarle, 704-985-1050

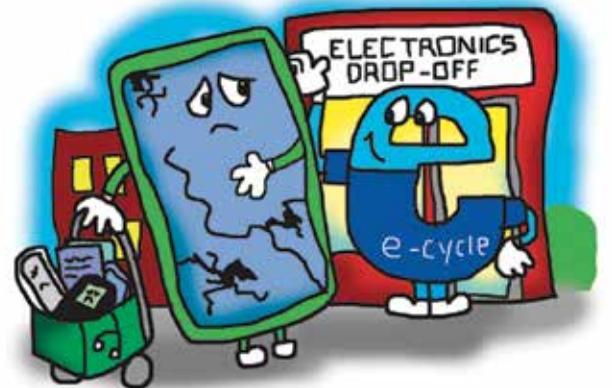
What's on your wish list?

Here's something to think about—at one time, a pencil was the newest technology known to humans. Today, when you think about "technology," you probably don't think about pencils but, instead, about electronic gadgets and games. As you work on your holiday wish list, you might be thinking about adding some new electronics to it. One of the best ways to reduce waste, however, is to use your older electronic

devices longer. Maybe you could add some technology-related fun to your wish list without asking for new devices.

Your wish list could include gift cards that you can load onto your devices to get new music, games, or videos. Maybe someone could give you a subscription to a video streaming service, like Netflix or Hulu. You can purchase new and/or used video games for your older gaming systems. When you are tired of your older games, some stores will buy them back from you and you could use the money to try out more.

When you do get new electronic devices, never throw the old ones into the trash. The materials inside them can cause pollution in landfills but can be useful in making new devices. Consider giving your old devices to someone else. You could donate them to an organization like a community center. You might sell them to a friend or to a store like GameStop. You can even learn online how to take them apart and rebuild them if you are interested.



Finally, if you have old electronic gadgets that you aren't using, recycle them. You can "e-cycle" at Stanly County's Newt Road Convenience Center, at the City of Albemarle Landfill, or at the Electronics Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Collection event next spring. You can call the Solid Waste Department at 704-986-3692 for more information. Many Best Buy and Staples stores also accept electronics for recycling.

It's in the bag

Winter is almost here, and your family is probably planning for gift giving and feasting. You will feel even happier during and after the big celebrations if you plan your joyful events to include as little waste as possible. One way to reduce waste from the very beginning is to take reusable shopping bags with you to all stores. If your family doesn't already use them, or doesn't use them much, gather all of your reusable shopping bags and have them ready by the door or in the car before you go shopping for party supplies and gifts.

If your family doesn't have reusable bags, you can find or make some. Search around the house for extra tote bags and store shopping bags. You can even make your own bags with old T-shirts; simply look online for instructions to "make a T-shirt bag."

Here are some tips to get the most out of your reusable bags:

- Check out reusable bags at the store or online if you need extras.
- Choose bags your family will love because they are easy to use and stylish.
- Keep empty bags in each family car so they are always ready when you head to the store.
- Take empty bags right back to the car after you unload your purchases.
- Wash the bags regularly and allow them to dry completely, inside and out.
- Clean bags right away if groceries leak or spill.

Fraction Action

Sofia and her friends decided to donate some of their old shirts to charity instead of throwing them away.

Facts:

1. Sofia gave away 6 shirts.
2. Ava gave away $\frac{1}{3}$ as many as Sofia.
3. Abigail gave away 2 times as many shirts as Ava.
4. Trinity gave away $\frac{1}{2}$ as many as Sofia.

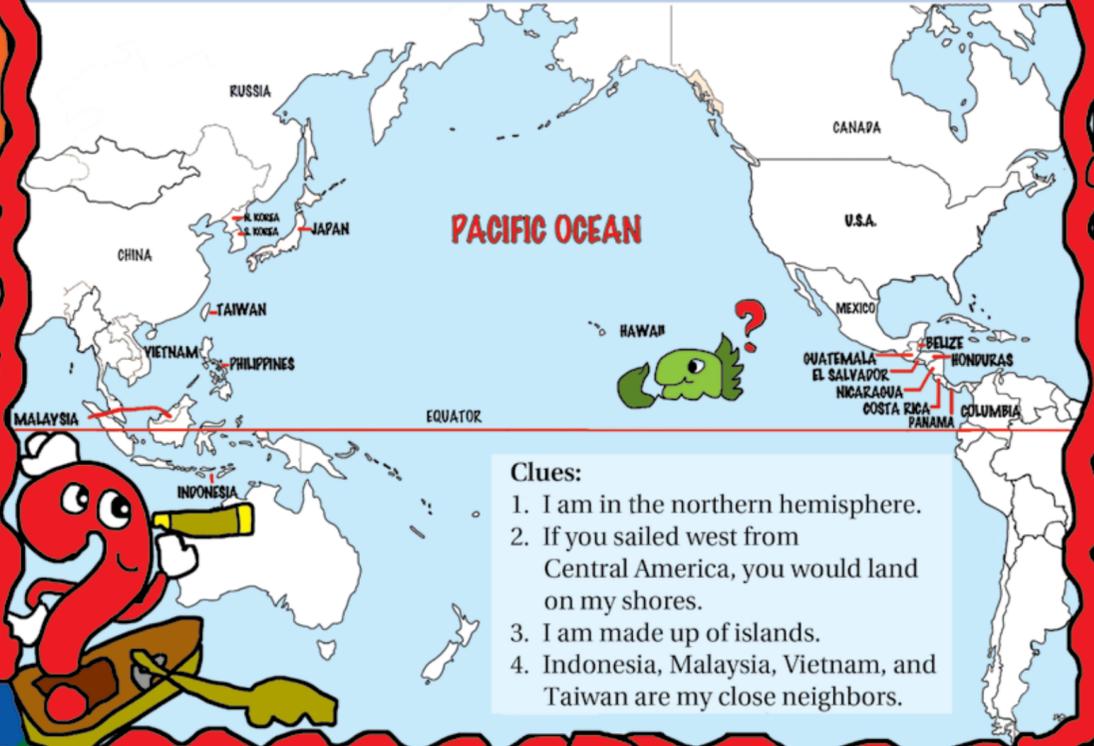
How many shirts did Ava give away? _____

How many did Abigail give away? _____

How many did Trinity give away? _____

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Nickel is the dominant material used to make the kind of rechargeable batteries you might use in your game controllers or toys. Using the clues below, figure out which country produced the most nickel in 2015 at 530,000 metric tons and then color it in on the map.



- Clues:**
1. I am in the northern hemisphere.
 2. If you sailed west from Central America, you would land on my shores.
 3. I am made up of islands.
 4. Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Taiwan are my close neighbors.

For The Birds

Birds sometimes have trouble finding food over the winter, but you can help! Follow these directions to make a birdfeeder from recycled materials that you have around the house. For this art project, here's what you will need:

- * 2-liter bottle
- * Black marker
- * Scissors or utility knife
- * Fishing line or strong cord
- * Two sticks, unsharpened pencils, or old wooden spoons
- * Hammer and nail
- * Metal washer, nut, or button
- * Stickers, markers, or paint
- * Bird seed

1. Clean the 2-liter bottle and remove the label using hot water. Let the bottle dry inside and out.
2. Measure about 1 1/2 inches up from the bottom of the bottle and mark the spot with a small black X. This is where one of your two sticks will go.
3. Rotate the bottle 90 degrees and put another X about 2 inches above the first.
4. Using your scissors, cut along the lines of each X. You may want to ask an adult to use a utility knife to make the holes.
5. Place a stick into the top hole and push it straight across. Where the stick hits the opposite side of the bottle, draw another X on the outside. Do this with the second stick on the bottom hole.
6. Remove the sticks and cut along your two new Xs. Then, one at a time, push each stick all the way through the bottle so that it pokes out on each side. These are your perches for the birds.
7. About 2 inches above each stick, cut holes about 1/4-inch wide. You will make four small holes. These are the feeding holes and should be big enough for the bird's beak but not so big that a lot of food will fall out.
8. Remove the lid from the bottle and, with an adult's help, use a hammer and nail to make a small hole in the top of the lid. Remove the nail.
9. Put fishing line through the hole in the lid and tie the line to a metal nut, washer, or button below the inside of the lid. After you knot the line, pull it tight until the button rests against the lid.
10. Cut the line or rope long enough to hang the feeder outside.
11. Decorate the outside of your bottle with stickers, markers, and/or paint.
12. Fill the bottle with bird seed, put the cap on, and hang it outside.

SCRAMBLED SCIENCE

Unscramble the words below, and then use one to complete each sentence.

- e-staew
- ompctersu
- eclercy
- reablearchge
- reatmsing
- purrepsoed

1. _____ is created when electronics are no longer useful or wanted.
2. Old CDs and DVDs can be _____, or made into something new, like decorations.
3. _____ music and videos instead of purchasing CDs or DVDs can reduce waste.
4. It is better to _____ old electronics than to throw them away in the trash.
5. Disposable batteries are thrown away after being used once, but _____ batteries can be used over and over.
6. _____, phones, and TVs are just a few types of electronic waste.

BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS

Add a prefix and/or suffix to each word and then put the word into the correct sentence below. (Hint: Sometimes you need to drop the "e" when adding a suffix.)

- __charge__ help__ __brace __use__ __crease

1. _____ homemade presents and use materials around the house to create great gifts.
2. Jazmine decided to use _____ batteries for her game controllers because they last longer and create less waste than single-use batteries.
3. You can _____ waste by giving food or event tickets as gifts instead of objects.
4. If you use _____ plates and silverware at your family party, you can reduce the trash that results from the plastic utensils and paper plates.
5. Be _____ by making sure all bows and bags are put away for reuse next year and placing recyclable wrapping paper into the right bin.

MOM... I WILL DUST EACH WEEK! W3



reem



ful



BIRD SEED

Worth the wait, not the waste

It was almost the dead of winter. The trees outside the back door of the big house were leafless and scraggly. The veggie garden was just hard, cold dirt with only a few brown stalks and twigs left from the year's harvest. The only sound was creaking caused by the wind as it pushed the bare branches against one another.

Wintertime dusk was beginning to settle all around the land where the big house sat. The top of the sky was darkening, but the few clouds that hung between sky and horizon glowed orange and purple and pink. If the little boy and his little-bit-bigger sister had looked very carefully, they might have noticed a few more gleaming specks of brightness. Under the brittle, bare twigs of the shrubs, the ones next to the barn door, several pairs of tiny eyes watched the big house and waited.

Before long, the tiny eyes saw the heavy back door swing open, and chatter, music, and laughter began to flow out. The little boy, his sister, their mother, and their father began the first of many trips to the barn. They carried folding chairs and tables. They carried boxes filled with plates, cups, and forks from their kitchen. They carried brightly colored bags and strings of tiny lights. Then came the containers with savory smells escaping from under the lids. Then people arrived, carrying food, drinks, and a few brightly wrapped packages into the barn and shouting happy greetings.

"How long do you think they'll be in there?" chitter-chatted an annoyingly impatient Squirrel. "I'm getting sleepy!"

Raccoon sleepily answered, "I'm tired, too, Squirrel. I've gotten fat, and it's time to settle in to a cozy spot until I need to eat again. I do thank you for telling us about this opportunity, but you have to be patient."

Cardinal chirped good-naturedly, "I don't mind staying up a little later tonight. It's hard to find food in the winter. The people will leave behind their wasted treats, and we will have a feast!"

A squeaky voice spoke up, "Well, I'm wide awake. In fact, I can hardly sit still from excitement. They are sure to leave behind some of that paper, and maybe even a box or two. Raccoon, you can take one of the bigger boxes for your long nap, and I'll nestle into a small one under the packing paper. With shelter and the food scraps they'll leave behind, this is going to be a great winter!"

The critters continued to wait with happy hope as the night grew dark, waiting for the people to leave. Finally, Mouse could stay put no longer and scampered up to a crack in one of the barn doors. As he poked his whiskers toward the space, he shrieked, "Here they come!" and hurried back to the safety of the shrub. In pairs and small groups, people said their goodbyes and made their way home. Soon after the last guest left, Mother, Father, Brother,

and Sister came out of the barn carrying the last of their loads to go back into the house. When Sister, who was last, passed the shrub, a parade of fur and feathers rushed through the closing doors, each creature trying to be the first to see the banquet that awaited.

Not a single morsel was to be found. No crumbs, no berries, no nuts, no forgotten, messy paper plates in the trash can, not even a forgotten cookie lay on the floor. There were no wads of crumpled wrapping paper or empty boxes to snuggle in or to use for nest building. The barn was warm, but where was the feast? Where were the cozy beds?

Squirrel said angrily, "All of that waiting! For nothing! Now I have to go out and find food tomorrow with hardly any sleep!"

Cardinal began a worried whistle; Raccoon began running round and round in circles out of frustration, and, so as not to be left out of the misery, Mouse joined in by shrieking a long chorus of squeaks. They had become a hubbub of crazy critters until an angry, eerie hooooooot floated down from the barn's rafters.

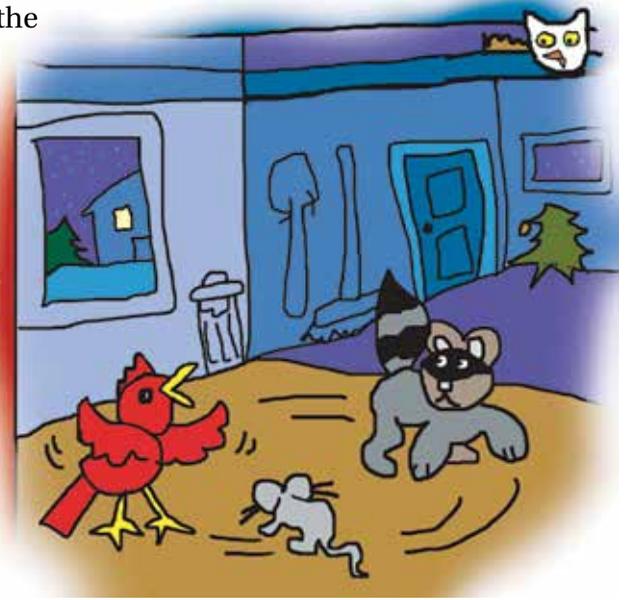
"Whooooo is upsetting my babies?" The small animals on the barn floor were shocked into silence. "I have just hatched my owlets, and I'm about to go out and find food. If you don't simmer down, I might have to make you our meal!"

Squirrel explained how they had all waited patiently under the shrub in the cold for their chance to feast and relax with the people's wasted food and party garbage, finishing, "And they left nothing behind for us!"

Luna explained. "The people were very careful to plan well so that there wouldn't be waste from their party. They fixed the right amount of food, then sent all of the leftovers with their guests. They used their own dishes and eating utensils so that there would be no paper plates to throw away. They saved any gift wrap or bags from packages to be reused or recycled. Most of the people gave each other promises of fun adventures as gifts. For example, the grandmother gave the girl a promise of a day of cookie baking and a movie later this month. They want to protect our earth and creatures like you!"

Mouse, Squirrel, Raccoon, and Cardinal thanked Luna for the information before leaving the barn sadly. Yet, when they reached the back of the barn, they saw a beautiful scene. While the critters had been awaiting the feast that seemed not to have happened, the children had prepared a gift and a feast just for them!

The small fir tree at the rear of the barn stood decorated from top to bottom. Strings of berries and popcorn hung round and round. Pinecones covered in peanut butter and dunked in birdseed hung from the branches. Dried apples and oranges filled in the rest. Bows made of raffia, perfect for nest building, added color near the top. The wait had been worth it after all!



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