

# Paper Reduction Campaign



## Snapshot

Most students are excited to help save forests and the plants and animals that live there. One of the best ways to do this is to simply use less paper.

**Objective:** Students and staff will significantly reduce their paper use at school. Students will be able to state at least one reason why reducing paper usage helps the environment.

**Age Groups:** K-12<sup>th</sup> grade

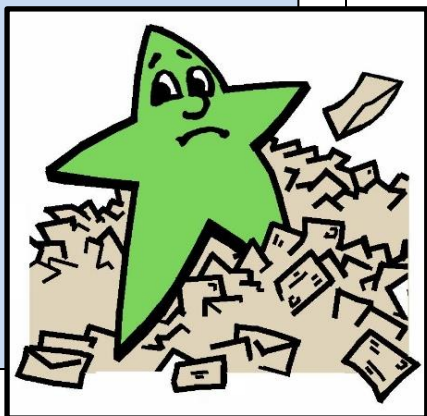
**Setting:** School building

## Project Duration:

- Preparation: 1-3 hours
- Campaign: 1-4 weeks

## Materials:

- 17 reams of printer paper for display (optional)
- Poster-making materials



## Why This Project Matters:

Trees are not the only casualty of using more paper than we need. The process of making paper also leads to water pollution, air pollution, and the loss of plant and animal habitat. To produce paper, healthy forested lands are often converted into tree farms, including old growth trees in the Pacific Northwest. Because schools use large quantities of paper for teaching and other communications, they can have a substantial positive environmental impact by reducing their paper consumption.

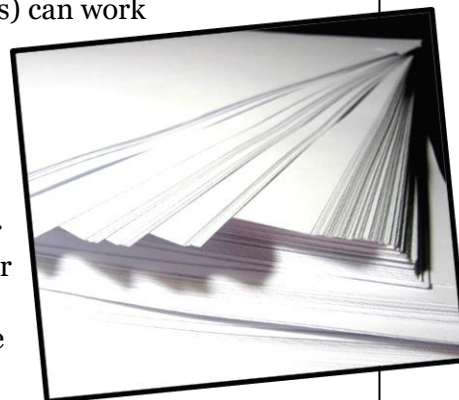
## Project Summary:

This campaign may be tailored to a school's individual needs and goals. The school will choose three or more collaborative actions to reduce their paper use. The entire school community (students, teachers, staff, and parents) can work together in achieving these goals.

## Implementation:

### Preparing for the campaign:

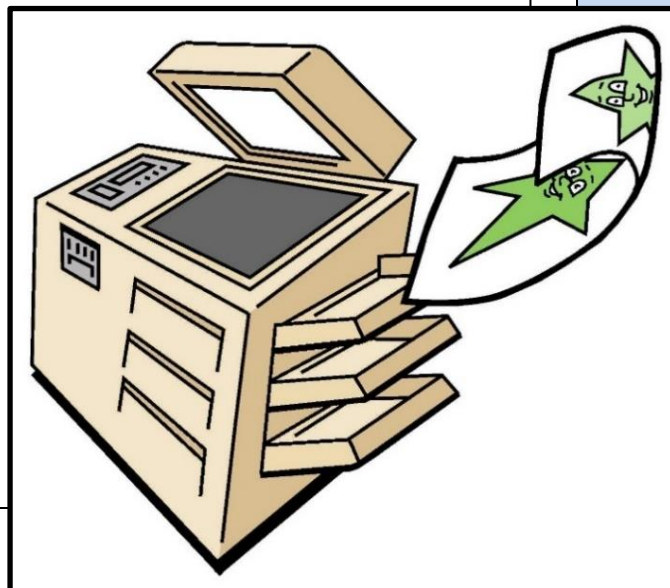
- Meet with students, staff and/or parents to identify existing paper usage at school and brainstorm ways to reduce it. Here are some examples of paper reduction:
  - replace paper cups, plates, and napkins in the staff lounge with reusables
  - acquire (via donation or purchase) a set of reusable plates, cups, and utensils for each classroom to be used for parties and school events
  - print/copy on of both sides of the paper
  - use smaller margins on documents
  - collect used paper that still has one blank side for writing/drawing practice paper
  - save and reuse scraps of construction paper for art projects



- use recycled paper only (100% post-consumer content, if possible)
- purchase chlorine-free paper products
- purchase tree-free papers (made from wheat straw, bamboo, or hemp) that grow quickly and are more sustainable
- use digital media instead of print media for sharing information (teacher resources, school newsletters, etc.)
- utilize small, portable white boards instead of paper during student seatwork
- consider fundraisers for digital tablets if your school does not already have them
- use digital projections of worksheets instead of paper copies for students
- investigate paperless receipts if there is a school store
- stock items made from recycled materials (pencils made from newspapers, recycled sticky notes, etc.) in the school store
- determine the necessity of subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, and periodicals
- use cloth towels or sponges instead of paper towels to clean classroom surfaces
- install hand dryers in bathrooms to eliminate paper towels
- reuse tissue paper and newspaper when shipping packages
- take steps to reduce junk mail sent to the school
- Decide which three (or more) paper-reducing actions the school community will focus on for this effort. More can be added in a later campaign once this effort is successful.
- Choose the activities and appropriate length of time for the campaign (see ideas below).

### Extensions:

- Make recycled paper with student groups. See Making Recycled Paper, Chapter 21.
- In the school store, sell reusable bags made from recycled materials featuring the school's logo.
- Facilitate a cloth napkin making activity. Napkins can be made for sale in the school store. See Making Cloth Napkins, Chapter 13.
- Encourage book reuse through using local libraries, holding a book swap, and/or donating books to charity.



### *Campaign promotions and kick-off event:*

- Have a student group research current data on the amount of paper use, how much ends up in landfills, and on the importance of forests (in relation to clean air, water, soil, and habitats).
- Create a visual by stacking 17 reams of printer paper (as a photo or as a tangible prop) to demonstrate how much paper is made from one 30-foot-tall tree.
- Inform the school community of the new paper-reduction goals through student-created posters, verbal or video announcements, family newsletters, and a kick-off presentation.
- Facilitate a 30-minute kick-off assembly to share information with the school community on the amount of paper being used, the amount that ends up in landfills, the environmental cost of making paper, and what the school will now be working on to conserve paper use. Students may create skits or other visuals for the assembly.
- Conduct an audit of school paper use prior to and periodically throughout the campaign. Report any progress made to the entire school community.

### **Assessment:**

Assessments will vary depending on which goals the school chooses to work towards. If reducing the number of copies made at the copy machine, for example, speak with the school's office manager about checking the copy machine's counter before and after the campaign. If the goal is to use both sides of every piece of paper, audit the recycling bins to see what percentage of the paper has been used on both sides.

During non-curricular times, such as lunch or recess, survey students by asking what they are doing to reduce their own paper use and why it helps the earth to do so.

### **Related Activities:**

"One or None" Paper Towel Campaign – Chapter 5  
Making Cloth Napkins – Chapter 13  
Reusing Children's Books – Chapter 14  
Making Recycled Paper – Chapter 21

