



# Reducing Our Impact

without the red tape

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**T**he environment is struggling. Deforestation, the dying coral reefs, heavy pollution in our water systems, and global warming are all happening due to careless human interactions with the environment. To one person the task of changing these interactions can seem impossible. What could you possibly do to change the world? Where would you even start? Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

## **Carpool**

According to Epa.gov, transportation contributes 29 percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. There are many benefits to carpooling with your friends to work or school. Not only does carpooling cut down on emissions, it also saves gas and makes it easier to find parking spaces. Carpooling is one of the easiest ways to reduce your carbon footprint. It can even save you money if you split the cost of gas with the person you are carpooling with.

## **Want to Win?**

In an effort to encourage environmental awareness at St. Andrew's, SA Faculty and Journalism class have worked together to create an incentive program for students. If you go to [sarevelation.com](https://sarevelation.com) and submit a picture of yourself supporting the environment, you will be entered to win amazing prizes. See [sarevelation.com](https://sarevelation.com) for details.

## **Take Action**

If you want a direct way to help the environment in your local community, participate in a cleanup in your local area. In Mississippi, there are always ways to get involved. Participating in cleanup can not only be fun but also an incredibly productive way to help the environment. Go to <https://takeaction.parley.tv/> to get involved in a cleanup near you.

## **Politics**

Voting is one of the most effective ways to stop climate change. If you can, vote for representatives that have a genuine interest in helping the environment. If you can't vote, but still want to make a difference, you can write letters to your representatives telling them to make laws to help the environment. You can also participate in climate strikes at your local political center or capitol. Go to the instagram account [@fridaysforfuture](https://www.instagram.com/fridaysforfuture) to see climate strikes in your area and around the world.

## Rejecting single-use plastics

One of the biggest pollutants in the environment is plastic. Plastic isn't biodegradable; instead, plastic breaks down into smaller pieces finding its way into the soil, water, and even the air. One of the best ways to keep plastics from entering the environment is to not use single-use plastics. Single use plastics are plastic products that are only used once and thrown away. By rejecting the use of these products as a consumer, you are helping the environment while simultaneously not supporting companies who create these products, thereby discouraging the production of wasteful plastic. Below are a few of the most common single-use plastics and ways to avoid using them.

### Water Bottles

According to Earthday.org, "Americans purchase around 13 disposable plastic bottles per month which total to 156 bottles annually." By using a reusable water bottle you can have a positive impact on your relationship with the environment. If you don't own a reusable water bottle, buy one, but try to find one that isn't made out of plastic.



### Plastic Straws

Across the world, half a million straws are used daily (Earthday.org). By using reusable straws you can help cut down on the amount of wasted plastic that is produced. There are several alternatives that are both single-use and reusable including paper, metal, bamboo, and even pasta.



### Grocery Bags

According to earthday.org, "Americans throw away 100 billion plastic bags annually." Additionally, the "reusable" plastic bags that are made of thicker material, have actually been found to be worse for the environment. Cloth bags, however, are a great alternative to plastic bags and won't damage the environment.



### Recycling

A large portion of plastics never even make it to the recycling plant or landfill. Instead, they are allowed to flow into the oceans; an equivalent of one full garbage truck of plastic into the oceans per minute (earthday.org). While it may not be possible to avoid all single-use plastics, you should always do your best to recycle what you use.