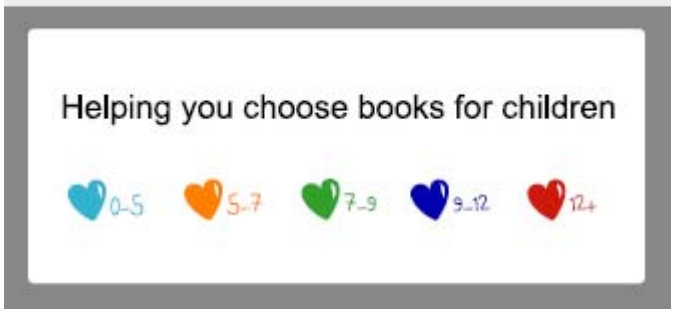
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You Can Save the Planet

written by

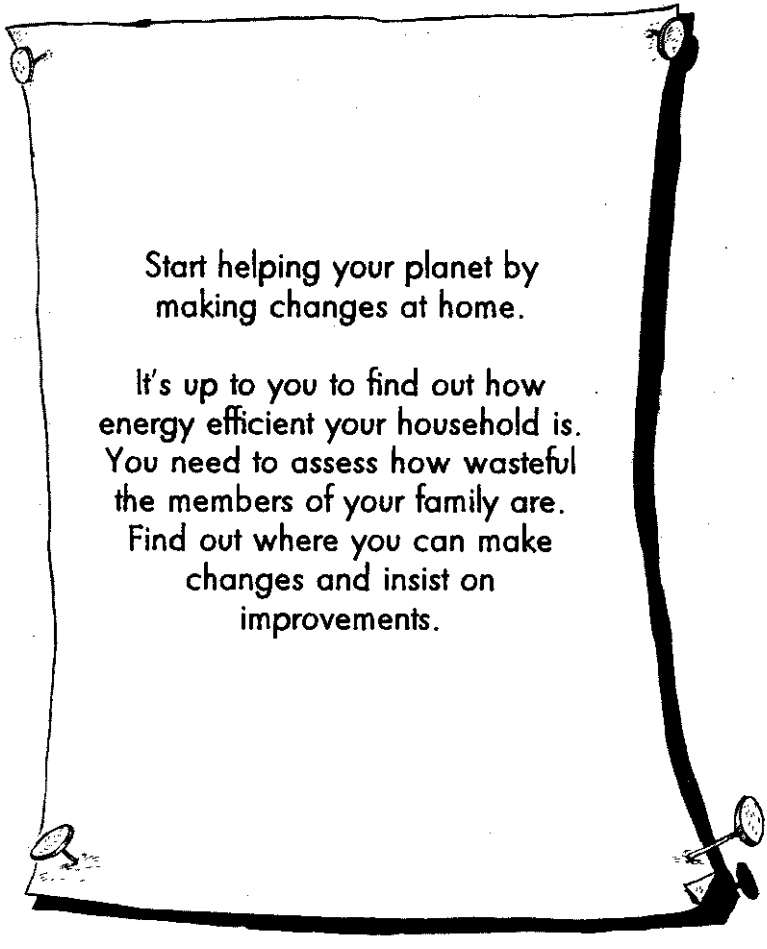
Jacquie Wines

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Start helping your planet by making changes at home.

It's up to you to find out how energy efficient your household is. You need to assess how wasteful the members of your family are. Find out where you can make changes and insist on improvements.

No.1: Assess Your Excesses

Find out how many energy crimes are being committed in your household every day. Make a note of the following:

ENERGY DIARY

• I have taken a look and our attic is/is not insulated.

• I tested each window in our house for drafts by holding a feather in front of it and seeing whether it fluttered. _____ windows had drafts.

• We have _____ light bulbs in this house. _____ of them are energy efficient, fluorescent bulbs.

• I walked around the house and _____ lights had been left on in rooms that were not being used.

• When I checked, _____ electrical appliances in the house were on standby.

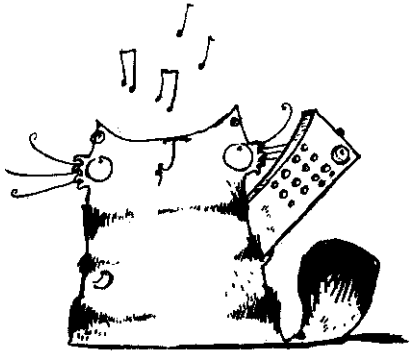
• The heating/air conditioning was set to _____. but unfortunately _____ windows were open.

• I checked the washing machine and the dishwasher when they were last used and they were full/ half full.

_____ taps in the house were dripping.

No.2: Switch It Off

Did you know that a colour TV left on standby can use 85% of the energy it uses when it is actually on? A video recorder left on standby uses almost as much electricity as when it is playing a tape.



Every gadget in your house that is left on standby wastes energy. You can often tell if an appliance is on standby because you'll see a little red light on it glowing. Many appliances go to standby if you use a remote control to switch them off. You might not think a little red light can do much harm, but it is costing millions of pounds in wasted energy.

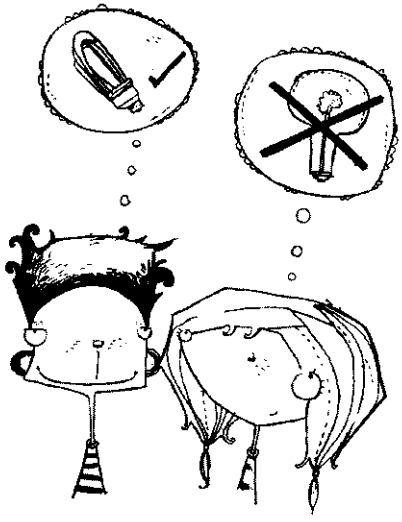
OVER TO YOU

• Check every appliance in your house, including TVs, computers, mobile-phone chargers, DVDs and video players. When an appliance is not being used it should be switched off at the socket on the wall or unplugged completely. Tell your parents they could save up to 13% off their electricity bill by doing this simple thing. They will be saving money as well as saving the planet.

No.3: Choose The Right Light

Check out every light and lamp in your house. How many of them have energy-efficient light bulbs?

Compact fluorescent, spiral light bulbs last ten times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs and use 66% less energy. Point this out to anybody who buys another box of 'old-fashioned' energy-wasting light bulbs, and rant at anyone who leaves on lights that are not needed. They'll soon get the message.



No.4: Don't Be A Fan Of Fans

The next time that you see someone who is cooking reach to switch on the extractor fan above the stove – stop them. Open the kitchen window instead, and tell them this is a 100% energy-saving solution.

No.5: Washday Decisions

Turning on the washing machine just to wash your jeans or a football shirt wastes water and electricity. And did you know that all the detergents you use pollute the water system?

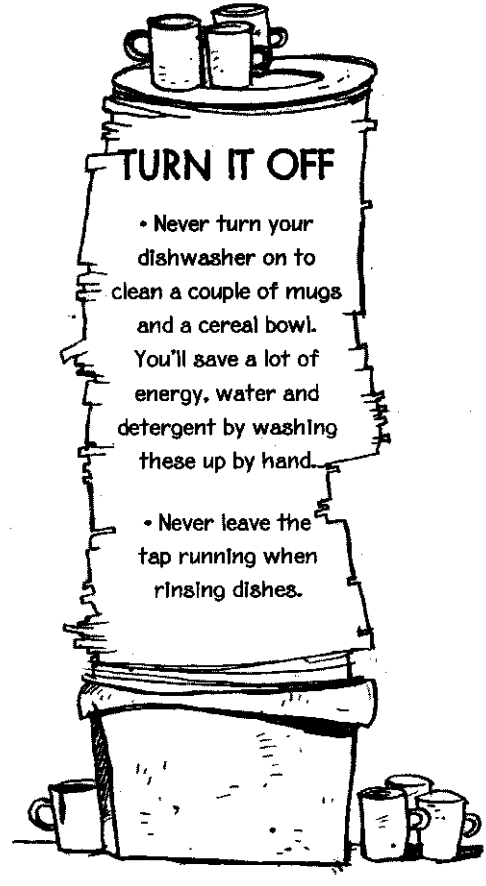
Copy out this list of rules for your household and make washday a more eco-friendly occasion:

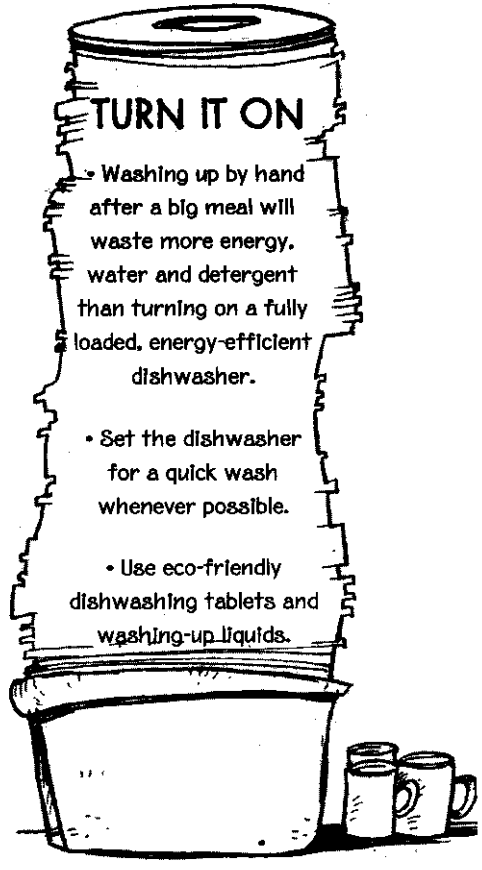
WASHDAY RULES

- If clothes aren't really dirty we will use a cooler wash. This saves electricity, because 90% of the energy used by a washing machine is used in heating the water.
- We will only switch on the washing machine when it is completely full.
- We will wash single items by hand.
- We will use environmentally-friendly washing powders.
- We will use less washing powder and we will NOT use fabric softeners.
- We will go easy on stain removers.
- We will try to keep our clothes cleaner so we can wear them for longer without washing them.

No.6: Get Out The Rubber Gloves

An eco-warrior's life is never easy. Sometimes you will need to weigh up the pros and cons of an issue in order to make a sensible choice. Take dishwashers: there are times when it makes eco-sense to turn them off, and times to use them.

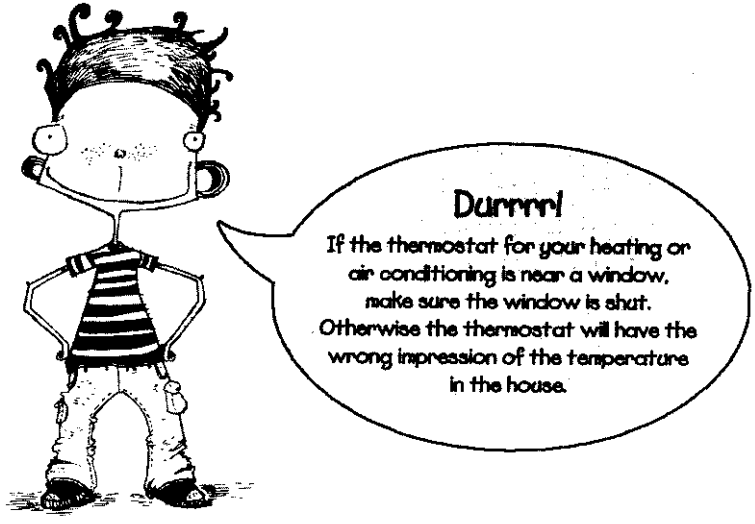




No.7: Check That Thermostat

Lowering the temperature on the thermostat of your heating and air-conditioning units by only 1.5°C (3°F) can reduce the greenhouse gases your household produces by up to a tonne. So take a look at the thermostat and check whether you really need the air conditioning that cold or the heating that hot.

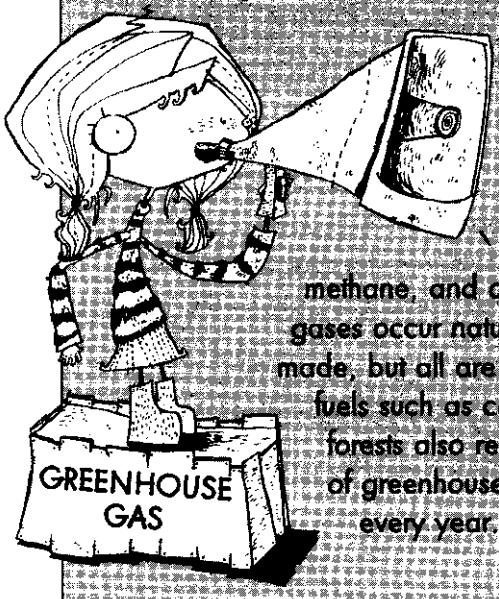
Find out about greenhouse gases and the effect they are having on our planet on the next page.



Another really simple but effective thing to do is dust or vacuum the surfaces of all the radiators in your house. This increases their efficiency by improving the flow of heat.

Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse gases are a group of gases that scientists believe are affecting the climate of our planet. The main greenhouse gases are water vapour, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, and ozone. Many greenhouse gases occur naturally, some are man-made, but all are increased by burning fuels such as coal and oil. Burning rain forests also releases millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases into the air every year.

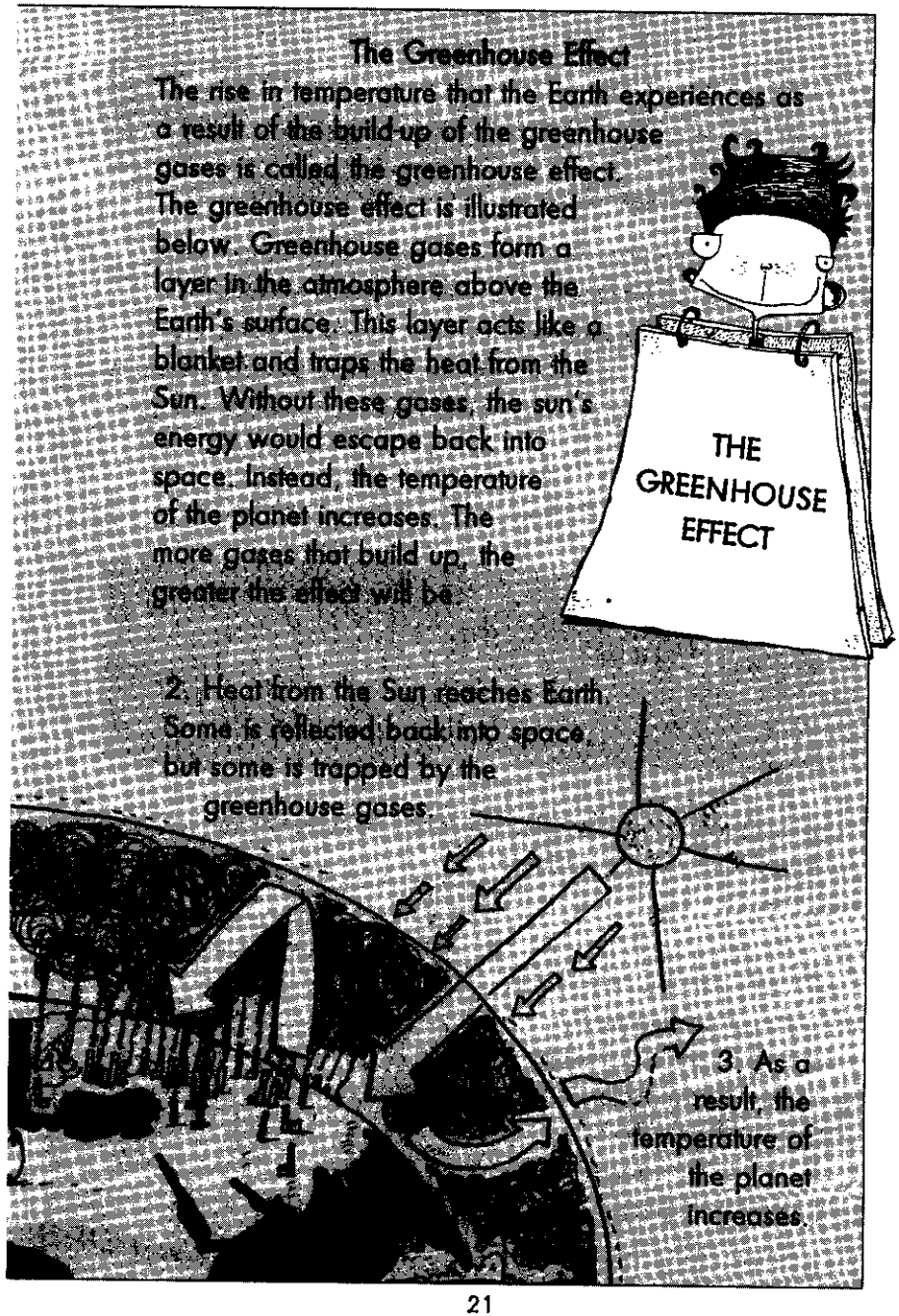


1. Greenhouse gases form a layer above the surface of the Earth, like a blanket. The more gases that are produced, the thicker the blanket becomes.



The Greenhouse Effect

The rise in temperature that the Earth experiences as a result of the build up of the greenhouse gases is called the greenhouse effect. The greenhouse effect is illustrated below. Greenhouse gases form a layer in the atmosphere above the Earth's surface. This layer acts like a blanket and traps the heat from the Sun. Without these gases, the sun's energy would escape back into space. Instead, the temperature of the planet increases. The more gases that build up, the greater the effect will be.



No.8: It's Cool To Hang Out

Household appliances that give off heat, such as a tumble-dryer, use lots of electricity. So whenever the weather is warm, persuade the members of your family to hang the washing outside on a line to dry, or arrange the clothes on a rack indoors. Turning off the tumble-dryer is a 100% energy-saving solution.

No.9: It's A Wind-Up

Why not look out for wind-up versions of household gadgets? They make perfect eco-gifts.

You'll find wind-up torches, radios and mobile-phone chargers. There's no need for mains electricity or batteries, all you have to do is wind and wind and wind and wind . . .

