

**REDUCE  
REUSE  
RECYCLE**

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## 1. Reduce

"Reducing" means **using less**, like using fewer plastic bottles or buying products with less packaging. It's about cutting down on waste from the start.

"Reduce" means not buying too many things in the first place. It's about being mindful of using resources wisely so they [don't end up in a landfill](#).

For instance, bringing your own **reusable coffee cup** or water bottle is an example of "reducing". By doing this, you help cut down on the need for single-use containers and reduce waste.



## 2. Reuse

"Reusing" means using things again instead of throwing them away. There are a lot of creative ways that you **can reuse anything** in your household.

For example, you can reuse old cardboard boxes to create fun DIY projects or as storage containers. This not only saves money but also **reduces the number of boxes** that end up in the trash.



Another example of "reuse" is using an empty glass jar to store leftovers instead of throwing them away. This way, you give the jar a **second life** and reduce the need for new containers.

### 3. Recycle

"Recycling" is the process of collecting and processing materials like paper, plastic, and glass so they can be **turned into new products**. It's a way to give old items a new life instead of sending them to the landfill.

On average, [over 69 million tons are recycled](#) in the United States. Paper and cardboard make up about two-thirds of all the recycled things. Next, metals are around 13%. Finally, glass, plastic, and wood together are about 4 to 5%.

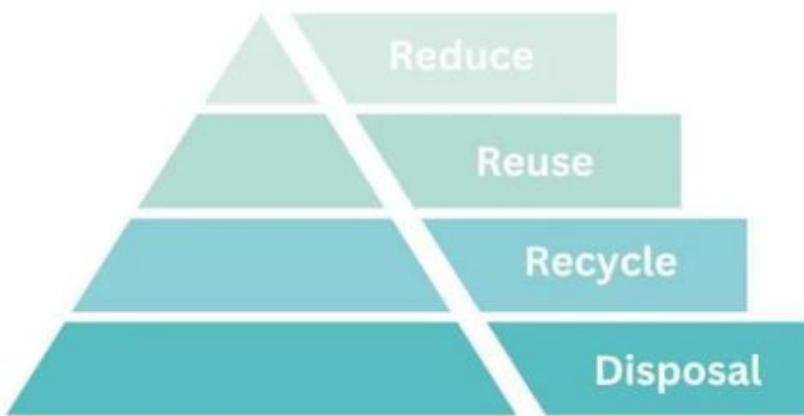
Food waste is still a significant problem. In the United States, **30-40% of all food produced is wasted**. This is a big problem because it means throwing away good food and causing environmental issues.



## The 3 R's Hierarchy

The order of the 3 R's is not just about the spelling; it's a strategic approach to **sustainable waste management**.

The 3 R's hierarchy starts with "Reduce," the best way to manage waste. Then comes "Reuse," and lastly "Recycle."



This hierarchy shows that it's **best to reduce and reuse** items first. Recycling uses more energy and resources and has a bigger environmental impact.

"Reduce" is the leader because it makes sure you don't buy unnecessary items in the first place. Next, "reuse" is like a **helpful sidekick** because it's when you use something more than once. Finally, "recycle" is like the hero who cleans up after a big mess.

## Examples of the 3 R's

The table below highlights some of the examples of applying the 3 R's to everyday life.

R's	Examples
Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Using a reusable water bottle</li><li>- Buying products with less packaging</li><li>- Walking or biking instead of driving for short trips</li></ul>
Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Using a cloth shopping bag instead of plastic bags</li><li>- Repurposing old jars as storage containers</li><li>- Handing down clothes or toys to younger siblings or friends</li></ul>
Recycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Putting empty glass, plastic, and paper in recycling bins</li><li>- Recycling old newspapers and magazines</li><li>- Turning aluminum cans into new aluminum products</li></ul>

## Summary

So far, you've learned about the importance of the 3 R's and how they can be helpful in reducing [climate change](#). Here's a recap of the 3 R's:

- ✓ "Reduce" means using less of something. Instead of using a plastic shopping bag, you bring your own reusable bags.
- ✓ "Reuse" means using things again. For example, you can repair or repurpose them instead of immediately replacing them.
- ✓ "Recycle" means that you convert existing items and turn them into new products. This includes paper, cardboard, metal, glass, plastic, and wood.

By following the 3 R's, we can **protect the Earth**, use things wisely, and make sure there's enough for us and the generations that come after us.

Reference(s): [The 3 R's - Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle - Earth How](#)