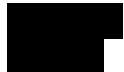


Earth Day Essay



Leland & Gray Middle School

Change Makes A Difference

By Jacqueline

Did you know, there are nearly 50 billion pieces of litter along U.S. roadways and waterways? It's true, millions of pounds of litter is created every year from us. Yes, you make a difference. Keeping some extra trash in your pocket before throwing it in the nearest trash bin can make a huge change. More change than you'd expect.

It's true, over 50 billion pieces of litter is produced every year in the U.S. Over 4.9 million pounds of litter is produced each year in the U.S as well. The average person produces 1,800 pounds of litter. Throwing all of your trash in the garbage, instead of on the ground, can make a huge difference. For example, if 100 people decided to throw all of their trash in the garbage in a year, then there would be 180,000 less pounds of litter!

The more that people decide to throw away their trash, the less litter there is on the side of roads. Litter harms wildlife, animals, and even yourself! Litter can spread diseases, viruses, and other types of bacteria that can get people sick. Around 400,000 people from developing countries every year die from the sicknesses litter can give you. Don't be scared, though! Only a few people get the flu, and most people just get some minor symptoms of the flu, and other minor diseases.

Though humans may only get minor illnesses, with few actually dying from litter, animals and wildlife are highly affected by litter. Over 1 million animals die from litter each year. If the animals try to consume the litter, since some litter may still smell like food, the trash will block the animals' airways and make them suffocate. This most commonly happens to fish and other sea creatures. Most of the deaths of animals from litter are sea animals.

Not to fear though, you can make a difference! The 1,800 pounds of litter you produce every year can be limited! Yeah, a few pieces of trash may fall out of our pocket one day, maybe some of your trash gets picked up in the wind as you're holding it, but you can try to make an effort to throw all of your trash in your nearest garbage bin! But not only should you do this, you should try to encourage others as well! Your friends, your family, try to make as many people as possible limit the litter that is harming our environment, our wildlife, and each other.

Resources:

[Environment America](#)

[Global Citizen](#)

[National Marine Sanctuaries](#)

