



Sustainability Smarts

Did you know that paper is one of the most recycled materials in the world? And that using paper actually helps to support wildlife habitats and watersheds? If you're like many people, you may have been told to "save a tree" by not printing out digital content. But printing on paper or shipping in a cardboard box is often the *more* eco-friendly choice for forests.

Test your sustainability smarts by answering True (T) or False (F) for each of the following questions. **But first, fold back the bottom of the page so you can't see the answers.**

- ___ 1. Paper production has a large carbon footprint.
- ___ 2. Most of the paper consumed in the U.S. is recycled.
- ___ 3. There are very few uses for recycled paper products.
- ___ 4. Reading e-books, doing homework on a computer, and paying bills online has no environmental impact.
- ___ 5. The paper industry has contributed to the growth of our nation's forests.
- ___ 6. The paper industry is important for the economy.
- ___ 7. Recycling uses less energy than making new paper.
- ___ 8. We could make all the paper we need using recycled fibers.
- ___ 9. Water used by the paper industry is returned to streams cleaner than it was before.
- ___ 10. There are 20% more trees in the U.S. today than there were on the first Earth Day celebration in 1970.

Now read the answers below to learn more about each of the quiz questions. Then, choose one topic and research it further using the listed online resources. Write down two facts you discover to share with your class:

1. _____

2. _____



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Pop Quiz Answers:

- 1. **False.** With only 1% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, the paper industry is one of the lowest industrial emitters. And paper industry members reduced their footprint by 19.9% from 2005-2016, while also reducing water waste.¹
- 2. **True.** In 2018, the U.S. recycled 68.1% of paper products used. The industry goal is to recover 70% annually by 2020. By contrast, 91% of plastic is not recycled.²
- 3. **False.** More than 5,000 products can be made from recycled paper.³
- 4. **False.** Modems and routers alone consume more than \$1 billion worth of electricity per year in the U.S. That's a total of 5 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions, or the equivalent of 1.1 million vehicles – and doesn't even include the power used to charge your computers, tablets, and/or mobile devices.⁴
- 5. **True.** The number of trees in the U.S. has increased by 20% since 1970, and U.S. forests grow 70% more wood each year than is harvested. The income landowners receive for trees grown on their land encourages them to maintain, sustainably manage, and renew this valuable resource.⁵
- 6. **True.** Companies in the U.S. paper industry employ approximately 950,000 people. In 45 states, they are among the top 10 providers of manufacturing jobs.⁶
- 7. **True.** Using old paper and cardboard to make new products uses 65% less energy and creates 35% less water pollution.⁷
- 8. **False.** Recovered paper accounts for about 38% of fiber used to make new products, but we'd run out in 6-18 months if we didn't also use new wood.⁸
- 9. **True.** Water is reused and recycled at least 10 times throughout the paper manufacturing process.⁹
- 10. **True.** Total forest area grew by 2 million acres from 2000 to 2005.¹⁰

¹<https://sustainability.afandpa.org/3-pillars/environmental/>
²<https://paperrecycles.org/media/news/2019/05/08/u.s.-paper-recovery-for-recycling-rate-reaches-record-68.1-percent-in-2018-and>
<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>
³<https://archive.epa.gov/wastes/conservation/materials/paper/web/html/faqs.html>
⁴<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/residential-network-IB.pdf>
⁵<https://twosidesna.org>
⁶<https://afandpa.org/our-industry/fun-facts>
⁷<http://www.bir.org/industry/paper>
⁸<https://twosidesna.org/recycled-fiber-and-wood-fiber-from-well-managed-forests-are-both-essential-to-sustain-the-paper-life-cycle/>
⁹http://afandpa.org/docs/default-source/sust-toolkit/af-amp-pa-2016-sustainability-report_final.pdf?sfvrsn=2
¹⁰<https://afandpa.org/our-industry/fun-facts>