

# Computer Capers

February 2009

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## Green Valentines

Aren't valentines normally red? This year they can still be red, but with an environmentally-sensitive "green" flair. Create your valentines from your used writing papers from school. Gather any handwritten work that you've gotten back from your teacher and no longer need to save. Fold the papers in half and cut out heart shapes for your valentines. Next, use your computer to create a small message that you can place in the middle of your "handwriting heart" that says... "You're just WRITE!," or another play on words associated with writing. Create several messages on the same page with space to cut around each. Next, print out your messages on a colored piece of paper (red or "green"), cut them into individual pieces, and paste them in the middle of your handwritten hearts. I'm sure your family and friends will appreciate your hard work and your attention to being environmentally responsible. Happy Valentine's Day to your friends... and to the earth too!



## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

These 3 R's are the most important rules to live by as far as the environment is concerned. To remind yourself and your family about these rules, create small posters or flyers that you can hang up around the house in key areas where the 3 R's can be implemented. Use a word processor and a large, bold font to write the words: "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." You might even be able to find clip art that fits this theme perfectly. Before printing, count the places where you might place the small poster. What about on the refrigerator door?...Next to each trashcan?...In the garage?...In your family car? Once your page is complete, print the exact number of copies needed. Place the posters around your house, and on each poster write out specific ways that you could implement the 3 R's for that location. For example, on the refrigerator, you could write, "Keep the Door Closed - Save Energy!," "Re-Use Plastic Containers," or "Recycle Waste." Hopefully, these little reminders will yield a BIG savings in your household expenses as well as a big benefit for our environment.



*Indiana Language Arts Standard: 2.4.5 Use a computer to draft, revise, and publish writing.*

*Indiana Language Arts Standard 4.4.2 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements for a piece of writing.*

## Weight of Waste

How much waste do you think your family throws out on a weekly basis? Do a family research project to find out. Set up a spreadsheet with a row labeled for each family member. In column B, enter that person's prediction in pounds for the weight of the family trash for a week. At week's end, weigh the trash generated by your family by using a bathroom scale. (Hint: Hold the bag(s) of trash and weigh yourself then subtract your weight from the result.) Record the actual weight and compare it to the predictions. Which family member's guess was the closest to the actual weight?...furthest from the actual weight? Were you surprised by what you saw and measured? Discuss ways to reduce the amount of trash discarded by your family and try those strategies during the following week. Have each family member again predict the weight of one week's trash and add that to a new column in the spreadsheet. Weigh the trash at the end of the week and record the actual weight as you did previously. Was the family able to reduce the waste? Was each person's prediction closer to the actual weight than his/her prediction for the first week? Did knowing how much waste is actually generated by your family motivate you to reduce, reuse and recycle? By implementing ways to reduce family trash, you'll make the trash collectors and the earth happy.

*Indiana Mathematics Standard 6.6: Students compute and analyze statistical measures for data sets. They determine Theoretical and experimental probabilities and use them to make predictions about events.*



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