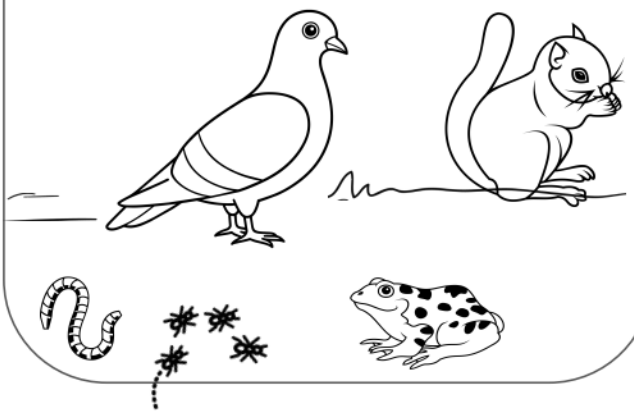
Name _____

What can young people do to protect the environment?

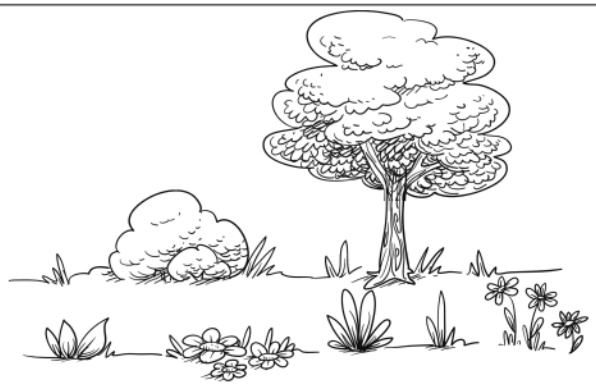
How many living things have you seen today? Could you count them all if you tried? Think about it.

There's all the people you've seen today—maybe your little brother, a mail carrier, people you passed on the street.

And there are animals to count, like your neighbor's dog, the pigeon you saw at recess, or the line of ants you watched climbing up the sink.



And how about plants? You'd have to count every patch of grass you walked over today, any trees you sat under, every field of crops you drove by.



It's a big list, right? And that's just the ones you've seen TODAY.

All of them depend on the Earth to live. It's the only place we've found so far in our entire universe where living things can grow and thrive.

But the Earth faces big challenges. Human actions are creating POLLUTION: chemicals and wast that can harm the environment. From a sea turtle trying to swim i ocean waters clogged with trash, to a human struggling to breathe smoky air in a city, pollution is dangerous for living things big and small.

Still, what can you do? After all, you're just one of about 8 BILLION people on Earth. And if you're still too young to vote, or run a business, or drive a car, how can you possibly help?
Good news—there ARE things you can do to protect the environment. How you can help will depend on where you live, and what you have access to. But here are a few ideas to get you started.

1

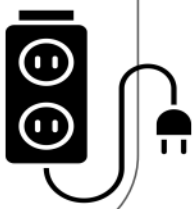
Make less trash
Lots of garbage causes lots of problems for the environment. Instead of using stuff you have to throw away after one use (like plastic water bottles or plastic shopping bags), use items you can reuse again and again, like reusable bottles or cloth bags. Try to avoid buying things you don't really need.

2

If you can, compost
We can turn food scraps into fertilizer that helps plants grow. Find out if your area has a compost program. If you have access to outside space, ask an adult if you can set up a compost heap.

3

Use less electricity
Electricity powers some of people's most important activities. But the more electric energy we use, the more we have to produce. And the process of producing electric energy sometimes creates pollution. Turn off electric devices when you're not using them.



4

Help keep your local streets and storm drains clean
Trash that starts in streets can end up washing into rivers or oceans. You can stop that from happening by putting trash where it belongs—in a garbage can.

5

Learn about the living things near you
The more you know about the unique environment around you, the better you'll be able to take care of the plants and animals living there. Research the plants and animals native to your area online, or visit a local nature center.