

The Recycling Maniacs

A play promoting the use of blue and black boxes
featuring 6 players – one with very limited English!

Anne Sproule, Meadowlands PS, Ottawa, Canada, 2005

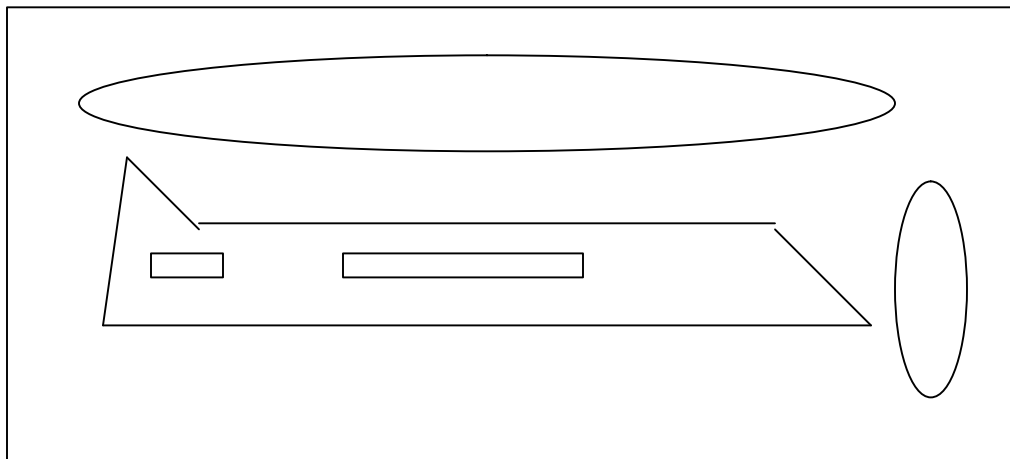
In lieu of a playwright's stipend, the writer requests that those groups wishing to perform this play make a donation to either the World Wildlife Federation or Nature Conservancy.

Props needed for this play:

- good both sides paper
- marker pen in an "ugly" colour
- blue box and black box
- styrofoam meat tray and airplanes
- short garbage can
- old books – several, as you might give one away each performance
- blue construction paper

To make a styrofoam airplane, cut out wings, tail, and a fuselage out of a styrofoam meat tray. Slot wings and tail into slots cut in the fuselage. Push a paperclip on the nose to weigh it so it flies well. (The dollar store sells these planes, so you can use them as a template, you can cut out the plane with scissors, but the slots are easier to make with a sharp knife.)

Costumes: Regular clothes or T shirts from Value Village or other Thrift shop can be decorated with fabric markers or crayons and the designs ironed on for permanence (cover crayon with blank newsprint paper before ironing).



The "stage" is set with a desk near the back, and the garbage can directly to the front, but with room to walk between the can and the desk. The black box and blue box are on either side of the garbage can, far enough away that several people can stand between each one. Hidden behind the black box are an old book, a yogurt carton with its foil top inside, a piece of blue construction paper, and a styrofoam meat tray. Hidden inside the desk is a styrofoam airplane made from a meat tray.

Player 2 is sitting at a desk, drawing something. The other players wander on stage and look at what s/he is doing.

Player 1 Hey <*name of Player 2*>, What are you doing?

Player 2 I'm a member of the EarthCARE Team! I'm making a poster to tell people not to waste paper. Hmm, I don't like this colour; I'll start over.

(crumples up paper and throws it in the garbage)

Player 3 What are you doing!!??!!!

Player 2 Didn't I just tell you?

Player 4 Yeah, but look what you just did!

Player 2 What?

Player 5 1) You threw out a piece of paper with one line written on it.

Player 3 2) You threw it in the garbage.

Player 2 Of course I did! I'm a member of EarthCARE! I don't litter!

Player 6 I'm glad you don't litter, but how about reducing, reusing, and recycling?

Player 2 How about it?

Player 5 Well, for a start, maybe you could *talk* to everyone you meet about saving paper instead of *using* paper to make posters to tell people not to use paper. That would be reducing.

Player 4 But posters can be a good thing. However, you could use the back of a paper that had already been used to make your poster; that would be reusing.

Player 6 And if you do have to throw out paper, try throwing it into the recycle box instead of the garbage. That way it can be recycled into new paper or cardboard.

Player 6 puts paper in the black box.

Player 2 Wow! Have you guys considered being part of EarthCARE? You have some great ideas. That's it! From now on I'm a recycling maniac. Hey there's some stuff!

Player 2 walks to hidden stash and picks up book.

Player 1 Recycling? Cool! I'm into it!

Player 1 climbs into the blue box.

Player 4 <name *Player* >1, please get out of the recycling bin, they're for cans and bottles and #1 and 2 plastic.

Player 4 lifts player 1 out of the blue box.

Player 2 Yes, <name *Player 1*>, please move, I have to put this book in there.

Player 2 goes to put book in blue box.

Player 3 No, NO, No!

Player 6 Are you absolutely sure no one wants to read that book -(asks audience) is anyone interested in a book called ____title of book_____?

(if audience says yes, give book to them then say...)

(If audience says no...put book in the black box while saying-)

Player 6 Books get recycled in the black box, not the blue box.

Player two finds piece of blue construction paper and brings it to the blue box

Player 2 Here's a great thing for the blue box! It's blue!

Player 3 No, NO, no!

Player 4 Construction paper goes in the cardboard box, with the other paper.

Player 2 finds yogurt carton, heads for the blue box

Player 2 Well, I'm sure this yogurt stuff goes in there – it's plastic and metal.

Player 3 No!

Player 5 I don't know why, but you can recycle aluminium cans, but not aluminium foil.

Player 6 And the plastic has to be #1 or #2.

Player 2 looks in blue box picks up Perrier bottle and looks at it.

Player 2 Well, there's a bottle in here already, and it says Perrier, not #1.

Player 6 You have to look on the bottom.

Player 2 Does anyone have a magnifying glass?

Player 5 pulls large magnifying glass out of pocket, takes bottle and looks at the bottom.

Player 5 I think it says 3, what do you think?

Player 5 hands bottle and magnifying glass to Player 4.

Player 4 Yes, unfortunately, we have to throw it in the garbage.

Player 4 goes to put yogurt carton into the garbage; Player one grabs it.

Player 1 No you don't, I'll take it home, paint it red, and make a great fake nose!

Player 1 demonstrates how excellently the carton makes a fake nose.

Player 4 Fantastic! That's reusing and using your head!

Player 2 finds the styrofoam meat tray.

Player 2 Here's a nice white thing! That'll go in the black box for sure.

Player 3 NO, No, No!

Player 6 That's Styrofoam – we can't recycle it.

Player 4 pulls out hidden styrofoam airplane and shows it to the audience.

Player 4 But we can make cool airplanes out of it before we have to throw it out. Anyone want an airplane? (gives airplane away) Don't forget to put it in the garbage when it breaks- and take off the paperclip to use it again.

Player 2 So let's see if I've got this straight –

paper, construction paper and cardboard goes into the cardboard box

empty pop cans, glass, tin cans, and #1 and #2 bottles into the blue box

everything else goes in the garbage?

Everybody: That's it!

Player 2 Okay <name *Player 1*>, you can jump into the garbage can instead of the blue box, you aren't recyclable.

Player 1 Good plan!

Player 1 starts to step into garbage can.

Player 3 No, No, No!

All the sensible people grab *Player 1*, then everyone bows.

This play has always been performed in classrooms, some with very limited free space. The offer of the book is rarely taken seriously, the director often has to ask the audience as well. After that, the offer of the airplane is always taken very seriously with many hopeful takers. We often just flew it into the class and created momentary pandemonium similar to a home run ball in the stands.