The Fun Theory

The effects of global warming are visible all around us. Ice is melting at the Earth’s poles, some animals and plants are in danger of extinction and tropical storms are stronger and more frequent than before. Wildfires, flooding and drought have also become very common.

So what is global warming and why is it happening? The Earth produces ‘greenhouse gases’ that protect our world. Greenhouse gases are good because they help to keep the Earth warm. They occur in nature, but they are also produced by some of man’s activities, for example, when we burn fossil fuels. Other human activities that increase the level of greenhouse gases are deforestation and travelling by car or plane. If too many greenhouse gases are produced, the temperature in the Earth’s atmosphere increases. This is called global warming and it has a negative effect on the environment.

What can we do to help? We can all recycle more! When we throw something away, it’s taken to a landfill site or it’s burnt and never used again. If we recycle something, it’s made into a new product and it won’t contaminate the environment. Recycling saves energy, conserves natural resources and limits the production of greenhouse gases.
We all know that we should recycle, but many of us don’t do it. In the European Union, we only recycle 25% of our household rubbish. Most of the rubbish that goes to landfill in Europe could be recycled. So how can we encourage people to recycle more? Researchers in Sweden have found that people recycle more if it is made into a game. This is called ‘the fun theory’.

The researchers did experiments to test their theory. In their first experiment, a bottle bank was converted into an arcade game! Lights and a scoreboard were added to the bottle bank and every time people put a bottle into the bank, they scored points. The ‘bottle bank game’ was a great success. In 24 hours it was used by nearly 100 people, while a traditional bottle bank in the same area was only used by two people.
In a second experiment, the researchers took an ordinary rubbish bin and added the sound effect of something falling from a great height into it. When people put rubbish into the bin, the sound effect was activated and they heard a falling sound and then a big crash! People loved the bin. In one day 72 kg of rubbish was collected in the ‘fun bin’. In a normal bin, a short distance away, only 31 kg of rubbish was collected.

The Swedish researchers proved that the fun theory is true: people do things more often if they’re fun. Perhaps in the future we can have fun recycling and save our planet!