

Don't Mess with Texas

Developed by Texas Department of Transportation in cooperation with Girl Scouts-Lone Star Council.



- ◆ **Requirements:** Complete the one ★ starred plus;

Daisy: Four activities

Brownie: Six activities

Junior: Eight activities

Cadettes/Seniors/Ambassadors: Ten activities

1. ★ **Daisies:** Participate in a cleanup around your meeting place and **FOUR** of the activities listed below.
 ★ **Brownies:** Participate in a cleanup around your school or neighborhood and **SIX** of the activities listed below.
 ★ **Juniors:** Assist with an "Adopt-a-Highway" cleanup or clean a park OR other public area and participate in **EIGHT** of the activities listed below.
 ★ **Cadettes/Seniors:** Adopt a highway, park, creek, or other public area and keep it clean for one year; OR plan and organize a neighborhood or community cleanup; OR plan and implement a litter awareness program for your school, church, or community. You must also participate in **TEN** of the activities listed below.
2. Make up a poem, poster, or skit about littering and display or perform it in a public place.
3. Interview 10 people to find out:
 - If they litter; If so, why?
 - If someone charged them \$1.00 every time they littered, would they stop?
 - What could make them stop littering?
 Share the results of your survey with your troop.
4. Learn about the ways water is affected by litter. Discuss how a piece of trash thrown on the highway can end up in lakes, rivers streams and even the ocean.
5. Think about the ways litter affects wildlife. What would happen to:
 - A bird that tried to eat a cigarette butt?
 - A raccoon that stepped on a broken bottle?
 - A turtle that swam into a plastic ring?
 Can you think of other ways litter might harm animals?
6. Conduct research to find out what laws are in place to combat littering in your community and statewide. Who enforces these laws? Has anyone gotten a ticket for littering? How much was the fine?
7. Find out more about the Don't Mess with Texas antilitter program. What kind of antilitter programs do other states have?
8. Write your own personal action plan to combat litter and stick to it for at least one month.
 - Contact your local health department to find out how litter accumulation can cause health problems. Report what you learn to your troop.

9. Find out what your community does with its trash.
10. Learn the decomposition time of:
 - A piece of notebook paper
 - A soda can
 - A piece of chewing gum
 - Cardboard
 - A Foam cup
 - A disposable diaper
 - A cigarette butt
11. With your troop discuss ways that Girl Scouts can set a good example when it comes to littering.
12. Find out the difference between biodegradable and photodegradable products. Which is better? Provide examples of each.
13. Discuss ways consumers can select items that are environmentally safe. Visit a store to see if you can identify safe products.
14. With your troop, discuss ways that Girl Scouts can set a good example when it comes to environmental leadership. How can you be a good role model for others when it comes to littering?
15. In a story, picture, or collage, trace a piece of trash from its source to its decomposition. Display or share your work.
16. Know the following terms and be able to explain them to your group. You can find definitions on the Don't Mess with Texas Web site at www.dontmesswithtexas.org.
 - Litter
 - Micro Litter
 - Gross Litter
 - Accidental Litter
 - Generation Litterer (Gen L)
17. Read " The Wartville Wizard" by Don Madden, a book that teaches elementary-age student about litter. Create a poster or diorama that depicts your favorite part of the book. Share your poster or diorama and review the book with your troop or group.
18. Answer the following questions and present the information to your group:
 - What are the penalties for littering in Texas?
 - As a citizen, how can you report litter offenses?
 - Who picks up the litter on Texas roads?
19. Research the history of the Don't Mess with Texas campaign. What was the campaign like when it first started? How has it changed over the years? What new programs have been added?
20. Research the following things and present your findings to your troop:
 - How much litter falls on Texas roadsides each year?

- What are the most common kinds of litter on Texas roadsides?
 - How much does it cost to clean up?
21. Write a report about the kinds of litter found during your school or community cleanup. Use your math skills to determine how many pieces were picked up and how many of each item/category were found. What type of trash is the largest contributor to litter in the area?
 22. Ask 5 adults you know how they take care of trash in their cars? Ask them to visit www.dontmesswithtexas.org and order a free, re-usable car litterbag from the Order Gear section and use it as a trash receptacle in their car.
 23. For one month, keep a diary documenting every time you see someone on TV or in a movie litter. What did they litter? How did they litter? Did they get in trouble for it? Report your findings to a younger or older troop.
 24. Report five people who litter on Texas roads. To learn how, visit www.dontmesswithtexas.org and check out the Report-A-Litterer section. Remember the required information to report a litterer and then keep a watchful eye and a pad of paper ready while in the car with your parents. Also, make a note of the most common thing you see littered. Are they Micro Litter, Macro Litter or Accidental Litter? (Note: this exercise could take several weeks to complete)
 25. Find out how fast the wind needs to be to knock trash out of the back of someone's truck. Do so by replicating such a situation with a fan and a few pieces of trash of varying weights.
 26. Team up with a younger or older troop and lead them in a cleanup activity at their school or lead them in a couple of the other requirement options of your choosing.

Resources

Don't Mess with Texas and
Adopt-a-Highway programs

Texas Department of Transportation
Travel Division
125 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483
(512)486-5900
Fax (512) 486-5909
<http://www.dot.state.tx.us/>
<http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org>

Community Cleanup programs

Keep Texas Beautiful
PO Box 2251, Austin, TX 78768
<http://www.ktb.org>

Environmental Education programs

TCEQ-Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
(512)239-1000

ac@tceq.state.tx.us
<http://www.tceq.state.tx.us>

Parks and Wildlife

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Park Operation
4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744
(800) 792-1112
(512)389-4800
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

Adopt-a-Beach, Adopt-a-River,
Lakeshore Cleanup

Texas General Land Office
1700 N. Congress Ave., Suite 840
Austin, TX 78701-1495
1-800-85BEACH
(512) 463-5001
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

Federal laws and regulations

Environmental Protection Agency
1445 Ross Ave., Dallas, TX 75202
(214)665-6444
<http://www.epa.gov/region6/>

Recycling

Recycling Coalition of Texas
PO Box 2359, Austin, TX 78768-2359
(512)473-3217
Fax (800)419-8633
<http://www.recycltex.com/>

Funding for projects

America the Beautiful Fund
725 15th St. NW, Ste 605, Dept. AG, Washington DC 20005
(202)638-1649

The Environmental Center
1245 West 18th Street, Houston, TX 77008
(713)880-5145