

(Before writing the response, make sure to read both passages of text.)

Space Junk

Many people know that trash is a big problem on planet Earth. What many people don't know is that trash has become a problem in outer space too. Years of space exploration have left tons of "space junk" in orbit around the planet.

According to *BBC News*, there are more than 22,000 pieces of junk in space around the earth. And these are just the items that we can see from the surface of the earth by telescopes or radars. There are also millions of smaller pieces of junk that we can't see.

Objects, like bits of old space rockets or satellites, move around the planet at very high speeds, so fast that even a very small piece can break important satellites or become dangerous to people, particularly astronauts. If the tiniest piece of junk crashed into a spacecraft, it could damage the vehicle. That's because the faster an object moves, the greater the impact if the object collides with something else.

To make things worse, when two objects in space collide, the two objects break into many smaller pieces. This happened in 2009 when a working United States satellite collided with a Russian satellite that was no longer functioning. The collision caused the satellites to break into more than 2,000 pieces, increasing the items of space junk.

To help minimize additional space junk, countries around the world have agreed to limit the time their space tools stay in orbit to 25 years. Each tool must be built to fall safely into the earth's atmosphere, or the mass of gases that surround the earth, after that. In the upper parts of the atmosphere, it will burn up.

Many scientists are also proposing different ways to clean up space junk. In England a metal harpoon is being tested that can be fired into space trash, grip the trash, and then pull the space junk into the earth's atmosphere where it would burn up.

The Germans have been planning a space mission with robots that would collect pieces of space trash and bring them back to Earth so that they can be safely destroyed.

In 2007 the Chinese tried to blow up one of its older satellites with a missile. Unfortunately, the explosion only created thousands of smaller pieces, adding junk in space!

"In our opinion the problem is very challenging, and it's quite urgent as well," said Marco Castronuovo, an Italian Space Agency researcher who is working to solve the problem. One reason that it's urgent is that countries are sending more and more objects into space. Many of these objects are tools that help people use their cell phones or computers.

"The time to act is now; as we go farther in time, we will need to remove more and more fragments," he says.

Save the World: A little change can make a big difference

That chocolate pudding you had for dessert was delicious! You lick the lid, and you're ready to throw out the container—along with the plastic spoon. Stop right there! You can recycle that spoon!

Recycling is the practice of using items or materials again. That cuts down on the amount of waste on the planet. Americans recycle much of their garbage. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States recycles more than 30 percent of its waste.

In 1999, recycling kept more than 64 tons of material from ending up in landfills. But there is still more that can be done.

There are several ways to recycle around the home. If your community has a curbside pickup program, you can leave recyclable materials outside. The materials are then collected and brought to recycling centers. Another option is to take recyclable items to a refund center. For example, you can take many types of cans to can-return machines at supermarkets. Drop in the cans and you receive a small amount of money for each one.

It is easy to separate recyclable items from other trash. Paper, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans can usually be recycled. To make it easy, keep separate recycling bins in various places in your home. If you are writing in your room and have

scrap paper, you can toss it into a recycling bin instead of throwing it out.

Five Easy Ways to Go Green

- Plant a tree. You can gather seeds, or you can buy a tree to plant. Trees help give us oxygen, which we need in order to live. Visit arborday.org for more information.
- Reuse plasticware. If you use plastic forks, knives, or spoons during meals, wash them and then use them again the next day. You will have less garbage, and you won't need to spend as much money on utensils.
- Turn off the lights when you leave a room. If no one is in a room, why keep it lit? Turn off lights, televisions, and other power-using devices when you don't need them. You will save energy.
- Donate old clothes. When clothing doesn't fit anymore, don't just throw it out. Donate the clothing to someone who needs it. Visit salvationarmyusa.org. You will not only cut down on waste but also help someone who might be unable to afford clothes.
- Return cell phone batteries. Cell phone batteries contain chemicals that can pollute air and water. Find out whether the phone store has a recycling program; if not, ask the employees whether they know of a program that collects the batteries. Visit recyclewirelessphones.com for more information.

Practice Essay for Text Dependent Writing

(Before writing the response, make sure to read both passages of text.)

Each passage provides ways to save the planet from pollution. Write an essay analyzing the positive results for cleaning up pollution in the world. Use evidence from **both** passages to support your essay.