



The Recycling Contest

by Rob Arego illustrated by George Ulrich



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

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🔊 It was Earth Day. Ms. Pepper was talking to her class about **pollution**.

“It’s a **global** problem,” she said.

“That means pollution happens in every country in the world,” said Micah.

“That’s right,” Ms. Pepper said.


“Pollution is everywhere. Can anyone give me an example?”

🔊 Ms. Pepper talked to Micah’s class.





 Micah talked about smog.


 “Cities are full of smoke and fog,”
said Izzy.

“Not fog. *Smog*,” said Micah. “Smog
is a mix of smoke and fumes.”

“We have a real pollution expert in
the class!” said Ms. Pepper.



 Ms. Pepper said the class would recycle.

 Then Ms. Pepper said, “Pollution is a big problem, but there are lots of things we can do about it. Does anyone have ideas?”

“We can **recycle!**” said Micah.

“Good, Micah,” Ms. Pepper said.

“When we recycle, we use things again.”

🔊 Ms. Pepper held up a chart. “To celebrate Earth Day, we’re going to start recycling as much as we can,” she said, pointing to the chart.

“Students in each grade will collect things to recycle,” she explained.

🔊 Ms. Pepper held up a Recycling chart.



🔊 “We’ll see which grade can recycle the most,” said Ms. Pepper.


Micah said, “Our class can recycle more than any other grade!”

“Yeah!” yelled all of his classmates.

“Okay, let’s do it!” said Ms. Pepper.

🔊 Micah wanted to win!



 The next morning, Micah carried a big **carton** to school.

The carton was full of empty cans and bottles. Micah could barely lift it!

The carton was also wet. Juice and water were **dripping** from it.

 Micah carried a big carton.



🔊 Every day the students brought in more things to recycle. Micah always brought the most.

But after a week, Micah looked at the recycling chart and rubbed his eyes.

“I can’t believe it!” he said. “The fourth grade is recycling more than we are!”



🔊 “We have to do better!” Micah said.

“We’re doing fine,” Ms. Pepper said.
“Remember, Micah, the real reason to recycle is to help the planet, not to win a contest.”

🔊 But Micah wasn’t listening. He was too busy thinking. Ms. Pepper had called him the pollution expert. His class had to win this contest!

🔊 The fourth grade was winning!



🔊 At home, Micah was running out of things to recycle. He drank way more juice than usual so he would have lots of empty cartons and bottles.



🔊 Micah grabbed the newspaper before his parents had time to read it.

“Sorry, I need this for school!” Micah said as he ran out the door.

🔊 Micah took the newspaper.



🔊 One night, Micah ate five cans of peaches! He asked his little brother to eat some, too. That made six cans.

Micah didn't feel so well when he went to bed. But when he thought of all those empty cans, he smiled.

🔊 Micah and his brother ate lots of peaches.



Finally, it was the last day of the recycling contest. That morning, Micah filled his little brother's red wagon with the six cans, 12 newspapers from the people next door, and 20 baby food jars from the people upstairs.

Micah's mother walked with him to school.

Micah and his mother walked to school.



🔊 When Ms. Pepper saw what Micah had in the wagon, she smiled.

“I think the third grade won the contest!” she said. “But next year we will have to think of a new way to celebrate Earth Day.”

🔊 “We could plant trees!” Micah said. “Trees help clean the air.”

“Yes,” said Ms. Pepper. “But we’ll only plant a few trees, not a whole forest!”



Micah thought about planting trees.





Responding



TARGET SKILL

Story Structure What is Micah's problem? How does he solve it? Copy and fill in the chart below.

Character: Micah	Setting: classroom and home
Problem: Micah wants his class to win the contest. Events: ? Solution: ?	



Write About It

Text to World Write a persuasive letter to a friend. Tell your friend why it is good for the Earth to recycle.



TARGET VOCABULARY

carton

complicated

dripping

global

hardly

pollution

project

recycle

rubbish

shade



TARGET SKILL

Story Structure

Name the setting, characters, and plot in a story.



TARGET STRATEGY

Monitor/Clarify

As you read, find a way to clear up what doesn't make sense to you.



GENRE

Humorous fiction is a story that is written to entertain the reader.

Level: K

DRA: 20–24

Genre:

Humorous Fiction

Strategy:

Monitor/Clarify

Skill:

Story Structure

Word Count: 604

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