



CLASSROOM APPLICATION

LIVE SIMPLY

In Henning's article on "Voluntary Simplicity," he suggests that simple living keeps our eyes fixed on the things that are most important: meaningful interactions with family, friends, and nature. How might the pursuit of material wealth or possessions distract you from meaningful connections to family, friends, or nature? If Henning's promise is true, that simple living would lead to "richer, more meaningful lives," what changes would you be willing to make in your relationship with "stuff" that might lead to greater happiness?

Here are some suggestions for actions that embrace a simple-living mentality. Consider each one and check the boxes of the actions you might like to try.

- Plan meals and limit food portions to avoid waste.
- Make more food choices that are both good for the environment and nutritionally sound.
- Reduce trash by sorting unwanted items into recycling bins, or begin composting.
- Evaluate the "stuff" in your bedroom. Which items do not make a positive impact on your life? Consider reducing the things you own by 25% or even 50%. Donate unwanted items to charity.



- Shop at secondhand thrift stores to reuse, recycle, and upcycle things others have discarded.
- Avoid single-use plastic and opt instead for reusable water bottles, straws, bags, and utensils.
- Conserve energy by turning off lights, electronics, and appliances when not in use.



- Look for ways to limit driving by carpooling, using public transportation, biking, or walking.
- Talk to your family about using energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances.
- For gift-giving or your own wish lists, consider activities and experiences rather than more material items.
- When hanging out with friends, opt for outdoor activities and don't rely on mall visits or shopping.
- Create weekly social media posts that focus on the importance of relationships.
- Work with friends or family to make natural, environmentally friendly cleaning products and toiletries.
- Donate a portion of your allowance or money received as a gift to organizations that match your environmental values.
- Define success for yourself that considers not only economic wealth, but includes meaningful connections with family, friends, and nature.
- Consider how a purchase contributes to lasting happiness and forgo purchases that only offer short-term gratification.
- Working with a partner, add three positive actions to this list of simple-living strategies. Be prepared to share your actions with your classmates.

