

Abundant American

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Do you know that only five percent of population in the world is American, but they consume twenty five percent of energies on the earth (Population and Energy Consumption)? People living in different countries have different ways of life. The environment affects their attitudes and habits of consuming resources. The United States is seen to be an abundant country, because they have so many resources to use. However, most of the people may not realize how rich they are or how poor other countries are. The problem is that people in the USA do not treasure those resources as much as people in other countries. Americans are wasteful and consume too many energies and resources and they do not even notice that. In this essay, I am going to analyze Americans' habits of consuming things from three aspects: food, electricity and personal belongs.

Do Americans really need that much food? According to research provided by Worldwatch Institute (2013), approximately 65 percent of American adults are overweight or obese, which means they have eaten too much food and even caused health problems. Although food is one of the necessary things for living, what Americans consumed is excessive. If Americans cut down on the amount of food they take in, they would be healthier, and meanwhile, famine happening in developing countries can be improved. Besides the amount number of the food Americans have eaten, the food Americans threw out is also a problem. The statistics shows that Americans throw out 200,000 tons of edible food per day (Population and Energy Consumption). I have been observing how Buena Vista University students manage their food for weeks. I found out that they took a lot of food to their plates, but only a few of students can completely eat it all. Since the meal plans are buffet, students here can take any kinds of food as much as they want and leave the food on the plates when they are full. I even saw a whole hamburger without any bites threw out directly. Some of the buffet restaurants in China have policies that customers have to pay extra money for the food they left in their plates. If universities in the USA can start these policies, students will realize how expensive and worthy the food is. They will estimate how much they are going to eat before taking food to their plate. In Taiwan, we are educated not waste food, because we used to be a poor country about thirty years ago. Most of the people, especially old people believe that if we throw out food now, we will not have enough to eat in the future. In addition, our cafeterias in schools are not buffet in Taiwan. Students have to pay for every dish they order, so

they seldom order more than they can eat.

Besides food, Americans do not treasure electricity, either. When the first time I moved into the resident hall in Buena Vista University, I was shocked that we do not have to turn off the heater. When I was living in the dorm in Japan, the heater and the air conditioner turned off automatically after 12 a.m., according to the housemaster, the school wanted to save the electricity and also fees for electricity, but we do not have any policies to restrain the use of air condition and other electronical devices in our resident hall. Therefore, we just let the heater on for the whole winter. The middle of the United State is very chilly, which can be the reason to use heaters so often to keep us warm. However, Americans also let lights and radios on for almost 24 hours per day. In Liberty Hall, the resident house I live currently, we let all the lights on in the bathroom and living room even after the midnight and at the time none is using it. It is scary to go to toilet in a dark night, but maybe leave a tiny light on would be enough. No to mention radios, if we can turn it off after midnight, I believe we can save a lot of electricity and prevent the radio being overused and broken.

Not only in the resident hall, I noticed this situation also happens on campus. American students and even professors seem not to be accustomed to turn off the lights when they leave a classroom. For example, when the class dismisses, students and professors will let the lights on and get out of the classroom. In Taiwan, our University requires us to turn off the lights when we get out of the classroom. Even though we know that ten minutes later a new class will come to use the classroom, we still will not waste the electricity of the ten minutes. On the other hand, I saw empty rooms with all lights on many times when I walked through the hallway. Some of them, such underground and toilet do not even need a light in the daytime. Since none studies there, the natural light from windows should be bright enough. Therefore, I will suggest BVU students or faculties turn those lights off especially during the day time.

Americans' wasting food and electricity is the phenomenon I noticed. According to one of my professor, Dr. Ludy, Americans like stuffs. They enjoy collecting things and store a lot of stuff in their house or room. Whereas, most of them are so-call white elephants. Take my roommate as an example, she has many decorations in our room. I also have been to an American adult's home. She collects many quilts and dolls. It is nothing wrong for people to possess their beloved collections, but the problem is, do Americans really treasure and take good care of their personal belongings?

Americans produced 254 million tons of garbage in 2013 (US Environmental Protection Agency, 2016). I also noticed that BVU students will throw a good amount of things away after they clean their rooms or art fundation studio. No to mention those things sold into thrift stores. Although the recycelling rate in 2013 had reached

34.3 percent (US Environmental Protection Agency, 2016), which means that one third of those garbages were reused, I still cannot agree Americans' wastful habits of treating their personal belongs. Recycling is one of the good ways to cut down on trash and decrease environmental burdens to the earth, but the fundamental solution is not to produce so many garbages. In other words, Americans should not buy so many useless things and they should think carefully before they throw their things out.

When I first came to the United States, I envied American people who have so much material wealth and so many resources to use. Unfortunately, they are not making good use of them. The ways Americans consume food caused obesity to themselves and also famine to people living in poor countries; the ways they use electricity caused unnecessary squander; the ways they deal with their personal belongings aggravated environmental problems. Since the United States is an abundant country, Americans use a big amount of resources to pursue convenience and maintain their life quality. However, resources are not inexhaustible. It is time to develop a batter habit of using those resources and think about our future.

Reference

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