



How Green Are You?

learning objectives

subjects

Environmental Education

WISCONSIN MODEL
ACADEMIC STANDARDS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
B.8.15, C.8.3, D.8.1,
D.8.3, D.8.5, D.12.2

materials

- How Green Are You? Worksheet

Students will:

- Understand how their personal choices can affect climate change.
- Make choices to reduce the amount of resources they consume over time.
- Educate others on ways to reduce their impact on climate change.



Background

An ecological footprint is a tool to measure how much land and water a human population requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes. By measuring the ecological footprint of a population (an individual, a city, a nation, or all of humanity) we can find out how we're impacting the planet. Measuring ecological footprints gives people information to help them take personal and collective action to live within the means of our planet. This activity flips the traditional notion of an ecological footprint on its side: it eliminates the negative connotation of how many resources we use and replaces it with positive reinforcement for the "green" actions we take.

Each day we make choices. Most days we make at least 10 choices before we eat breakfast. Those choices have an effect on our environment, positive or negative. We each have the responsibility to look at the choices we make and decide if they are the right ones for us and whether there is room for improvement.

activity

HOW GREEN ARE YOU?

Ecological Footprint

Students will complete the worksheet and discuss how their daily actions affect the planet.

Procedure

1) Have your students list the choices they made this morning before school. List them on the chalk board. Ask them to think about whether their choices may have impacted climate change. Here are some examples:

- Did they have the TV and the radio on at the same time this morning?



- Did they run the water while they were brushing their teeth or did they turn the faucet on only when they needed it?
- Did they leave the house with the lights still on in their room?
- Did they carpool or take the bus to school, or did they drive by themselves in a car?
- Did they pack a lunch with locally grown foods, which require less transportation?

2) Discuss with students how we all have the responsibility to make good decisions. Ask students to decide how they might have made better choices this morning for the planet. How could changing their choices affect climate change?

3) Remind students that life is all about choices. The choices they make affect the planet in a number of different ways.

4) Have students fill out the worksheet.

5) Discuss students' answers on the worksheet. Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers. Where do they think they could improve? Where do they think they are doing well?

Discussion Questions

1) What new habits can the students put into their daily routine to become more Earth-friendly? Do they think these would be hard changes to make?

2) Discuss ways of going "overboard" and expecting too much of yourself versus taking small steps to improvement. For example, stopping driving all together might be too difficult but perhaps you could cut out two unnecessary trips per week. Or rather than proposing to eliminate all fossil-fueled forms of transportation, decide to car-pool to school, ride your bike, or take public transportation when available.

3) Encourage students to come up with new questions to add to the worksheet. Remind students that when something seems too difficult to achieve, many people will be turned off and refuse to even try so they should pick tasks that will make a difference in the environment but not be unobtainable.

Going Beyond

Help raise awareness at home! Ask students to take the worksheet home and have their parents or siblings fill it out. What differences or similarities were among their answers?





activity Ecological Footprint

HOW GREEN ARE YOU?

NAME _____ CLASS _____

TEACHER _____ DATE _____

Complete this worksheet by answering all of the questions and awarding yourself points. "Yes" answers receive all of the points listed, "sometimes/maybe" answers receive half of the points, and "no" answers receive zero points.

HOME SCORE _____

- 1) Do you turn off the TV and computer when you are done with them (4)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 2) Do you turn lights off when leaving a room? (4)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 3) Do you reheat leftovers in the microwave instead of the oven? (8)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 4) Do you choose to open the windows on a nice day instead of turning on the air conditioner? (10)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

RECYCLING SCORE _____

- 5) Do you recycle all paper, glass, and plastic at home? (20)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 6) Do you recycle when at school? (10)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 7) If there is no recycling bin available when you are away from home, do you hold onto your trash until there is a bin available (i.e. bring your soda bottles and paper home to recycle)? (20)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 8) Do you use both sides of a piece of paper before tossing it into the recycling bin? (4)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

TRANSPORTATION SCORE _____

- 9) Do you carpool, take the bus, walk, or bike to school? (6)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 10) Do you trip-chain? (e.g. combine trips by going to the store on your way home from school instead of going home and then back to the store and then home again.) (10)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 11) Do you turn your ignition off when you are parked or stopped for more than thirty seconds? (10)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 12) If you are going to a friend's house just a mile or two away, do you leave the car at home and bike or walk there? (10)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 13) Do you reduce driving on Air Quality Watch days? (12)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

ENERGY SCORE _____

- 14) Do you have compact fluorescent light bulbs installed in your home? (one point for each light bulb)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 15) Do you use rechargeable batteries and/or recycle your batteries after use? (6)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 16) Do you unplug your cell phone and I-pod chargers after they are done charging to reduce "phantom energy" loss? (4)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO
- 17) Do you turn the thermostat down in the winter and wear a sweater, and up in the summer and wear shorts? (6)
 YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

worksheet



WATER SCORE _____

18) Do you turn the water off while brushing your teeth? (6)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

19) Are your showers less than 5 minutes? (10)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

20) Do you wait to wash your favorite pair of jeans or other items until there is a full load of wash to be done? (4)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

21) When able, do you choose organic foods? (20)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

22) Do you use a reusable lunch bag and containers to carry food with you instead of disposable? (12)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

23) When possible, do you buy locally-grown food instead of food shipped from elsewhere? (20)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

REDUCE & REUSE SCORE _____

24) Do you say "no thank you" to bags for items you buy at a store where you purchase only one or two things and can carry them without a bag? (16)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

25) Do you carry reusable bags into the grocery store with you instead of taking new paper or plastic bags? (10)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

26) Do you use refillable water bottles instead of one-time use plastic bottles? (4)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

27) Do you check out books from the library instead of purchasing new ones? (4)

YES SOMETIMES/MAYBE NO

ADDITIONAL STEPS SCORE _____

List up to four other environment-friendly steps you take (points indicated for each measure).

28) _____ (4)

29) _____ (6)

30) _____ (8)

31) _____ (10)



How Green Are You?

Count up your points in each category and then total them to find out which category you fit into.

- HOME _____
- RECYCLING _____
- TRANSPORTATION _____
- ENERGY _____
- WATER _____
- REDUCE & REUSE _____
- ADDITIONAL STEPS _____
- GRAND TOTAL** _____

Keep up the good things you are doing to fight global climate change, and try some new tips too. Remember, no one can do it all, but you can choose to step lightly on Earth by picking sustainable ways of life and sticking to them.

0–50 You are a Green Newbie

Jump on in and learn more about the environment and what you can do to help fight climate change! Try some of the tips on this worksheet to become greener.

51–125 Greenie-In-Training

You have really put an effort into becoming green, but there is SO much more to do! Keep going strong!

126–200 As a Green Machine, you really know what you're doing when it comes to protecting the planet! Keep up the good work.

200+ You are the Green Guru! You are treading very lightly on Earth! Way to go! Try teaching others about protecting the environment without pressuring them.