



My Ecological Footprint

Age group	10+
Group size	10+
Time	45 minutes

Overview

This activity shows participants how much their personal lifestyles impact on the ecosystem.

Objectives

- To introduce the concept of the ecological footprint
- To understand how sustainable different personal behaviours are
- To discuss what behaviours we can change

Materials

- Outside space or big room where all participants can stand in one line and walk forwards up to 70 small steps
- Pen and a copy of the questionnaire for each participant

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that in the following activity the participants will see how much their lifestyle impacts on our ecosystem. For each question, every participant should consider for themselves which answer to give. Remind them that this is not to make them feel guilty, but to show them in which areas improvements might be possible or might not be possible. If they are not sure which answer to give, they should estimate or else take the average answer.
2. All participants stand in a line. One question at a time is read out and the participants step forward according to the answer they give. They also mark their answer on the questionnaire.
3. After having read all the questions, come together in the group. Give the participants time to individually sum up all their answers. Explain what the numbers mean and let the participants compare their footprint with the global average.

Debriefing

- How did it feel to always move on or be left behind?
- Which behaviour could you change and which not? Why is it possible to change some activities and not others?
- Is it a life choice or a necessity to reduce your footprint?
- What would you be ready to give up? Change?
- Where should we stand in the end?

The ecological footprint

The ecological footprint estimates the area of land and ocean required to support one's consumption of food, goods, services, housing and energy and assimilate one's waste. The ecological footprint is expressed in 'global hectares', which are standardised units taking into account the differences in biological productivity of various ecosystems impacted by consumption activities. Nowadays the expression 'carbon footprint' is used more often to express the total set of greenhouse gas emissions caused by a person, an organisation, an event or a product.

Total your score by adding up the circled values from the above questions.

- If your score is less than 150, your ecological footprint is smaller than 4 hectares.
- If your score is 150-350, your ecological footprint is between 4.0 hectares and 6.0 hectares
- If your score is 350-550, your ecological footprint is between 6.0 hectares and 7.8 hectares
- If your score is 550-750, your ecological footprint is between 7.8 and 10 hectares
- If your score is more than 750, your ecological footprint is greater than 10 hectares.

Only 2.1 hectares per person are available on earth. If everyone in the world used more, we would need more than one earth to sustain us. The average footprint in the UK and Canada is 6 hectares, in Austria 5, in Nicaragua 3, in Sri Lanka 1.



Appendix: Ecological Footprint Questionnaire		
HOUSING	Steps	Points
How many people live in your household?		
1	3	30
2	2	25
3	2	20
4	1.5	15
5 or more	1	10
How is your house heated?		
Natural gas	3	30
Electricity	4	40
Oil	5	50
Renewable energy (solar, wind)	1	10
How many individual taps (in your kitchen, bathrooms, and outside) and toilets do you have in your house?		
Less than 3	0.5	5
3-5	1	10
6-8	1.5	15
8-10	2	20
More than 10	2.5	25
What type of home do you live in?		
Apartment/ flat	2	20
House	4	40
FOOD		
How many meals per week do you eat meat or fish?		
0	0	0
1-3	1	10
4-6	2	20
7-10	3.5	35
More than 10	5	50
How many meals do you eat per week prepared from fresh ingredients (not 'ready' meals or frozen pizzas)?		
Under 10	2.5	25
10-14	2	20
14-18	1.5	15
More than 18	1	10
When purchasing your food items, does your family try to buy locally produced goods?		
Yes	2.5	25
No	12.5	125
Sometimes	5	50
Rarely	10	100
Don't know	7.5	75
TRANSPORTATION		
If you or your family own a car, what type of car is it?		
Motorcycle	1.5	15
Small compact	3.5	35
Mid-sized	6	60
Large	7.5	75
Sports, 4 by 4 vehicle or mini van	10	100
Pick-up truck or full-size van	13	130



	Steps	Points
How do you get to school/ work?		
Car	5	50
Public transport	2.5	25
School bus	2	20
Walk	0	0
Bicycle, rollerblade or skateboard	0	0
Where did you go on holiday/ vacation within the last year?		
No vacation	0	0
Own country, own region	1	10
Own country, different region	3	30
International	4	40
Intercontinental	7	70
How many weekend trips per year do you take by car or plane?		
0	0	0
1-3	1	10
4-6	2	20
7-9	3	30
More than 9	4	40
PURCHASES		
How many large purchases (stereo, TV, computer, car...) has your household made in the last year?		
1-3	1.5	15
4-6	3	30
More than 6	4.5	45
Have you bought any energy-efficient products in the past year instead of non-energy efficient (fridges,etc.)?		
Yes	0	0
No	2.5	25
WASTE		
Do you try to reduce the amount of waste you generate (eg. Buying food in bulk, refusing junk mail/ flyers...)?		
Always	0	0
Sometimes	1	10
Rarely	2	20
Never	3	30
Does your household compost?		
Always	0	0
Sometimes	1	10
Rarely	1.5	15
Never	2	20
Does your household recycle paper, cans, bottles etc.?		
Always	0	0
Sometimes	1	10
Rarely	1.5	15
Never	2	20
How many rubbish bags of waste do you fill each week?		
One half-full garbage bag	0.5	5
1	1	10
2	2	20
More than 2	3	30

