



At Eastern Connecticut  
State University

# Personal Ecological Footprint

Institute for Sustainable Energy

[www.sustainenergy.org](http://www.sustainenergy.org)

860-465-0256



Complete each of the categories for a typical day in your home. Add the points in each category to obtain a subtotal, and transfer each subtotal to the summary chart. Use the grand total to calculate your ecological footprint.

Adapted from: *Teaching Green - The Middle Years*

## Water Use

### My Score

- My shower (or bath) on a typical day is: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No shower / no bath (0)  
 Short shower 3-4 time a week (25)  
 Short shower once a day (50)  
 Long shower once a day (70)  
 More than one shower per day (90)
- I flush the toilet: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Every time I use it (40)  
 Sometimes (20)
- When I brush my teeth,  
 I let the water run. (40) \_\_\_\_\_
- We use water-saving toilets. (-20) \_\_\_\_\_
- We use low-flow showerheads. (-20) \_\_\_\_\_

**Water Use Subtotal:**

## Food

### My Score

- On a typical day, I eat: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meat more than once per day (600)  
 Meat once per day (400)  
 Meat a couple times a week (300)  
 Vegetarian (200)  
 Vegan (150)
- \_\_\_\_\_ of my food is grown locally or  
 is organic \_\_\_\_\_  
 All (0)  
 Some (30)  
 None (60)
- I compost my fruit/vegetable  
 scraps and peels. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes (-20)  
 No (60)
- \_\_\_\_\_ of my food is processed. \_\_\_\_\_  
 All (100)  
 Some (30)  
 None (0)
- \_\_\_\_\_ of my food has packaging. \_\_\_\_\_  
 All (100)  
 Some (30)  
 None (0)
- On a typical day, I waste: \_\_\_\_\_  
 None of my food (0)  
 One-fourth of my food (25)  
 One-third of my food (50)  
 Half of my food (100)

**Food Subtotal:**

## Transportation

### My Score

- On a typical day, I travel to school by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Foot or bike (0)  
 Public transit / school bus (30)  
 Private vehicle; carpool (100)  
 Private vehicle; 1 student (200)
- Our vehicle's fuel efficiency is \_\_\_\_\_  
 More than 30 miles/gallon (-50)  
 24 - 30 miles/gallon (50)  
 17 - 23 miles/gallon (100)  
 Less than 17 miles/gallon (200)
- The time I spend in vehicles on a  
 typical day is: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No time (0)  
 Less than half an hour (40)  
 Half an hour to 1 hour (100)  
 More than 1 hour (200)
- How big is the car in which I travel on a  
 typical day? \_\_\_\_\_  
 No car (-20)  
 Small (50)  
 Medium (100)  
 Large (SUV) (200)
- Number of cars in our driveway? \_\_\_\_\_  
 No car (-20)  
 Less than 1 car per driver (0)  
 One car per driver (50)  
 More than 1 car per driver (100)  
 More than 2 cars per driver (200)
- Number of flights I take per year? \_\_\_\_\_  
 0 (0)  
 1-2 (200)  
 More than 2 (400)

**Transportation Subtotal:**

## Shelter

### My Score

- My house is \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Single house on large lot (suburbia)(50)  
 Single house on small lot (city) (0)  
 Townhouse/ attached house (0)  
 Apartment (-50)
- Divide number of rooms per person, no baths, by the  
 number of people living at home. \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 room per person or less (-50)  
 1-2 rooms per person (0)  
 2-3 rooms per person (100)  
 more than 3 rooms per person (200)
- We own a second, or vacation home that is often empty.  
 No (0) \_\_\_\_\_  
 We own/use it with others. (200)  
 Yes (400)

**Shelter Subtotal:**

### Take action and learn more:

[www.tenpercentchallenge.org](http://www.tenpercentchallenge.org)

[www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/english/index.asp](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/english/index.asp)

[www.myfootprint.org/](http://www.myfootprint.org/)

[www.rprogress.org/newpubs/2004/footprintnations2004.pdf](http://www.rprogress.org/newpubs/2004/footprintnations2004.pdf)

**Energy Use** **My Score**

1. In cold months, our house temperature is: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Under 15°C ( 59°F ) (-20)  
 15 to 18°C ( 59 to 64 °F ) (50)  
 19 to 22 °C ( 66 to 71 °F ) (100)  
 22 °C ( 71 °F ) or more (150)
2. We dry clothes outdoors or on an indoor rack. \_\_\_\_\_ Always (-50)  
 Sometimes (20)  
 Never (60)
3. We use an energy-efficient refrigerator. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes (-50)  
 No (50)
4. We have a second refrigerator / freezer. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes (100)  
 No (0)
5. We use 5 or more compact fluorescent light bulbs. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes (-50)  
 No (100)
6. I turn off lights, computer, and television when they're not in use. \_\_\_\_\_ ✓  
 Yes (0)  
 No (50)
7. To cool off, I use: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Air conditioning: car (50)  
 Air conditioning: home (100)  
 Electric fan (-10)  
 Nothing (-50)
8. My clothes washer is a \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Top load (100)  
 Front load (50)  
 Laundromat (25)

**Energy Use Subtotal:**

**Clothing** **My Score**

1. I change my outfit every day and put it in the laundry. (80) \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am wearing clothes that have been mended or fixed. (-20) \_\_\_\_\_
3. One-fourth of my clothes are handmade or secondhand. (-20) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Most of my clothes are purchased new each year. (200) \_\_\_\_\_
5. I give the local thrift store clothes that I no longer wear. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes (-50)  
 No (100)
6. I never wear \_\_\_\_\_ % of the clothes in my closet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Less than 25% (25)  
 50% (50)  
 75% (75)  
 More than 75% (100)
7. I buy \_\_\_\_\_ new pairs of shoes every year. \_\_\_\_\_  
 0-1 (0)  
 2 to 3 (20)  
 4 to 6 (60)  
 7 or more (90)

**Clothing Subtotal:**

**Stuff** **My Score**

1. All my garbage from today could fit into a: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shoebox (20)  
 Small garbage can (60)  
 Kitchen garbage can (200)  
 No garbage created today! (-50)
2. I recycle all my paper, cans, glass and plastic. (-100) \_\_\_\_\_
3. I reuse items rather than throw them out. (-20) \_\_\_\_\_
4. I repair items rather than throw them out (-20) \_\_\_\_\_
5. I avoid disposable items as often as possible. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes (-50)  
 No (60)
6. I use rechargeable batteries whenever I can. (-30) \_\_\_\_\_
7. In my home we have \_\_ number of Electronics? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Computer, TV, Stereo, VCR, DVD, X box, Game boy, etc.)  
 0-5 (25)  
 5-10 (75)  
 10-15 (100)  
 more than (200)
8. How much equipment is needed for typical activities?  
 None (0) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very little (20)  
 Some (60)  
 A lot (80)

**Stuff Subtotal:**

**Summary**

Transfer your subtotals from each section and add them together to obtain the grand total. Divide the grand total by 300.

- Water Use \_\_\_\_\_
- Food \_\_\_\_\_
- Transportation \_\_\_\_\_
- Shelter \_\_\_\_\_
- Energy Use \_\_\_\_\_
- Clothing \_\_\_\_\_
- Stuff \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total** \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ **300** = \_\_\_\_\_ Earths

If everyone lived like I do we would need \_\_\_\_\_ Earths to sustain the people of the world.

Multiplying the number of Earths needed, by 4.7, gives the number of acres used to support my lifestyle. \_\_\_\_\_ acres

Worldwide there are 4.7 biologically productive acres available per person, and this doesn't include all of the other plants' and animals' needs.

Some average footprints:

- United States: 24 acres
- Canada: 22 acres
- Italy: 9 acres
- Pakistan: Less than 2 acres

Complete an online Ecological Footprint calculator <http://www.myfootprint.org/>

Acres Calculated \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Earths \_\_\_\_\_

- How did the online calculation differ from your paper calculation?
- Which calculator do you feel, portrays your lifestyle more accurately? Why?
- What items would you value differently in the paper calculator? Would revaluing those numbers affect other people's Calculation?
- Make a commitment to reducing your Ecological footprint!



At Eastern Connecticut  
State University

## Personal Ecological Footprint

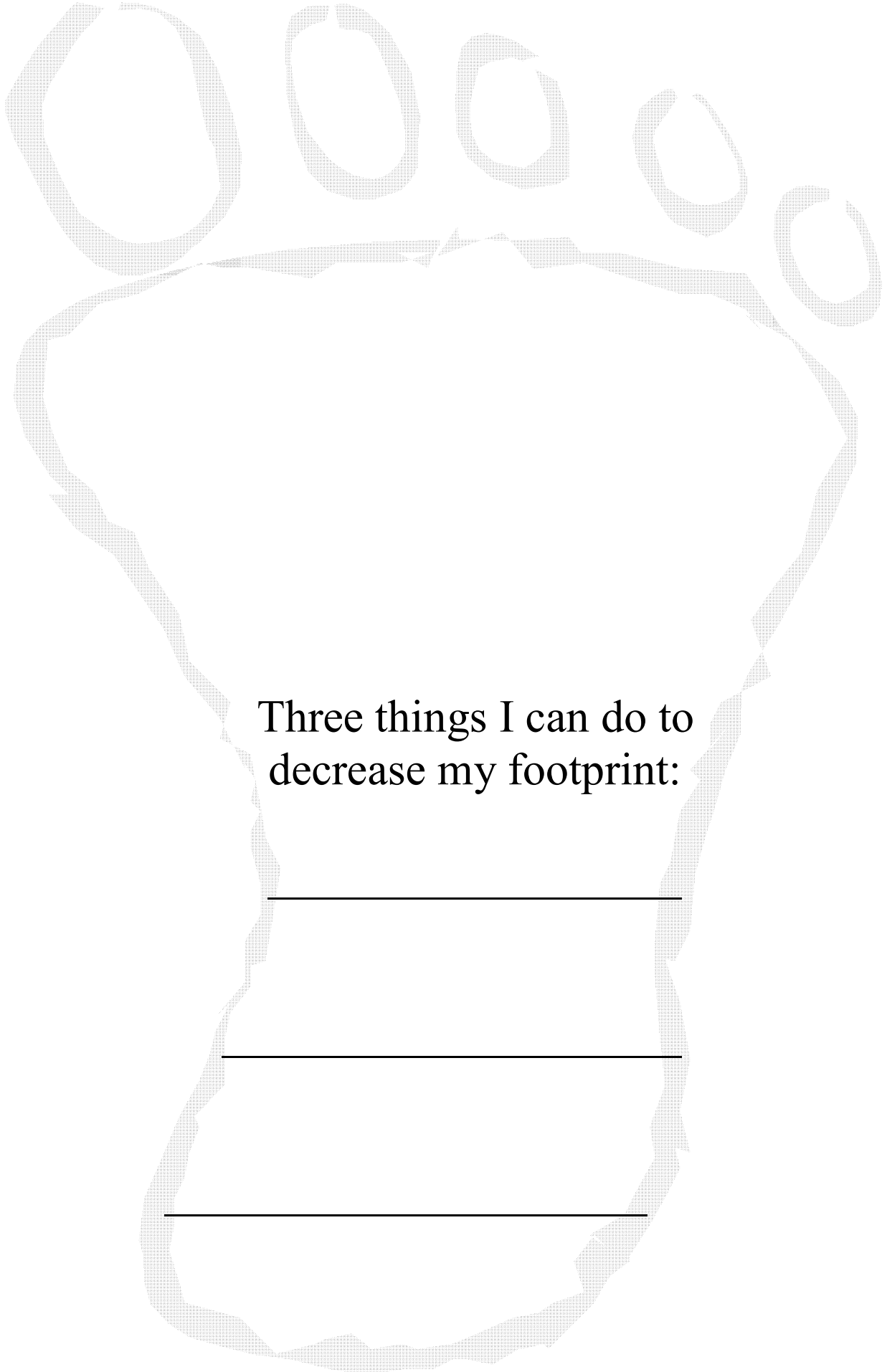
Institute for Sustainable Energy

[www.sustainenergy.org](http://www.sustainenergy.org)

860-465-0256



If everyone lived like \_\_\_\_\_  
it would take \_\_\_\_\_ Earths to support the  
people of the world.



## *What if the Earth were an Apple?*

The Earth seems like such a large place, will we ever have too many people for Earth to produce the things we need to survive? How about the plants and animals that live here? Is there enough for all of us? How much of the Earth is actually available to produce the food we need and to clean up our wastes? What's your guess; 100 % of the surface, 50%, less?

Using an apple to represent the Earth; cut the Earth into four pieces. Now throw out three of the pieces that represent the oceans. Oceans make up 75% of the Earth's surface area. Slice the remaining piece of Earth in half and throw out one piece representing lands, such as deserts, that are inhospitable. What's left is 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the apple. But that's not the amount available to us. Slice the 1/8<sup>th</sup> into four sections and throw out three of them. These represent areas that are too cold, too steep, or too rocky to produce food. Peel the skin off of the remaining 1/32<sup>nd</sup> slice of the apple and throw out the rest. This small amount of skin represents the Earth's crust, the area that has enough topsoil to produce the food on which we all depend. The Earth's topsoil is only five feet deep on average and produces a relatively fixed amount of food. Over-farming and erosion take away billions of tons of topsoil each year. Each inch of topsoil takes on average 100 years to form.

The Earth doesn't seem quite as big anymore does it? Natural resources are limited and must be used wisely so that all of us can live on this small piece of Earth. Let's look and see how your daily decisions affect the amount of natural resources you and your family use.

### *Living Sustainably on the Earth*

#### *A. Water*

1. Take showers instead of baths, if you already take showers shorten them
2. Don't brush your teeth or shave with the water running
3. If you have a lawn, water early in the day or late in the evening if possible

#### *B. Agriculture/Food*

1. Grow some of your own food
2. Buy organically grown veggies
3. Cook at night or outside to keep house cool
4. Keep water in the refrigerator so you don't have to run the faucet for cold water
5. Reduce your meat consumption, substitute tofu for meat
6. Help non profits plant trees in developing countries
7. Support local farmers/ farm stands
8. Support /join groups that help restore ecosystems

#### *C. Transportation*

1. Ride your bike or walk to work or school or the store
2. Take a bus, vanpool or carpool
3. Drive an energy-efficient vehicle
4. Keep your car tuned and tire pressure at correct levels
5. Group your trips with the car

#### *D. Personal actions that support sustainability are:*

1. Be frugal. Use only what you need. Buy less so that you produce less waste
2. Be efficient. Promote energy efficiency and use resources in your daily life efficiently
3. Be a recycler. Recycle all wastes that you can and buy products from recycled materials
4. Compost organic waste
5. Help restore the environment, replant, and protect wetlands
6. Help control population growth
7. Print all assignments on both sides of the paper
8. On a long trip take a train or a bus, not a jet.

#### *E. Home*

1. Plant wildlife friendly yards.
2. Discuss environmental ethics with your family and friends
3. Select nontoxic alternatives for cleaning products, pesticides and paints
4. Don't discard anything down storm sewers, recycle
5. Don't use an in sink disposal

#### *F. Energy*

1. Shut off lights, stereo, computers, etc when not in use
2. Draw curtains at night, use insulated curtains
3. Add insulation, caulk, and weather stripping
4. Use fluorescent bulbs where possible
5. Keep thermostat at 68° F in winter and 78°F in the summer, use fans
6. Dress more warmly
7. Turn down thermostat on water heater
8. Install flow reducers on faucets and shower heads
9. Do only full loads of laundry
10. Dry clothes on a line outside
11. Repair leaky faucets
17. Heat only used areas
18. Install an automatic thermostat