

Activity 2: Lowering your Ecological Footprint

From "Introduction to the Ecological Footprint," a lesson from Creative Change Educational Solutions, www.creativechange.net

The role of individuals

There are many ways you can reduce your footprint and live more sustainably. Here are a few ideas:

Change in habit	Footprint reduction over in a year	Some reasons for the reduction
Eat six ounces less beef or fish.	20 square yards	Factory farming and irrigating feed grain is extremely water intensive. Just 2.2 lbs. of hamburger produced by a typical California beef cattle operation uses 5,432 gallons of water. About 38% of the global grain harvest becomes food for livestock.
Drive 100 miles less.	100 square yards	Driving is one of the largest contributors to a person's footprint because of the land used for roads, the fossil fuels burned, the carbon released into the atmosphere, and the resources needed to produce cars.
Shower 90 minutes less.	100 square yards	Fresh water requires energy and chemicals usage to pump, process, and clean it. Heating water also requires gas or electricity to warm it.

The role of society

While individuals have an important role in promoting sustainability, some of the most powerful ways to reduce our footprint can only occur at the societal level. Increasing the availability of renewable energy, for example, can only come about if communities, states, and the nation as a whole work for this. Strategies could include policies that promote renewable energy, tax incentives for research, education and career training, and incentives for individuals to adopt renewable energy in their homes.

Clearly, change must occur at the individual and societal level. In this activity, you will a strategy to reduce your footprint in terms of food, energy usage, or transportation. ~~You will conduct research and identify changes at both the personal and societal level that can impact your footprint.~~

Directions for activity 2

1. Identify a proposed **personal** action for reducing your footprint in terms of food, energy, or transportation. For example, you could reduce your food footprint by eating more local foods or fresh foods.



2. Suggest a change at the community, state, or national level that could make it easier to reduce your footprint.

Example: I could buy more locally-grown food if our community had a farmer's market, or if our grocery store carried it.

3. Identify who the decision-makers are for these changes.

4. Identify who would be in favor of the change, and who might be against it.

5. Describe barriers to achieving the change.

6. Describe ways you and other students can advocate for the change.

7. Finally, identify steps you will commit to as an individual and as a citizen involved in shaping policies.