

# Sustainability



## Learning aims:

- Learn new words relating to sustainability and the environment
- Discover more about the native species living in your school
- Assess your class' impact and identify improvements that can be made
- Discover ways that you can reduce your impact on the Earth
- Explore communication techniques to encourage others to join your sustainability mission

## Activity 1: Language

Discuss what the term “environmental sustainable” means, and in turn, what it means to “be environmentally sustainable”. Introduce the fact that every product we consume (including food and clothing), modes of transport and how we produce waste, all have a “carbon footprint”. The higher our carbon footprint, the more we negatively impact life of Earth. Ensure that students are aware that our carbon footprint is not definite - we can make small changes to reduce our footprint and improve our impact.

## Activity 2: BioBlitz

Ever wondered what animals call your school home? Why not carry out your own “BioBlitz” (wildlife survey) to find out? First, you can ask your students to hypothesise which species you might find. Keep a record of what they think and review this after your BioBlitz. You should also identify the different “microhabitats” - i.e. a log pile, trees/bushes, sports field, around the windows. Your BioBlitz can include both animals and plants but be aware that plants can be more difficult to identify.

Now spend the same amount of time (i.e. 45 mins) in each microhabitat recording every species you find. Top tip: Take photos of animals you find - you can then use the internet, apps or books to identify them later. Good apps for ID include Google Lens & iNaturalist.

Keep track of all species identified in a method of your choice - *return to our main page for a free downloadable wildlife recording sheet.*

Finally, return to the list you made before your BioBlitz and see if any of the guesses were correct! Now that you know what lives where in your school, you can start to provide extra shelter and food for some of these animals.

*Additional Activity: Look into other ways to survey animals that might be using your school grounds at night (i.e. hedgehog tunnels, camera traps etc.).*

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## **Activity 3: Feed the Worms**

Worms are an incredibly useful animal on our planet. They are essential for healthy soil, breaking down nutrients and recycling waste (i.e. dead leaves and animals), and are at the bottom of many complex food webs.

It is very important that we have healthy soil wherever possible as it helps to store, regulate and filter water, and also stores carbon which can help fight against climate change.

Help the worms get a head start on creating healthy soil by providing a compost heap in your school grounds. Not only will you be giving animals some shelter and food, you will also reduce the amount of classroom waste that goes to landfill (which produces more carbon). The Wildlife Trust offer some great advice on how to start your own compost heap: [Find out how to compost here.](#)

## **Activity 4: Classroom Sustainability Review**

What is the source of most of your classroom waste?

Ask students to quantify the contents of your classroom bin over the course of a day (or a week if you produce little waste). You could do this by keeping a tally of every item placed in the bin (including the recycling bin), then creating some charts after you have a total. You could combine this task with a maths lesson based around percentages, and a science lesson based around creating graphs - there are many graphs that could be used to illustrate your data, i.e. bar or pie.

Once you have identified the main sources of your waste production, start a discussion about ways you can reduce this. Take some of your students' best ideas and implement them as part of a new classroom sustainability initiative.

## **Activity 5: Recycled Art Project**

To save some of your waste from landfill, lead a recycled art project using the rubbish created in your classroom (this can include from snack and lunch as well). Top tip: Ensure all waste is clean before using it in your art!

There are lots of inspirational articles on [Pinterest](#) about using recycling in art, or you could allow your students' creativity to flow! Why not split your class into smaller groups and assign them an animal to make a sculpture of? You can then host an exhibition of their work in a school display.

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## **Activity 6: A Plea for the Planet**

We find that many young people can become passionate about environmental issues, but struggle with where to start on making a difference, and encouraging others to help in their mission.

This activity is designed to encourage students to use their voice/creativity/persuasion techniques to promote healthy change in their peers.

The level of engagement and amount of time you dedicate to this activity is entirely up to you, but we recommend using it as part of a wider project in combination with some of the other activities above, in order to concrete the learning that students have done on this topic as a whole.

### Part 1 - Assign a topic

Has there been a particular topic that your class have found interesting/inspiring? If it's difficult to identify a single topic, you could assign a topic to the class (i.e. something that is very current or relevant to their lifestyles).

### Part 2 - Research

Encourage your students to research this topic in as much depth as possible.

Questions to explore can include:

- Why is this particular topic problematic for the Earth?
- Has anyone identified more sustainable alternative?
- What charities or groups are working toward fixing these issues?
- How can individuals help in their day to day lives?

### Part 3 - Present

Use your students' skillsets to create a multimedia presentation about this topic. You could use posters, poems, stories, art, PowerPoint presentations, music - the possibilities are endless!

### Part 4 - Share

The best way to encourage change is to share your messaging as far and wide as possible in your school community! You could share your work with a presentation board, an assembly or through social media.

We would also love to see anything you create so please do share your work with us at [outdoorlearning@theparkstrust.com](mailto:outdoorlearning@theparkstrust.com) or tag us on social media!