

increase your impact: environmental ambassadors

This section outlines activities and projects that whole classrooms or individual students can embark on to make an even bigger impact. You may wish to add more activities to your *One Simple Act* for Schools program to create a bigger impact on the environment. Individual students may want to extend their Simple Act and “do more” for the environment. Whatever your reason, extend the *One Simple Act* for Schools program here by empowering students to:

- “Take their act home” and encourage their families to participate,
- Apply their knowledge to another aspect of environmental action, and/or
- Choose to share what they know with another classroom, or with the whole school.

Division 1 Acts for Grades 1 - 3

1 I WILL REUSE AND RECYCLE PAPER.

- Set up a paper recycling bin next to every trash can in the building. Encourage the students to deposit reusable paper and reuse paper from this bin. (ALL SUBJECTS).
- Have the students design posters asking fellow student to recycle their paper and explain why it is important to recycle (LANGUAGE ARTS and ART).
- Plant trees in the school yard or have the students raise trees from seed to plant (SCIENCE).
- Calculate the amount of paper being recycled and have a competition with other classrooms to see who is recycling the most paper (MATH and SOCIAL STUDIES).
- Make notepads out of paper used on one side. Have your students deliver these notepads to teachers throughout the school (ART).

2 I WILL RECYCLE MY DRINK CONTAINERS.

- Have students collect their drink boxes for a week and turn it into a math problem by calculating the volume of waste that would be put into the landfill each year if they were not being recycled (MATH).
- Some beverage containers are eligible for a refund. Use your recycling money to buy a recycled item for your classroom, or another environmentally-friendly reward for your students (SOCIAL STUDIES).
- Clean drink boxes make great reusable and recyclable construction materials for those elementary school science building or buoyancy units (SCIENCE).
- Larger beverage containers can be reused for plant science activities as plant pots (SCIENCE).
- Gable-top milk cartons make excellent bird feeders, and storage containers. A Google search will net you lots of patterns and craft ideas (ART).

3 I WILL TURN OFF THE LIGHTS WHEN I DON'T NEED THEM.

- Have students create a “Light’s Out” project that combines music and art. (LANGUAGE ARTS and ART).
- Have the students create a mode or diagram of their school or home and talk about the use of light in various rooms and what can be done to reduce the use of electricity in those locations (LANGUAGE ARTS, SCIENCE and ART).
- Ask students to do an inventory of the lights in their home. How many lights? What different types of lights are in the home (lamps, overhead fixtures, outdoor lights, etc.)? Which lights are used the most? Which lights can be turned off more often? Which lights can be used less when the curtains/blinds are open? (MATH, SOCIAL STUDIES)
- Ask students to find other ways of using less energy, at home and at school. You can integrate some of the energy efficiency acts from Division 2 (SCIENCE).

4 I WILL COMPOST MY FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SCRAPS.

- Sing out books on composting to read aloud or for your students to read, such as *Composting: Nature's Recyclers*, by Robin Koontz, *Worms Eat My Garbage*, by Mary Appelhof, or *Compost, by Gosh!: An Adventure with Vermicomposting*, by Michelle Eeva Portman
- Weigh all the scraps you add to the composter and keep a tally of how much waste you have prevented from entering a landfill.
- Visit www.sortitout.ca to download a waste reduction teacher's guide and video resources.
- Close the loop for your students - use your finished compost or worm castings in flower beds or gardens at school. Find out more by downloading Alberta Environment's Backyard Composting to Reduce Organic Waste at www.environment.gov.ab.ca/info/library/8129.pdf
- Visit www.environment.gov.ab.ca/edu/activities/century/ae.html to learn more about composting.

5 I WILL BE A WATER SAVER!

- Have the student's interview school staff, parents and other students about ways to conserve more water (LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Invite a water or wetlands educator in to talk about the importance of water conservation (SOCIAL STUDIES).
- Hold a school 'Learning Fair' to share information about water conservation. Invite other schools in the area to attend (SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, and LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Create water conservation messages to be read during morning announcements and encourage the rest of the school to conserve water (LANGUAGE ARTS).
- In developing countries, clean and accessible drinking water can be a luxury. Many people have to walk long distances to a safe water well and pump their drinking and washing water for the day. Create a relay race where students have to carry water for Canadian consumption, (On average, Canadians use 329 litres of water per person per day) and for consumption in developing countries, (Canadians use as much as 27 times more water as some developing countries. Use 12 litres of water per person per day as a general comparison).

Division 2

Acts for Grades 4 - 6

1 I WILL TURN OFF THE TAP WHILE I SOAP UP MY HANDS.

- Have the student's interview school staff, parents and other students about ways to conserve more water (LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Invite a water or wetlands educator in to talk about the importance of water conservation (SOCIAL STUDIES).
- Hold a school 'Learning Fair' to share information about water conservation. Invite other schools in the area to attend (SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, and LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Participate in **Minister for a Day**. This is an annual part of Alberta Environment's wetland education program that supports Grade 5 teachers and students. Students are required to apply their learning about wetlands and provide their ideas around environmental priorities. They share their ideas for motivating Albertans to change their behavior and inspiring better stewardship of Alberta wetlands.
www.environment.gov.ab.ca/edu/mftd (SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, and LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Participate in **Alberta Water Quality Awareness (AWQA) Day** is a province-wide program focused on increasing people's awareness and understanding of water quality and watershed health, through hands-on water quality testing. AWQA Day participants are given free water quality test kits and encouraged to get outside and explore the health of their local waterways. www.awqa.ca (SCIENCE).

2 I WILL PACK A WASTE-FREE LUNCH.

- Participate in the Triple StaRs program for Grade 4 classes
www.recycle.ab.ca/images/stories/2008triplestars.pdf (SCIENCE).
- Check out **Sort It Out!** A web-based teaching resource covering waste reduction in Alberta. Learn about the importance of reducing waste, reusing things and recycling www.sortitout.ca (SOCIAL STUDIES and SCIENCE).
- Hold a waste-free lunch week in your classroom or school (SCIENCE and LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Do a lunch waste audit with the students to find out what is being thrown away at school (SCIENCE).
- Look at student lunches and find out where their food comes from. Is it produced locally or does it come from far away? Consider the waste and energy use required to bring our food to us. Organize a local produce lunch at your school or invite local farmers to come and speak about our local agricultural products (SOCIALSTUDIES).
- Organize a school yard clean-up (SOCIAL STUDIES and SCIENCE).

3 I WILL USE ACTIVE OR GREEN TRANSPORTATION AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.

- Ask the parent committee at your school to start a walking school bus or a carpooling website/bulletin board.
- Involve the Physical Education teacher. Conduct fitness tests on students before and after the green and active commuting commitment period.
- Reward students for all their hard work – create a bike helmet rack in your classroom. Track their accumulated green mileage on a wall chart. Challenge students to travel 50 km over the commitment period using active transportation. Reward the winners by announcing their names over the PA system.
- Participate in **Environment Week – Host or Visit a Green Stop!** during the first week in June. Green Stops are Environment Week events organized by local organizations and community groups designed to educate, empower and engage community members. It can include activities that celebrate your environmental accomplishments or teach others about the environment. www.environment.gov.ab.ca/edu/eweek
- Host a school bike fair and have students decorate their bikes with green and active transportation messages. Cycle through the neighbourhood on a pre-determined route and let your neighbours know you will be cruising through.

4 I WILL TURN OFF THE COMPUTER AND OTHER ELECTRONICS WHEN I AM NOT USING THEM.

- Have the student's research energy creation in Alberta and have a discussion about the efficient use of energy resources (SCIENCE).
- Incorporate lessons about electricity into an investigation of how school electronics work (SCIENCE).
- Have the students design a 'switch-off' campaign to educate their family members about the importance of conserving energy (SOCIAL STUDIES and LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Have the students design a video or skit on the theme of energy conservation to share with their peers (LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Invite an energy expert to come and share tips and information with the students (SCIENCE).
- Put reminder messages on the desktops of the library computers (SOCIAL STUDIES).

5 I WILL REMIND MY PARENTS AND OTHER DRIVERS TO BE IDLE-FREE IN THE SCHOOL ZONE.

- Research the effects of idling on people and the environment. Talk about ways kids can help remind their rides not to idle (SCIENCE and LANGUAGE ARTS).
- Ask students to research typical tailpipe pollutants to determine their effects on human and environmental health. Look up: Carbon Monoxide (CO), Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), and volatile organic compounds (VOC). (SCIENCE).
- Host a school-wide green transportation day. Send out notices to parents to encourage them to participate. Put up posters and make PA announcements to advertise the event. Individual classrooms can have “team names” and can win prizes for most kilometres traveled using green transportation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Alberta Environment Information Centre
Main Floor, Oxbridge Place
9820 - 106 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 2J6
Telephone: 780-427-2700
Fax: 780-422-4086
www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca