

Chasing the Wind

Ecological Footprint



Your Ecological Footprint

It must be one of the most famous footprints in (or out of!) the world. Somewhere in the Sea of Tranquility on the Moon is the imprint of Neil Armstrongs' left boot. It is evidence that human beings have been there - and left a mark on the planet.

All of us also have an ecological footprint - your impact on the Earth. This is sometimes called your global footprint. It depends on different things: how much energy you use, how much waste you produce and so on. The bigger your ecological footprint the bigger your impact on Earth.

It is also possible to work out ecological footprints for countries or companies. By adding up the impact of all the people involved you come up with some frightening figures!

Scientists have calculated the number of footprints the Earth can support. If everyone on the planet had a ecological footprint as big as someone in the UK we would need three Earths to spread them over.

1. List the things that will have an effect on the size of your ecological footprint. Think creatively - what do you do that affects the planet? Aim for at least five ideas.
2. Compare you ideas with a partner. Now make a combined list.
3. Adding up the effects of all of the things you do is difficult. If you visit www.footprint.wwf.org.uk you can take a short quiz to see the full size of your ecological footprint. Answer the quiz honestly and see how many Earths we need to keep you alive.
4. Pick some of your answers and think about what you could do to improve the situation. Put in your new answers and see how much your footprint reduces by.
5. Now pick three things that you are willing to change about your lifestyle to reduce your ecological footprint. Pick things that have the biggest effect but be honest - will you really make this change? Write down your new resolutions and show them to your partner. In a week see if you've managed to keep your resolutions - and if your partner has kept theirs!