

My Green Footprint

My Green Footprint (15 minutes)

Equipment:

- copies of the 'My Green Footprint' student worksheet
- textas, pens or coloured pencils

Outline:

1. Ask students if they know what an ecological footprint is? Has anyone ever done an ecological footprint before?
2. Give a brief explanation/definition of what an ecological footprint is and why it is used. An example is:

"An ecological footprint can show the amount of land required to support the lifestyle of an individual, region, industry, community, nation or even a school. It is an estimate of the area a population uses to produce all of the natural resources it consumes and to absorb the waste this generates.

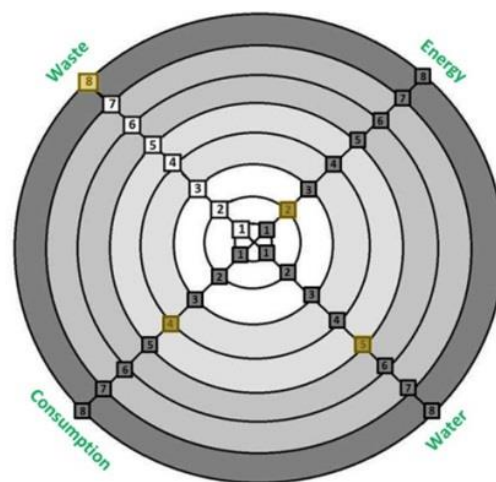
Put simply, it calculates the size of our impact on the Earth."

(<http://www.eqa.edu.au/site/measuringyourschools.html>)

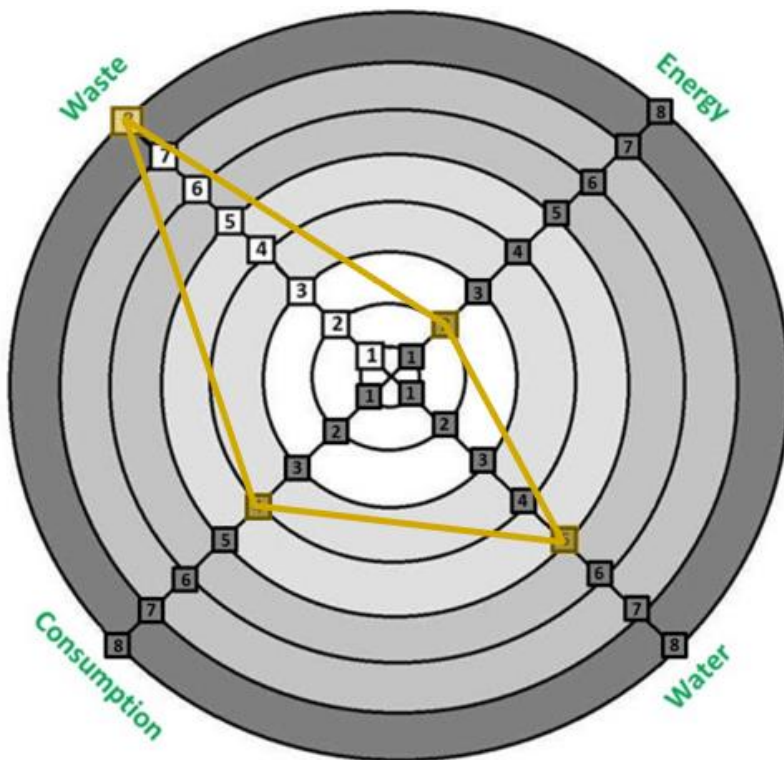
Ecological footprints can help people see how changes in their everyday behaviour and lifestyle choices affect the size of their footprint.

3. Explain to students that they will be completing a modified ecological footprint; a green footprint. They will need to read each question and circle the answer that best represents the action they currently do at home. Go through the first example with them:
I turn off the tap when I'm brushing my teeth – rarely (2) / sometimes (1) / always (0).
Each answer option has a number associated with it. When they have completed a section (e.g. water) they need to add up the numbers they have selected for each response (e.g. $2+2+1+0 = 5$).
4. Some students may need help with, or an explanation of, what some of the questions are asking. For example, in the 'consuming' section, the final question may not make initial sense to students. It refers to buying local, but takes it one step further by acknowledging that we do purchase things from other countries, and that when we do, we should consider the social, economic and environmental consequences of those purchases.
5. Once students have completed each of the four sections on the worksheet, they can then move onto mapping their results and thinking about where they can make changes in their lives to improve their green footprints, resulting in a more sustainable lifestyle.

To map out each section, students take the 'total number' for a section (in this case water=5 / energy=2 / waste=8 / consumption=4) and put a cross or dot on the corresponding number on the wheel.



- Once this has been done, instruct students to join up their crosses or dots. You should end up with a diamond-shaped footprint:



- Ask students to take a look at their mapped green footprint. Which area do they have the highest score in? Which area has the lowest? The higher the score, the greater the need to make improvements in this areas.

IMPORTANT: The aim of this activity is not to make students feel bad about what they are doing. It is merely to introduce them to the idea that their actions have consequences and that they can take action to change their behaviours and improve their scores and the planet.

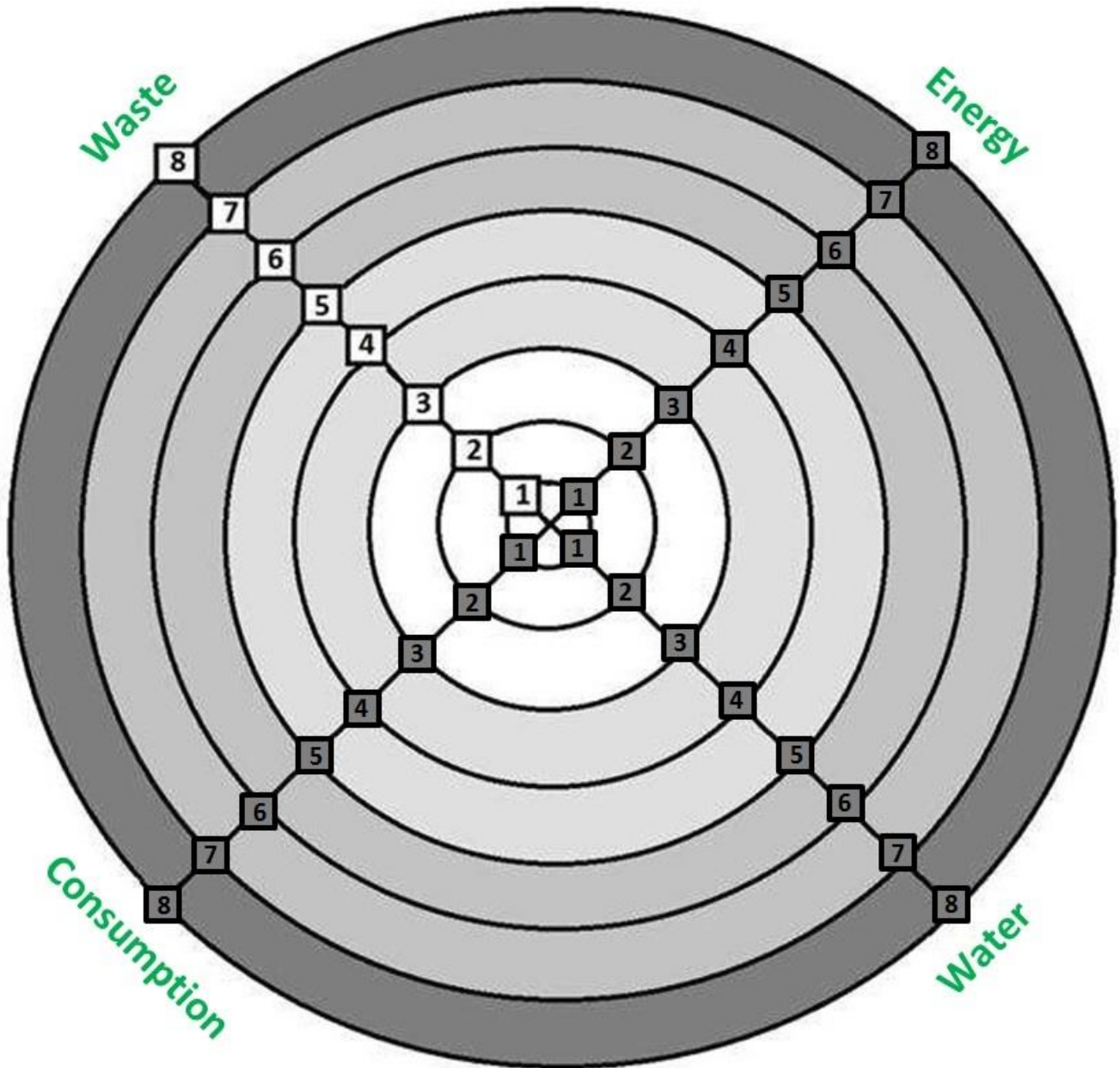
- Ask students to identify which area they scored highest in and/or which specific question(s) they scored highest in. Give them some reflection time to fill out the table on the other side of the student worksheet. It may be helpful to give them some examples first or ask the students to brainstorm some as a group.
- Allow some time for optional sharing.
- An extension could be to ask the students to calculate the area of their original footprint (**hint: the diamond is made up of four right-angled triangles**) and compare it with one that would occur if they made the changes identified in the table.



My Green Footprint!

Water	Please circle....		
I turn off the tap when I'm brushing my teeth.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I am usually in the shower for....	10 minutes 2	5 minutes 1	≤ 3 minutes 0
I use a bucket in the shower/bath to catch excess water to use on the garden.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I only half fill the kitchen sink when washing dishes	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
	Total =		
Waste			
I put my breakfast, recess and lunch scraps in compost or green bins.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
Any items I have that can be recycled I put into recycling bins.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I ask my mum/dad/caregiver to buy food with little or no packaging for my lunch and recess (e.g. Nude food).	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I try to re-use broken or old items for other purposes rather than buying new things, wherever I can.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
	Total =		
Energy			
I turn off my electric appliances (TV, Mp3 player, phone charger, laptop etc.) at the power point after I use them.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I switch off the lights when leaving a room.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I try to use only one electronic device at a time instead of having multiple appliances on (e.g. talking on a mobile, using a tablet to check social media and having the TV on in the background).	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I walk, ride, carpool or use public transport to travel to school, after-school and weekend activities (e.g. sports practice, visiting a friend, going to the shops etc.).	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
	Total =		
Consuming			
I ask my parents to buy things that I need, rather than things I want.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
All of my old clothes and unwanted items are handed down to family members and/or given to charity.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I avoid throwing out items just because they are no longer in fashion.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
I ask my mum/dad/caregiver to only buy locally made or grown items, or items supporting socially and environmentally responsible organisations.	Rarely 2	Sometimes 1	Always 0
	Total =		

Mapping My Green Footprint



Where can I improve my behaviour and actions?

What are the areas I can improve in?	What are some actions/behaviours I can adopt to improve in these areas?