

# EcoSchools Canada (2024-2025)

Alternating between Did you know?, Challenge! and Trivia

ecoschools  
écoécoles  
CANADA  
Environmental learning  
and certification programme

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## Did you know?

Greenbelts exist all over the world, but Ontario's Greenbelt is the world's largest! It stretches over two million acres (that's the size of over 5 million hockey rinks) and is home to wetlands, forests and 78 species at risk, making it one of the most biodiverse places in Canada!

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## Challenge!

There are many active and sustainable ways to get to school, such as walking, cycling, busing, and carpooling. Grab a friend and create a map of active and sustainable ways to get to school. How many ways can you think of?

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## Are you ready...

Are you ready to take environmental action? Spending time to reflect on your environmental goals and how to take meaningful action for your school can be one of the first steps, as well as creating an EcoTeam! An EcoTeam (environmental group or eco-club) is at the core of a strong EcoSchool. A well-rounded EcoTeam involves students from a range of grades, school principals, teachers, parents, and custodial staff. Learn more at [ecoschools.ca](https://ecoschools.ca)

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## Trivia

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases in the Earth's atmosphere that can trap heat from the sun and in turn cause the planet to warm. What percentage of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions is caused by transportation?

Answer: 25%

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## Did you know?

EcoSchools call their school's environmental promise or pledge an EcoCode. An EcoCode can take many forms, from something as simple as a statement or poem, to a more in-depth document such as a school climate policy.

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## Challenge!

How can you divert textile waste? Challenge your friends and family and see who can repair, swap, donate or upcycle the most clothing. Have a fashion show or exhibit your cool creations when you're done!

7



## Did you know?

Composting is recycling organic waste such as food scraps (like banana peels and apple cores), paper products, and yard waste into soil. Composting not only helps to reduce the amount of waste headed for the landfill but also creates a fertilizer that helps plants grow big and strong.

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## Trivia

What takes more energy, heating or cooling?

Answer: Heating is more energy intensive for several reasons including insulation issues and the nature of cooling a space versus warming the air. Both heating and cooling have an impact so let's work to reduce both!

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## Did you know?

A school's "water footprint" is how much water a school uses in a year. Knowing this helps inspire water-saving actions! What are some ways you can save water at school?

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## Challenge!

Litter can be damaging to plant life and detrimental to animal habitat and health, especially if it is mistaken for food and ingested. Do a community cleanup with your friends, family, or peers. See who can fill up a garbage bag first!

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### Did you know?

Idling is when we let a vehicle's engine run while it is parked. Letting cars idle wastes money and fuel, and causes pollution that contributes to climate change.

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### Trivia

How many pine trees does it take to make 10,000 sheets of paper?

Answer: 1

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### Did you know?

These events usually require a lot of material for decoration and tableware and can use a lot of energy for lighting and heating. How can we turn school events into green gatherings?

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### Challenge!

An increasing number of wildlife are becoming displaced from their natural habitats. Support wildlife by creating a bird feeder, bat box, or toad home out of recycled and/or natural materials.

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### Did you know?

Do you ever wonder how much waste your school produces in a day? It is estimated that Canadians dispose of over 3 million tons of plastic waste every year, less than 10% of which gets recycled. How can you reduce the plastic you throw away?

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### Trivia

When a species is called "at risk" it means it is in danger of disappearing. Can you name three Canadian species at risk?

Answer: Over 250 unique species were spotted with nearly 58,000 submissions!

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### Did you know?

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Canada's Changing Climate Report concluded that while climate change can be caused by natural variations, the current changes we are seeing can only be explained by human activity.

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### Challenge!

Sorting waste correctly helps reduce the amount of trash at your school and home. Challenge yourself and those around you to see who can sort the waste most effectively!

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### Did you know?

Freshwater is necessary for all life on earth, but it is also a limited resource. Depending on your school's location, the water you get to drink, use in your school garden, and flush your toilets comes from different sources such as surface water or underground aquifers.

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### Trivia

How many different species of birds were recorded by Canadians of all ages in the Great Backyard Bird Count in 2023?

Answer: Over 250 unique species were spotted with nearly 58,000 submissions!

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### Did you know?

Reaching about 1 million students annually, EcoSchools Canada is the largest bilingual, voluntary environmental certification program for K-12 schools in Canada.

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### Challenge!

GOOS (Good On One Side) paper is paper that has been used on one side but is still blank and usable on the other side. Make a creative GOOS paper bin using recycled materials. Have a GOOS paper bin contest with your friends or family!

23



### Did you know?

Getting outside and growing plants in a food garden can teach many valuable life skills. From designing your garden to growing seedlings to harvesting your crops—food gardens can provide hands-on education about nutrition, soil, teamwork, and food systems.

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### Trivia

Simple actions to reduce energy use, like switching off a light, can help to conserve the Earth's natural resources. How much of a light bulb's electricity is used to make light?

Answer: Only 10%! The rest of the energy is wasted, so switch off your lights when you exit a room!

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### Did you know?

EcoSchools across the country diverted over 392,900 kg of waste from the landfill last school year. That's equivalent to the weight of more than 1,450 grizzly bears!

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### Challenge!

Since 2010, more than a million Canadians have shown their support for limiting the rise of global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius by turning down their thermostats by the same amount (or more) and wearing their favourite sweaters to stay warm. Challenge yourself and the people around you to turn off the heating and put on your favorite sweaters!

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### Did you know?

Some examples of actions created by certified EcoSchools include: removing invasive species, investigating local soil health, hosting book swaps, organizing secondhand holiday markets, developing seed libraries, joining letter writing campaigns, growing bioleather — just to name a few!

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### Trivia

In Canada, what percentage of students walk or bike to school?

Response : 25%

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### Did you know?

Earth Hour is a global movement encouraging everyone to take action for the environment by switching off their lights for one hour. Earth Hour even made it to space! In 2015, astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti joined the Earth Hour movement from space by holding a sign 'Change Climate Change' inside the International Space Station.

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### Challenge!

How many days can you go without using a plastic water bottle? Challenge your friends to see who can go the longest!

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### Did you know?

A School Energy Footprint is a measure of the amount of energy used by a school during the year. Schools use energy in a lot of ways such as heating classrooms on a cold winter day, powering computer equipment or keeping the lights on.

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### Did you know?

Dr. Bondar, the first Canadian woman in space, is also the only astronaut to use fine art photography to explore Earth's natural environment from the surface. The Bondar Challenge is a contest for students to learn about the art of photography and to discover nature. Visit [ecoschools.ca/bondarchallenge](https://ecoschools.ca/bondarchallenge) to participate.

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### Did you know?

Indoor gardening can improve your overall well-being! It can alleviate stress, encourage relaxation, and create a sense of achievement. Create your own indoor garden today at home or in your classroom by using EcoSchool resources!

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### Challenge!

Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and is a great opportunity to take action for the environment! Challenge yourself and your friends to do fun Earth Day activities such as a community clean-up, zero-waste challenge, or a craft from natural materials!

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### Did you know?

Did you know that almost one third of greenhouse gases come from how we grow, make, and move our food? What we choose to eat and how we get our foods, can have a ripple effect on our food system and the environment it relies on. So, let's think twice about our choices and make a positive impact!

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### Trivia

How long can a plastic bottle take to decompose?

Answer: Up to 450 years

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### Did you know?

A pollinator is any animal that helps to fertilize flowering plants. In Canada, these include animals such as butterflies, moths, beetles, and bees. In fact, between 75-90% of flowering plants worldwide depend on pollinators for their survival. Without pollinators, we would lose a lot of food and plants.

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### Challenge!

A waste-free lunch may include reusable food and drink containers, washable cutlery, and cloth napkins instead of prepackaged foods, plastic baggies, juice boxes, paper napkins, and disposable utensils. Have a waste-free picnic with friends and family.

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### Did you know?

A low-mow zone is exactly what it sounds like—a designated area of your schoolyard lawn that is not mowed regularly. Low-mow zones help to increase biodiversity by providing favorable habitat for a variety of wildlife and pollinator species.

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### Trivia

What's the difference between avoidable food waste and unavoidable food waste?

Answer: Avoidable food waste is when all edible parts of a piece of food are not used when preparing or cooking food or when food is left to spoil. Unavoidable food waste is a part of food that is not edible such as a pit.

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### Did you know?

"Nature" is often understood as a place far away from human activity, however humans exist within natural systems all the time, even in big cities! Grow deeper connections to nearby-nature by creating local field guides, maps, or signage for the nature in your school yard!

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### Challenge!

Plan an Environmental Fair featuring student projects or host an Environmental Conference where students present workshops and hands-on activities. Invite your community, including school staff and students, nearby schools, families, and community organizations, to attend and learn something new.

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### Did you know?

Canadians are spending less and less time outside, which is taking a toll on our health and well-being. Get outside and have a blast playing sports, exploring nature, cycling, hiking, or using your imagination for creative play, staying active and connected!

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### Trivia

Over the next 30 years, the number of hot days in a year is expected to be more than double in Canada. What are some ways you can protect yourself from the summer heat?

Answer: Keeping cool in the shade, seeking cool locations, and drinking plenty of water.

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### Did you know?

A Sit Spot is one specific place in nature you return to on a regular basis. Turned into a routine, a Sit Spot can also help improve self-expression, and creativity through nature journaling, as well as uplift your mental, emotional, and physical health.

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### Challenge!

Did you know that about one third of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the food industry? What we eat, how we source our foods, and our daily behaviours can have an impact on our planet. Have a cookoff with your friends or family to see who can make the most sustainable meal!

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### Did you know?

Many of your devices and appliances use electricity even when they are turned off. Phantom power is the energy used by appliances when they are turned off, but still plugged in. By unplugging electronics when they are not in-use you are helping to reduce unnecessary energy use.

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### Trivia

How much e-waste are Canadians on track to produce by 2030?

Answer: 1.2 million tons annually.

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### Did you know?

Environmental literacy is all about learning IN the environment, FOR the environment, ABOUT the environment, and FROM the environment! What are some ways you've learned IN, FOR, ABOUT, and FROM the environment?

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### Trivia

Indoor Air quality is important! Air pollutants, such as dust, pollen, mould, and carbon monoxide can be contributors to poor air quality. On average, what percentage of time do Canadians spend indoors?

Answer: 90%

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### Challenge!

Environmental journalism shines a light on important subjects in the world. Young Reporters for the Environment Canada is a national program that gives youth the opportunity to show off their environmental journalism skills. Submit your creative work to the YRE contest at [ecoschools.ca/yre/](https://ecoschools.ca/yre/)!