

Sustainability in Action

Make a Difference in Your Community

To mark 2017 as the centennial of America entering the Great War, the Architect of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., recreated a War Garden as it would have been during World War I. These fruit, vegetable, and herb “Victory Gardens” were planted at private residences, public parks, school yards, and unused land plots to increase food supplies without increasing the use of land or labor already dedicated to agricultural work.



[Library of Congress](#)

The country also undertook other food and energy waste reduction programs throughout the war, calling on every citizen to act sustainably. The initiatives of our forebears lends credence to the idea that actions undertaken by individual citizens can have a significant impact on our nation as a whole and laid the foundation for modern day action projects.

Action projects are experiential learning activities that provide a chance to focus on issues directly affecting you, your community, and the world we share. Designing and implementing an action project of your choosing allows you to understand that you have the ability to bring about positive and significant change in your school, communities, and world.



[National Archives](#)

Directions: Want to understand your role as a member of a community as well as a global citizen? Get motivated to undertake a Sustainability in Action Project! Choose from the suggested list, or champion your own cause.

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Project Ideas

Revitalize Your Schoolyard

Does your schoolyard look grey and bleak? Transform it by coordinating with school officials to fundraise for tools and supplies, then plant native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers to contribute to a healthier school environment!

Grow Local Food

Do you ever wonder where the food you eat comes from? Plant and care for your own food from seed to harvest! Begin thinking about the path your food travels from the farm to your plate, and why it matters for your health, farmers, rural communities, and the environment.

Become a Food Detective

If planting or maintaining a garden is not feasible in your area, become a food detective by keeping a journal that notes where the primary ingredients in your meals come from. Are your apples from your local community, state, or nation? Or do they come from overseas, and if so how are they transported? Find out by tracking the food transmission path of the meals you consume for a week.

Energy Conservation and School Audit

Take action with a school audit to study and analyze what uses up energy at your school. Then take on the mission to lower energy use school-wide by starting a energy conservation campaign. Inform your fellow students, teachers, school workers, and school visitors of steps they can take to reduce your school's energy consumption.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Do you ever feel like you live in a culture that doesn't understand the dangers of having so many non reusable and wasteful products and habits? Then start a campaign to champion the benefits of reducing, reusing, or recycling! Undertake a project showing others how to recycle common items, how to choose reusable alternatives to disposable products, and some basics on how to reduce waste or overconsumption.

How Big is Your Ecological Footprint?

Want to calculate and become accountable for your ecological footprint? Using research tools from the internet, calculate the amount of natural resources you consume in a given year. Then determine the footprint of the entire class by finding the mean, the median, the mode, and the standard deviation for your class. Create a graph of your class footprint and explore ways you can work together to reduce your footprint. Armed with this new knowledge and awareness, students are encouraged to take action by informing the public of their shared responsibility to subsequent generations to preserve our natural resources and how they can also examine the impact of their consumption.