

Brownies



Eco award

Introduction

Welcome to the Eco award! Are you ready to become an eco Brownie and improve your environment?

Your environment is made up of everything around you – people, animals, plants and nature. What we do can affect our environment in a good and bad way. It's important to look after your world and think about how you can be more **sustainable**. This means finding ways you can help look after your environment.

Eco is a shortened word for **ecological**.

Ecological means our relationship with people and animals.

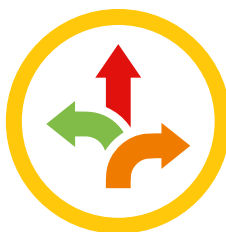
By completing this Eco award you'll:



Discover
how you
can help the
environment



Be creative



Make your
own choices



Work
together with
your friends
or family



Make a
difference
in your
community

To achieve this award you need to carry out 5 steps. You can record your progress on the award log on [page 12](#). You'll then officially be an eco Brownie and get a special badge and certificate.

You can do the award on your own, in groups, with your unit, at home or even with your local community. This award is all about having a positive impact on your environment, no matter how small. It all helps!

Community is the people who live near you, your local shops, parks and playgrounds, and your school.

Step 1

Work out your carbon footprint

What does **carbon footprint** mean? When you open your fridge, turn on the TV or wash the dishes, you use energy. Your carbon footprint is the amount of **carbon dioxide** put into the air from the energy you've used. Things like how you get to places, what you eat, where you buy your clothes or food, and how you use your electronics all make a difference to your carbon footprint.

Carbon dioxide is the air you breathe out. It also comes from burning things, travel, food and buying things. Too much carbon dioxide in the air means the Earth will get hot. This can cause many problems for animals, plants and you! Doing things like growing plants and trees helps lower the amount of carbon dioxide in the air.

Have a look at the carbon footprint checker on the next page for an idea on how some choices in your life affect the environment. You can fill it in directly on the resource or you can grab a piece of paper and pen to note down your answers.

It's OK if you can't control some of these choices. It's all about exploring what things affect your carbon footprint and finding out ways to improve the environment.

When you've answered all the questions, add up how many times you said yes or no. The more times you said yes the lower your carbon footprint. If you need help, ask an adult. You might want to use your results to help you decide your actions for **step 3**.



Watching 1 hour of TV uses the same amount of electricity as boiling your kettle every day for nearly 3 months!

**International Energy Agency,
The carbon footprint of streaming
video: fact-checking the headlines**

Carbon footprint checker

Add up how many times you said yes or no. The more times you said yes the lower your carbon footprint.

Questions

Answers

| Building – unit or home | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Do you turn off the lights when you leave a room? | yes | no |
| Do you turn off your TV, computer or video games when you're not using them? | yes | no |
| Do you turn off the tap when brushing your teeth? | yes | no |
| Do you take a shower rather than a bath to wash? | yes | no |
| Do you dry your clothes on the washing line rather than in the dryer machine? | yes | no |
| Travel | | |
| Do you bus, train, cycle or walk rather than taking a car to your school or unit? | yes | no |
| Food | | |
| Do you throw away leftover food in the food waste bin? | yes | no |
| Do you recycle? | yes | no |
| Do you use a reusable water bottle or food containers? | yes | no |

Step 2

Choose your environment

Now you've completed the carbon footprint checker, it's action time! To achieve your Eco award, you need to do 3 actions to help your environment. First, decide which of the 3 environments below you want to help:



Home



Unit



**Local
community**

You can do all 3 of your actions in the same area, or choose different environments for each. Check out some examples on [page 9](#).

You'll need to do 1 of your 3 actions for at least 1 month to show you're a real eco Brownie! For example, you could do it for 1 hour every week for 4 weeks.

Whichever environments you choose, your leader or an adult at home will support you along the way to complete your 3 actions and achieve your award.

Step 3

Pick your actions

There are lots of ways you can help your environment. What are you going to do? And how are you going to show what you've done?

For ideas, the 4 Rs are a good place to start:



Refuse – say 'no' to something.

Instead of taking a new plastic bag, bring a cloth one from home.



Reduce – use or buy less of something.

Speak to your parent/carer and ask if you can borrow a book from a friend or the library rather than buying a new one. Or do a toy swap with a friend rather than buying a new toy.



Reuse – use something again.

Take a reusable water bottle out with you rather than buying a new plastic bottle.



Recycle – give something a new use.

Use an old plastic food container to store things like beads, buttons or crayons.

Have a look at **page 7** for ideas to help get you started. Chat with an adult to make sure you can make the change you want. Remember that 1 of your 3 actions needs to be 1 month long.

Once you've decided your actions, note them down on your award log on **page 12**. Check out the options below for some ideas of how you can show what you've done. You can use more than 1 way if you like!



Take some photos



Write about it in your diary



Draw a picture



Make a poster



Make a video



Check out the safety guidance on page 14 to help you stay safe during activities.

Below are some ideas for your 3 actions

We've split them up into different categories such as travel and food. Before you start any actions make sure you've checked with an adult or leader. They may need to help you. If you have an idea not on the list, that's great! Just check with an adult first to make sure it will help the environment.

Community

- **Set up a book swap** at your unit, school or with family/friends.
- **Help at a community garden.**
- **Get involved in a litter pick** or other rubbish picking event.
- **Donate some clothes, toys or food to charity.**
Ask an adult if there are any shops or collections close to where you live or happening at school.

Building

- Does your chosen environment have a recycling process? **Introduce recycling bins** for plastic, metal and cardboard.
- **Save electricity** – turn off lights when you leave the room.
- **Save water** – turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- **Take it outside.** Ask your unit leader to plan more unit meetings outside (depending on the weather). It's a great way to use less gas and electricity and there's more space for fun.

Conservation

To look after and protect our environment and animals.

- **Design and build a bug or bee hotel** in your garden or outside your unit meeting space.
- **Plant wildflowers** in your garden or in plant pots. This helps insects to pollinate the flowers.
- Do your **grow your own interest badge**
- **Create a mini pond** to encourage more insects and wildlife to come to your garden, patio or balcony.
wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-create-mini-pond
- **Plant a tree** in your garden or in a plant pot.
- **Build a hedgehog home** in your garden to encourage them to rest, hibernate and raise their hoglets.
wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home
- **Make a house for frogs and toads.** Create a winter den for frogs, toads and newts.
wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum
- **Build a butterfly garden**
wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-attract-butterflies-your-garden

Shopping

- **Buy something second hand** instead of new. You could go to a local charity shop!
- **Do a clothes or toy swap*** with your friends.
- **Reuse things** in your unit or at home where possible, like paper.
- **Upcycle**** your rubbish and use it for some arts and crafts activities. You could use cereal boxes to make a mask or mini theatre, for example.

Travel

Reduce your car use:

- Lift share with a friend to school or your unit meeting.
- Use public transport (bus or train) where possible.
- Walk or cycle to places where possible.

Bring your own water bottle when you're travelling. Get your family to do it too!

Top tip

If you're travelling abroad check if you can drink the tap water.

Food

Plant and grow some of your own food in a plant pot or flower bed.

Reduce your food waste:

- Start using a compost bin to reduce food waste and use as a fertiliser for plants.
- Reuse leftover food – soak banana peel in water and add to your plant for a natural fertiliser.
- Eat leftovers the next day so they don't go to waste.
- Use less food in activities by planning what you will need and what to do with what's leftover.

* Make sure you get permission from your parents/carers first.

** Upcycle – making something into another thing to use.
Upcycling means you throw less away.

Below are some examples of the **3 actions** you might decide to take

If you're doing the Eco award individually...

Action 1

Category – building
Environment – home

Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

Action 2

Category – shopping
Environment – home

Instead of buying brand new, look for what you need in your local charity shop instead.

Action 3 – for 1 month

Category – food
Environment – home or unit

Reduce your food waste – complete your **zero waste interest badge**. Keep doing it for 1 month!

If you're doing the Eco award as a unit...

Action 1

Category – conservation
Environment – local community

Build a hedgehog home near your unit.

Action 2

Category – shopping
Environment – unit

Try to reuse things in your unit where possible, like paper.

Action 3 – for 1 month

Category – community
Environment – unit

Set up a weekly book swap at your unit. Do this for 1 month.

Step 4

Inspire others

Well done for completing your actions! How did you help your environment? Did you have fun being an eco Brownie?

It's time to share what actions you've done for your Eco award.

Tell your Brownie friends at your unit how your changes have made the world a better place!

If you completed the award as a whole unit, you can visit another unit or section to share what you did. By sharing, you can inspire others to think about the environment and what we can all do to help it.

Sharing with your guiding friends is the first step to finishing your award. Make sure to fill this part in on your award log on [page 12](#). Once you've done this, your leader will check you've completed all your actions and make your Eco award official! Your leader will order your badge and certificate to present to you.

Did you know your Eco award certificate is FSC-certified? That means the paper it's on comes from protected forests, where they make sure the trees chopped down are replaced with more.

Step 5

Celebrate!

Wow you're an eco Brownie! Let's celebrate! You should be proud that you've made your environment more sustainable. Not only that, you've inspired others to follow in your footsteps.

Being kind to the environment doesn't have to stop now you've finished your award. Keep up the amazing work and share your eco ideas with your friends and family. If we all work together, we can make better choices for our environment.



**Wear your
badge with pride
because you're
an eco Brownie!**

If you want to continue your eco journey in guiding, you can do your Eco award again as a Guide and Ranger. You'll have to think of different actions to do – your leader can help with that when the time comes.



My award log

Name:

My actions to help the environment

Action 1

Action 2

Action 3

Action 1

Evidence seen by leader

Date completed

My guiding peers have confirmed that I've completed this action

Signed by leader



Action 2

Evidence seen by leader



Date completed



My guiding peers have confirmed that I've completed this action



Signed by leader



Action 3 – 1 month

Evidence seen by leader



Date completed



My guiding peers have confirmed that I've completed this action



Signed by leader



Safety guidance

Staying safe outside

Stay with an adult. Make sure you're always with a grown-up to help keep you safe.

Speaking to strangers

You shouldn't talk to strangers when you're on your own. If someone you don't know starts talking to you, find your unit leader or parent/carer straight away.

If a stranger speaks to you and it makes you feel worried or confused, speak to an adult right away to let them know how you feel.

Pay attention to where you are

Look around and make sure you're in a safe place to complete your award.

Keep away from roads and dangerous places

Stay a safe distance from roads, water, and other areas that might be dangerous.

Stay safe in the sun

When you're outside on sunny days, remember to wear sun cream, a hat and sunglasses to protect yourself.

Cross the road safely

Always use the Green Cross Code. Stop, look and listen before crossing the street, and try to wear bright or reflective clothes so drivers can see you easily. At night, make sure you're wearing something reflective – like a special armband – because bright colours won't show up in the dark.

Handling rubbish

If you need to handle rubbish when completing your award, for example if you run a litter pick in your local community, always:

- Wear gloves
- Don't pick anything up that could be harmful, like broken glass or dog waste
- Wash your hands afterwards

Personal information

You shouldn't share your personal information with people you don't know.

If you're making any posters or crafts as part of your award, don't include your personal information like your full name or where you live.

Check with your unit leader or parent/carer before sharing what you've made.

Be safe on the internet

Always check with a parent/carer before using the internet for your Eco award and let them know why you need to use it as part of your award.

Make sure you don't share any of your personal information online. Also, be careful downloading any documents, and check your parent/carer is happy for you to do this.



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