

Rangers



Eco award

Introduction

Welcome to the Eco award! Are you ready to become an eco Ranger 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 daily ways you can help look after your environment – now and into the future.

Eco is a shortened word for **ecological**.
Ecological means our relationship with people and animals.

By completing this Eco award you'll:



To achieve this award you need to carry out 5 steps. You can record your progress on the award log on **page 13**. You'll then officially be an eco Ranger 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 or wider community. This award is all about having a positive impact on your environment, no matter how small. It all helps!

Step 1

Work out your carbon footprint

What does **carbon footprint** mean? Your carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air because of your own energy needs. 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.

Have a look at the carbon footprint checker on the next page for an idea of how eco-friendly you are, and to understand how some of the choices in your life affect 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. Once you've completed the checker, you can use it as a guide to help you decide your actions for **step 3**.

It's OK that you may not be able to control all these choices as a young person. This part of the award is designed to give you some more understanding and knowledge of how everyone's carbon footprint has an effect on the world.

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
When you've finished using your appliances, do you switch them off and unplug them?	yes	no
Do you turn the water off when brushing your teeth?	yes	no
Do you have a shower rather than a bath to wash?	yes	no
Do you dry your clothes without using electricity? Eg hanging your washing on the clothes line.	yes	no
Do you recycle?	yes	no
Do you close the windows when the heating is on?	yes	no
Closing the windows when the heating is on, keeps the heat in and the cold air out!		
Do you wash your clothes on a lower temperature?	yes	no
Washing your clothes on 30 degrees instead of 40 degrees helps save energy!		
Do you have energy-saving lightbulbs?	yes	no
Energy saving lightbulbs use less energy and last longer than conventional lightbulbs. They can be a bit more expensive initially but will save money on energy bills in the long-run.		
Travel		
Do you use public transport, cycle or walk to school or to your unit rather than a car?	yes	no

Food

Do you throw away leftover food in the compost or food waste bin?

yes

no

Compost is an easy way to break down waste so it can be used again. Normally it's kept in a bin or heap where natural rubbish (food and plants, for example) is allowed to mix together. After a period of time, it decomposes and you can use it as a natural fertiliser for your garden or plants.

Do you grow any of your own food?

yes

no

Using seeds from fruit you eat can be a fun way to grow your own food, reduce packaging and help the environment. Plant the seeds in a pot on your windowsill or in the garden.

Do you use a reusable water bottle or food containers?

yes

no

Clothing

Do you wear second hand clothes, such as those passed to you from family and friends, or bought from a charity shop?

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 commit to 3 actions to improve your environment. Your actions can be across any of these areas:



Home



Unit



**Local
community**



**National/
international
community**

Decide which area you want to help. You can do all 3 actions in the same area, or you might want to choose different areas. Check out some examples on **page 10**.

You'll need to do 1 of your 3 actions for at least 3 months to show you're a real eco Ranger!



A return flight from London to Berlin puts out about 0.6 tonnes (the same weight as a polar bear) of CO₂ per person into the air. That's 3 times more carbon than you'd save by recycling for a whole year!

BBC, Should we give up flying for the sake of the climate?

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 5 Rs are a good place to start:



Refuse – say 'no' to something.

Buy a drink in a can rather than plastic bottle. Cans are much easier to recycle and have less environmental impact.



Reduce – Use or buy less of something.

Borrow a book from a friend or the library rather than buying a new book. Have a clothes swap with your friends, rather than buying new.



Reuse – Use something again.

If you get a takeaway with your friends or family, reuse the food containers for your lunch or leftovers.



Repair – mend something when it breaks.

Sew up a hole in a top or sock rather than buying a new one.



Recycle – give something a new use.

Use a cardboard box to send someone a gift.

Have a look at **page 8** for ideas to help get you started. You might need to talk to an adult to make sure you're able to make the change you want. Remember that 1 of your 3 actions needs to show your commitment over 3 months.

Once you've decided your 3 actions, note them down on your award log on **page 13**. You can choose how to show what actions you've done, and use more than 1 way if you want. Here are some ideas:



Take photos and explain what they show



Ask an adult to write about your action and review what you did



Write in your diary, journal or blog



Present your action in front of a group



Make a video or short film



Create a poster or leaflet



Write a story

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.

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.
- Use a timer for lights to turn off.
- Use energy-saving lightbulbs.

Save water

- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- Don't overfill the kettle when making a hot drink, only boil the water you need.
- If you have a dual flush button on your toilet, make sure to use the smaller one for liquid waste and the bigger one for solid waste.

Take it outside

- Work with 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 offers more space for fun. There are lots of ideas to choose from – try pitching a tent or go on a penny hike! Or why not try your hand at bushcraft?

Community

- Set up a **book swap** at your unit, school or with family/friends.
- **Get involved in a community garden.**
- **Get involved in a local environment campaign.**
- **Organise a litter pick** or other rubbish picking event.
- **Get involved in a donation initiative**, for example donate clothes to charity or give food to food banks.
- **Create an awareness day.** Encourage the creation of green spaces by bringing your community together. Plan an event based on being environmentally friendly so people can learn about sustainability and planting their own gardens.

Conservation

To look after and protect our environment and animals.

- **Volunteer at a local conservation project.**
- **Plant native wildflowers** in your garden or in plant pots. This helps insects to pollinate the flowers.
- **Plant a tree** in your garden or in a plant pot.
- **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](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-create-mini-pond)
- **Design and build a bug or bee hotel** in your garden or outside your unit meeting space.
- **Build a hedgehog home** in your garden to encourage them to rest, hibernate and raise their hoglets.
[wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home](https://www.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](https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum)
- **Build a butterfly garden.** [wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-attract-butterflies-your-garden](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-attract-butterflies-your-garden)

Shopping

- **Create a plastic and food waste diary**
Using the template on **page 16**, record your use of plastics and food waste for 1 week. Look at what small changes you could make to help improve this. Then the next week, complete the diary again and see if you've become more sustainable!
- **Support a local business in your high street** rather than buying from a big company that has lots of stores.
- **Buy something second hand** instead of new.

- **Upcycle*** something in your home, unit or community.
- **Get creative and turn old clothes into something new.** You could make scrunchies from a t-shirt or a shopping bag from a jumper!
- **Do a clothes swap**** with your friends.
- **Try to reuse resources in your unit** where possible. Can you make a plan with your leader about which resources can be used again?

Food

- **Start using a compost bin** to reduce food waste and use as a fertiliser for plants.
- **Reuse leftover food**, for example, soak banana peel in water and add to your plant for a natural fertiliser or use coffee grounds to make a body scrub.
- **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.
- Try to **buy fruit and veg that is locally sourced** and in season.
- **Plant and grow some of your own food** in a plant pot or flower bed.
- **Challenge yourself to swap out meat in 1 meal** for an alternative protein** with less environmental impact. For example, you could have beans, lentils, eggs, tofu, mushrooms, nuts, seeds or soya.
- **Avoid food packaging where possible.** You could buy loose potatoes and veg rather than in a plastic bag, use tea leaves instead of tea bags or save and reuse your shopping bags for your next food shop.

Travel

Use travel as a chance to learn about climate action in other communities. Look around. Can you see solar panels, wind turbines, rain barrels or compost bins around your area? How could these work in your home or community?

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.

Are there any **sustainability projects** you can visit? In the UK we have great projects where you can visit and learn more about sustainability:

- Eden Project – Cornwall
- Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre – Wales
- Dynamic Earth – Scotland
- Castle Espie Wetland Centre – Ulster

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

**Make sure to discuss with your parent/carer first.

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

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

Action 1

Category – travel

Environment – local community

**Reduce your car use by doing
1 or more of the following:**

- Share a lift with a friend to school or your unit meeting
- Use public transport (bus or train)
- Walk or cycle where possible

Action 2

Category – food

Environment – home

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

Action 3 – for 3 months

Category – conservation

Environment – local community

Volunteer at a local conservation project for a minimum of 3 months.

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

Action 1

Category – shopping

Environment – unit

Do a clothes or book swap with your unit or other units.

Action 2

Category – shopping

Environment – unit

Try to reuse resources in your unit where possible.

Action 3 – for 3 months

Category – community

Environment – local community

Set up a donation initiative fundraiser for your local community and guiding peers. Plan the event over 3 months.

Step 4

Inspire others

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

It's time to share what actions you've done for your Eco award. Tell your Ranger 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 13**. 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 Ranger! 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 Ranger.

If you want to continue your eco journey in Girlguiding after Rangers, you could support girls with their Eco award as a unit leader or helper.



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 – 3 months

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 busy roads, water, and any 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
- Make sure you don't pick anything up that could be harmful, like broken glass or dog waste
- Wash your hands afterwards

Personal details

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.

Plastic waste diary

Record your plastic use over 1 week in the table below.

Items	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Plastic bags (at shops, school or home)							
Plastic bottles (juice, water, fizzy drinks, sauce, toiletries)							
Single-use cups (at school, home or outside)							
Flimsy plastic packaging (ready meals, cereal packets, packaging around some fruits/ vegetables)							

What changes can your household make to reduce the amount of plastic you all use and throw away?

1.....

2.....

3.....

See if you can make these changes part of your daily routine. Then complete another week of your plastic waste diary.

Have you managed to reduce the amount of plastic you use? Are there any differences in your record of plastic use?



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