



## 50 Classroom Climate Actions - Resources and Descriptions

**Make your classroom more sustainable by taking these climate actions to reduce your collective ecological footprint and move forward with climate action!**

**Questions?**

**Contact:**

**ainslee.macmillan@the  
gaiaproject.ca**



@gaiaproject



thegaiaproject\_



facebook.com/gaiaproject



www.thegaiaproject.ca

**HINT! Re-use your climate action poster by creating your own scratch-off paint! [Click here](#) for a tutorial.**



# What We Eat

As global meat consumption increases, so does its climate impact. Livestock production occupies 30% of the planet's land surface and is responsible for 18% of greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane and nitrous oxide. The average meal travels 1,200 kilometres from the farm to plate. Food grown closer to home produces fewer transportation emissions and supports local farmers.

## Explore and Investigate

**1. Local foods** - What kind of food grows naturally in your region? Research local farms, markets and food processing plants to find out. Learn more about supporting the local food industry. [Local Foods Directory](#)

**2. Food miles** - The food we eat must be prepared, packaged and delivered to grocery stores. Find out how far the food you eat has travelled before arriving on your dinner plate. [Food Miles](#)



## Classroom Activities



**3. Lunch box breakdown** - Learn more about the food you eat everyday. Where did it come from? How was it grown, made or prepared? Is this food good for you? [Lunch Box Breakdown](#)



**4. Plant-based party** - Invite your students to help plan and participate in a plant-based party. Meat consumption contributes largely to GHG emissions, so take time to appreciate some tasty plant-based recipes. [Plant-based Recipes](#)



**5. Food field trip** - Get out into the community for some experiential learning. Visit local food producers in your area. Find out if berry or apple picking, maple sugaring and fiddlehead picking are available in your region. [Farm to Cafeteria Farmers Market Directory](#)



**6. Local foods recipe book** - Have your students research or develop recipes using local foods. Design a cookbook for these recipes and find a way to share or distribute this to your community. [Local Foods](#)



## School-wide Action

**7. Seasonal food challenge** - Start a campaign at your school to encourage students and staff to celebrate and eat foods that are in their natural growing season. This campaign pairs nicely with the ugly fruit campaign, requiring consumers to question what good and healthy produce really looks like. [Ugly Food Seasonal Food Calendar](#)



**8. Donate canned goods** - Schools can do their part to alleviate poverty and food insecurity through raising awareness and contributing to the well-being of our community. Collect foods in a safe manner that can be donated to local food shelters. [Food Donations](#)



**9. Garden at school** - There are many ways to introduce students to growing plants and food at school. Your school community may be brand new to gardening or already have the tools or resources in place. Explore school grants and/or introduce learning activities to engage the entire school in a gardening initiative. [Little Green Thumbs](#)



## What We Waste

Refusing, reducing and reusing our waste will help lessen our reliance on the planet's natural resources. This can potentially reduce emissions of greenhouse gases created through the production and consumption of fossil fuels.

## Explore and Investigate



**10. Role of compost** - Schools produce an incredible amount of organic waste that could end up in the landfill. This organic matter can be composted to produce soil rich in nutrients. Learn more about how compost is made and used to reduce waste. [Composting](#)



**11. The 4 R's** - We often think about Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling when thinking about our waste, but sometimes people forget about the most important one, REFUSE! If we refuse something in the first place (straws, takeaway cups, giveaway products we don't need) then we will have significantly less waste! [Recycling Campaigns](#)





**12. Food packaging and labels** - Packaging materials have a recycling language of their own. Learn about symbols and systems used to differentiate plastic and paper materials. [Recycling](#)

## *Classroom Activities*

**13. Litterless lunch** - Waste free lunch campaigns have been on the rise in North America in recent years. Lunch boxes can often be found filled with single-use plastics (wrappers, baggies, and other packaging) which end up in landfills or in the oceans. The goal of these campaigns is to eliminate any single-use plastics from snacks/lunches. Be mindful of socio-economic issues at your school and try not to isolate any students with circumstances out of their immediate control. [Litterless Lunch](#)



**14. Clothing swap** - The fashion industry is a major contributor to both greenhouse gases AND waste in our landfills. Fast fashion has become a major issue in the environmental world. Luckily, shopping second hand has become very popular. Organize a clothing/goods swap with your students to encourage them to buy used instead of new. [Fashion Footprint](#)



**15. Create a compost system** - There is never a shortage of food scraps at schools, so why not start a compost system to divert these from the landfill? There are various forms of compost systems available, so do some research to figure out the best fit for your school. If space is an issue at your school consider reaching out to community partners to donate the compost. [Types of Compost](#)  
[Create a Vermicompost System](#)



## *School-wide Action*



**16. Collect E-waste** - With technology always changing this can lead to a large amount of electronics ending up in our landfills. Teach your students about e-waste and where to recycle it, better yet, get a bin for your school! [Recycle e-waste](#)





**17. Recycle paper/cardboard** - Get creative with how you recycle/reuse paper in your school and create a G.O.O.S (Good On One Side) bin. Contact your regional waste commission to see how to get recycling bins for your school. [GOOS Campaign](#)



**18. Ban single-use plastics** - People recognize the significant negative impact that single-use plastics have on our environment. This knowledge allows people to be much more aware of their consumption patterns. Take it a step further and consider restricting or banning single-use plastics at your school. [Single-use Plastics](#)

## How We Use Energy

The energy we use in our schools and homes leads to additional carbon emissions. During the winter, over half of the energy is used for heating, so the most important step we can take is to cut back on energy waste. Saving energy saves money too!

### Explore and Investigate

**19. Renewable energy** - Teach students the difference between renewable and nonrenewable energy. Learn what type of renewable energy we generate in New Brunswick. [Renewable vs. non-renewable Renewable Energy](#)



**20. Peak Energy** - Between 6 to 9 am and 4 to 8 pm New Brunswickers are using large quantities of energy due to our daily routines (getting up for school/work, and returning from school/work). This creates two large peaks in our energy consumption. [Learn more here](#)



**21. Electric vehicles** - Discuss the difference between conventional and electric vehicles. Learn about the different levels of electric vehicles and different models available. [Learn more here](#)



## Classroom Activities



**22. Turn-off the lights** - Designate students to be in charge of the lights on a rotating schedule, remind them to turn off lights when leaving rooms, or when natural light is available. Get creative and design “Lights out” stickers for your class/school. Complete this classroom light activity to learn more about your impact. [Lighting Assessment](#)



**23. Bring in an energy expert** - New Brunswick is home to a variety of renewable energy companies and organizations focused on the environment and energy efficiency. Consider reaching out to any of them to learn more and provide presentations to your students. Contact The Gaia Project to learn more about energy in New Brunswick! [Renewable Energy Companies](#)  
[The Gaia Project](#)



**24. Unplug devices** - Did you know that devices that are left plugged in, but not being used still use energy? This is often called phantom/ghost, or vampire energy! Learn more about this energy and start a campaign to unplug devices weekly in your classroom, then consider scaling up to the whole school! [Vampire Power](#)

## School-wide Action

**25. Efficiency campaign** - Work together as a school to save energy. Saving energy saves money too, so this could mean spending the money elsewhere in your school! Learn more about ways to make your school more energy efficient. [Energy Assessment](#)  
[Energy Efficiency](#)



**26. No idle zone signs** - Banning cars/buses from idling outside your school doesn't only improve the health of the environment, it also improves the health of people! Learn more about the benefits of reducing idling, and how you can start an initiative in your school! [Idle Free Zone](#)  
[No Idling at School](#)



**27. Bike, walk, roll to school** - Biking and walking are low-impact activities that are great for you, and your environment! Carpooling and taking the bus are also great options, more people traveling together means less cars on the road! Check out this cool program that allows you to track how students travel to school each morning! [BikeWalkRoll](#)



# How We Use Water

Climate scientists have been saying all along that one of the primary effects of climate change is the disruption of the water cycle. So much of everyday life and planning is determined by water systems. Climate change is having an impact on drinking water supplies and sanitation.

## Explore and Investigate



**28. Flood preparation** - Science has proven that with increased climate change comes the threat of increased extreme weather events. In New Brunswick coastal and inland flooding can be a major threat. Learn more about measures that can be taken to prepare for floods. [Emergency Preparedness and Recovery. Beat the Flood](#)



**29. Watersheds** - What is a watershed? What is your local watershed? What species will you find in your local watershed? What measures are being taken to protect your local watershed? Take time to learn more about your local area and look into local watershed groups. [Find Your Local Watershed](#)



**30. Water pollution** - Once you've learned a bit more about watersheds, research if there are any sources of pollution impacting it. Look more broadly at common forms of water pollution, and what can be done about them. [Water Pollution Facts](#)

## Classroom Activities

**31. Water diary** - Monitor your personal/class water footprint by tracking the amount of water you use on a daily basis. Think beyond just the basics such as showering, drinking, doing the dishes, etc. Consider the water involved in making your food products and clothing. Brainstorm ways to reduce the amount of water you use. [Water Footprint](#)



**32. Harvest rainwater** - Why let perfectly good rainwater go to waste? Collect rainwater for various uses around your school such as watering plants in a greenhouse or in the school. [Harvest rainwater at school](#)



**33. Create a weather station** - Get students familiar with meteorology, the study of the atmosphere. Learn about weather patterns and how climate change is impacting them. Build a weather station for your school to monitor temperature and rain/snow fall! Learn more about the effects of climate change on weather in New Brunswick. [DIY Weather Station](#)  
[Climate Change in New Brunswick](#)



**34. Test water quality** - The water quality of your school needs to meet certain health and safety standards. Students can monitor the quality of water in your schools drinking fountains and sinks. Find the equipment they need to collect data. [Water Quality Program](#)



## School-wide Action



**35. Shoreline/beach cleanup** - Let students become citizen scientists by exploring the various types of trash found in their environment, all while protecting wildlife and their natural habitat! [This](#) easy-to-use platform has great resources available for schools.



**36. Start a rain garden** - Rain gardens are gardens that use water-tolerant native species to collect and filter stormwater runoff. They are beneficial as they help to reduce flooding and improve local water quality. [What is a Rain Garden?](#)

## How We Live on Land

A flourishing life on land is the foundation for our life on this planet. We are all part of the planet's ecosystem and we have caused severe damage to it through deforestation, loss of natural habitats and land degradation. Promoting a sustainable use of our ecosystem and preserving biodiversity is not a cause, it is the key to our own survival.

## Explore and Investigate

**37. Carbon sinks** - Carbon sinks are areas that are capable of absorbing carbon, two natural examples of these are oceans and forests. These help to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases found in the atmosphere, lowering the impacts of climate change. [Carbon Sink Lesson Plan](#)





**38. Ecological footprint** - Every wonder what your personal impact on the environment is? Work together as a class to calculate your ecological footprint using this tool. Encourage students to do this at home too and figure out ways to spark change. [Calculate your Footprint](#)



**39. Native species** - To better appreciate nature, take some time to learn about species native to New Brunswick, and Canada as a whole! Learn about trees and plants of the Acadian Forest, and learn about native wildlife species you might see outside! [Wildlife in NB](#)



## Classroom Activities



**40. Bring in a nature expert** - We are so lucky in New Brunswick to have such strong ties to our natural environment. New Brunswick is host to a wide variety of environmental groups, many of which offer educational programs/presentations for schools, and who better to teach about nature than the experts? [NB Groups](#)



**41. Learn outdoors** - There have been proven benefits to learning outside, these include (but are not limited to): improved mental and physical health, strengthened connections to nature, lower levels of problem behaviour and improved cooperation and the list goes on. Take your class outside or bring in an expert. Better yet, look into creating an outdoor classroom at your school! [Great Minds Think Outside](#)



**42. Count birds/bird watch** - Whether your school is located in an urban or rural setting you are likely to see a variety of bird species around your school grounds. Take time to teach students about different birds in your area, and encourage them to take note of the birds they see at home. [Become a Bird-friendly School](#)



**43. Plant trees** - If you took the time to learn about carbon sinks earlier, you would know that trees store large amounts of carbon. To help take climate action, and to improve the overall health of the environment, plant a few trees in your community or on your school grounds. Check out local environmental groups to see if they have educational tree planting programs. Apply for grants to help with this. [Tree Planting](#)



## School-wide Action

**44. Pollinator garden** - Bees have been buzzing all over the news in recent years due to their decline in numbers. Luckily there are some pretty easy solutions that your school can take to fix this problem! [Pollinator Garden](#)



**45. Adopt a trail/cleanup** - Improving the quality of our living planet is as simple as cleaning up litter in your environment. Organize a trail/playground cleanup around your school or out in your community. Check out the Nature Trust of New Brunswick, or the Nature Conservancy to join cleanups already happening in your area. [Pitch-in Week](#)



## How We Can Share

Share your climate action story with your school, and even your whole community! Share your experiences with your community/school through a variety of different means. Often climate change can be an overwhelming and scary topic, but it is always important to highlight your successes and the action your school is taking!



**46. Climate change event or discussion** - Organize or participate in a school-wide/virtual climate strike to show your support for climate action! Many schools across NB have been hosting climate change panels bringing in local leaders and experts to teach students about climate change and help answer their questions. [Fridays For Future](#)



**47. Perform a production or play** - Perform/record a production/play at your school with the environment/climate change as the main theme. Get creative and let students write their own, or use online templates to help out.



**48. Poetry or music performance** - Share your climate change knowledge, ideas, and even fears through creative means such as poetry and/or music. Climate change can be a very stressful and scary topic, sharing our fears through creative means can be a great way to connect with people and share tips about how they cope with their fears. Sharing information through alternative methods can also be helpful in teaching others. [Climate Change Play](#)





**49. Write letters** - Writing letters to local community/political leaders is a great way to improve your writing abilities, and take climate action by voicing your opinion! This is a great way to integrate climate change into courses beyond the sciences. [Climate change letter writing](#)



**50. Arts and design display** - Get creative and create climate change/environmental art projects. Create different ways to show the impacts of climate change on the Earth. Create an awareness campaign at your school by designing posters to distribute.

**Want to take your climate action a step further? Check out these additional resources created by The Gaia Project:**

[Grade 3-5 Resources](#)

[Grade 6-8 Resources](#)

[Grade 9-10 Resources](#)

