



At-Home Environmental Challenges

The following list includes examples of environmental challenges, outdoor activities, and other resources that were shared during THE GREEN TEAM webinar on February 23, 2021. For additional resources to support environmental education at your school, visit [THE GREEN TEAM website](#) or [contact us!](#)

Energy Efficiency

- [Eversource Challenge](#): The program offers grade-specific challenges ranging from poster-making for first graders to persuasive imagery for high school students.
- [Climate Superstars Challenge](#): Presented by Samsung, ENERGY STAR®, and the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), Climate Superstars is a 10-day online environmental challenge. During the challenge, middle school classrooms (Grades 6-8) complete short tasks geared towards environmental literacy and energy efficiency.
- [Put Energy Efficiency in Play](#): Through the National Environmental Education Fund (NEEF), join the National Hockey League (NHL®) in taking action at home to reduce energy use. Download the activity guide PDF to help you conduct an energy audit.
- [Family-Friendly Energy Saving Tips](#): This resource offers eight strategies to empower children to save energy at home utilizing fun games and challenges.
- [National Energy Education Development](#): National Energy Education Development (NEED) provides hands-on distance learning content through online courses, free activities, and equipment.
- Energy Savings Challenge: Teachers create a list of energy saving tasks and assign a point value to each one: turn off lights (5 points), unplug electronics/appliances while not in use (5 points), switch to LEDs (15 points), electronics free day (10 points), etc. Challenge your students to reach 25 points the first week, 50 points the next week, and so on for the entire month of April. Students can also be challenged to create energy saving posters and signs to display around the house.

Waste Reduction

- THE GREEN TEAM has developed a [Slash Trash Lesson Plan](#) that students can use to create and implement a plan to reduce waste at home, collect and analyze data, see how much their family reduced during the month, and summarize and share their results with the class.
 - The [School Slash Trash Report](#) and [Analysis Addenda](#) are an at-school extension of this activity, designed for students in grades 6-12.
- The Keep Massachusetts Beautiful [Talking Trash & Recycling](#) program provides no-cost interactive 45 minute presentations that teach students about trash and recycling via Zoom. Designed for grades 6 and up, a shorter version can be created for younger students.
- [Eco-Carpentry Challenge](#) (at-home adaptation): Students can find old items like furniture that are lying around their home and turn them into new products. Items like old clothing or toys can be repurposed as well. Awards can be given out virtually by teachers.
- Conduct a waste audit and learn about your trash. Determine if there are items that can be recycled or composted.
- Litter Busters Challenge: Challenge students to clean up their neighborhood, favorite park, or body of water/shoreline. Who can collect the most bags of litter in two hours?
- Connect with local farmers to glean food for food rescue organizations.
- Write letters to your mayor or other political figures to support local environmental initiatives.

Recycling

- Start a recycling program at home. Visit [Recycle Smart MA](#) to learn what should (and should not) go into the recycling bin in Massachusetts.
- [Make recycled paper at home](#): Use a kitchen blender, a screen attached to a frame, a wood board, sponge, rolling pin, towels, and some dry heat to turn scrap paper into new paper.
- [Plastic Bag Weaving](#): Follow these instructions to weave an eco-mat out of plastic bags.
- Upcycling Challenges: Use trash or recycling to make artwork.
- Interview your recycling hauler to learn more about the industry and what items can and cannot be recycled in your town.
- Research available resources for your city or town, including recycling, composting, textiles, reuse/repair, library of things, or hazardous waste disposal.
- Upcycled Fashion show: Redesign thrift store items or clothes going out after spring cleaning.
- Making signage for recycling bins.
- Create a hopscotch game about what to recycle and how to sort materials.
- Ask students in your school's Recycling Club to create their own "recycling at home" video and show it at school meetings or online.
 - Check out our [THE GREEN TEAM Presents: Recycling at Home](#) video for inspiration.

Composting

- [Sandwich bag compost experiment](#): Make a mini-indoor compost in a sandwich bag.
- Start a composting program at home.
- Make an outdoor compost bin using scrap wood, pallets, or other materials.
- Make your own worm bin! Collect earth worms by looking under leaves, then put them in a container with air holes and feed them small amounts of fruit and vegetable scraps. [Click here](#) for more information about vermicomposting from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP).

Gardening

- [City Nature Challenge](#): Students go outside and take pictures of plants and animals, then upload them to an app.
- [Million Pollinator Garden Challenge](#): The National Pollinator Garden Network provides various garden-related challenges to revive the health of pollinators.
- Start an at-home garden this spring!
- Create a list or diagram of the different insects you see in your garden.
- Gather wildflower seeds and make seed packs to share next year.

Climate Change

- [Tree-Plenish](#): Through student-led events, Tree-Plenish is able to plant trees in the community based on approximations of school paper usage.
- THE GREEN TEAM [Climate Change Scorecard](#): Use this scorecard to track the amount and type of actions taken to slow global climate change and keep our earth healthy.
- [Massachusetts Marine Educators 2021 Ocean Awareness Contest](#): Students submit art (visual, written, interactive/multimedia, spoken) that tells a story about human relationship with water and the need to conserve it. Deadline is June 14, 2021.
- [Walk Across Mass](#): Walk Across America and Walk Across Massachusetts kits allow students to learn about geography while calculating their total distance traveled over the course of a week, month, or whole school year.
- Create a solar-powered vehicle.

Misc.

- [Water pollution activity](#): This free downloadable activity helps you conduct an easy at-home experiment to show the effects of water pollution on the environment.
- [Neponset River Watershed Association](#): Discover a list of “Around Your Yard” challenges to help the environment at home.
- [Fifty environmental activities kids can do at home](#): This article offers a long list of activities categorized by content with links to external resources.
- [Environmental Education at Home](#): The National Environmental Education Foundation hosts this database of games and activities relating to the environment.
- [Earth Week Challenge](#): The Earth Week Challenge is a 7-day challenge to practice sustainability and fight climate change. Each day of the week tackles a different action.
- [Environmental Competitions for Students](#): This list of opportunities for students provides links to both submission-based and performance-based competitions.

- [National Environmental Education \(EE\) Week](#): This year's EE Week will be April 19-23, 2021. Visit the website for registration information and links to activity guides, educational videos, infographics, and citizen science resources from EE Week 2020.
- [Ranger Rick Photo Contest](#): Anyone 13 or under may enter, with a parent's or guardian's permission. Send in your best original nature photographs. Winners are selected every month.
- [Lexus Eco Challenge](#): Although this challenge is canceled for 2020-2021, in past years teams of students tackled environmental issues related to land, water, air, and climate. They created Action Plans with practical solutions and quantifiable results, while competing for prizes such as grants and scholarships.
- [eCYBERMISSION](#): Presented by the Army Educational Outreach Program, students participate for free in a team challenge working together to solve a problem in their community using STEM. Please note the registration deadline for 2021 has passed.
- [Project Green Challenge](#): Starting on October 1, Project Green Challenge will inform, inspire, and mobilize high school, college, and graduate students worldwide with a call to action featuring 30 days of environmentally-themed challenges to touch lives, shift mindsets, and equip students with knowledge, resources, and mentorship to lead change on campuses and in communities.
- [Go Green at Home Challenge](#): Each week in April, a new bingo-style board of themed actions that students can do for the environment will be shared. Each document includes links to resources, a "calculate the impact" section, and additional things for older students to check out. Students are challenged to see how many actions they can do!
- Creative Video Challenge: Challenge students to create a video on an environmental topic that is important to them. Make a list of "winning" categories for classmates to vote on the "best" video for each category. Category examples can include: most creative, most educational, funniest, most original, best use of props, most artistic, etc.
 - Create a video on any topic related to helping the environment. Be creative!
- Organize a neighborhood GREEN cleanup event.
- Collect rainwater for household cleaning or to water plants.
- Animal tracking (in snow or mud): This activity can be done in the backyard or front yard. Students can research the tracks they find to figure out who made them.