

Environmental Footprint Assessment Assignment (worth 6 points)

Type your answers onto this document and post this on icollege by deadline.

YOUR NAME _____

PART 1: KEEP AN ECO-DIARY: RECORD YOUR CONSUMPTION FOR THE WEEK (6 or 7 days):

Food choices: what percent of your meal items this week were:

- % Vegetarian (non-flesh)?
- % Non-Dairy?
- % Organically grown?
- % Locally-grown?

(note: these are not supposed to add up to 100%)

Transportation options:

How did you get where you needed to go? (this includes vehicles, mass transit, planes, biking, and walking)

And about how many miles did you travel this week?

What percentage of your overall miles traveled is “green” (mass transit, biking, or walking)

Disposal of items: Regardless of how you disposed of your waste this week, what percent of your waste is comprised of the following three categories (note that these should all add up to 100%):

- % trash/landfill items (non-recyclable items and animal-based food items)? vs
- % recyclable items (cardboard, paper, glass, aluminum, certain recyclable plastics)? vs
- % compostable plant-food items and tissues/napkins?

Out of 100% of your waste disposed, compare what percentage ended up in which of these 3 locations (note that this should also equate to 100% total between the three)?

- % in the trash?
- % in the recycling bin?
- % in the compost bin? (not everyone has one of these, so if you don't, then say zero).

Plastics:

How many times did you use or buy items that contained or were wrapped in plastic (including styrofoam), including food/drink items served on plastic?

Of that, how many single-use/disposable plastic items did you use? (even if they went in the recycling after).

Home Energy Use (non-renewable): *(if you are using electricity or natural gas in your home, answer these questions)*

For about how many minutes a week do you have lights on and televisions and electronic devices like laptops/phones? In how many rooms?

How many minutes this week did you have to charge things or keep devices plugged in?

How many minutes this week did you use your stove/oven or other major appliances? (we know the refrigerator is always running, so you don't have to count that here)

What percent of your home water usage is heated/hot water?

Water Use: *(note: this isn't counting the consumption of water-intensive foods such as meat)*

Consider how much water you use at the bathroom sink and at the kitchen sink and in the shower/bathtub. Then estimate about how many minutes was the tap running each day? ____ x 7 days = ____ minutes a week.

How many loads of laundry did you wash this week?

How many times did you flush a toilet this week?

Did you wash your car, or water your lawn this week?

Shopping:

Besides food, what items did you buy this week?

Were they new or previously owned?

How eco-friendly were they?

Toxins: Did you use any chemical products this week? (on lawn? Household cleaning products? Insect sprays? Paint or nailpolish? Unnatural toiletry or personal care products?) check out the Environmental Working Group website's nontoxic consumer guides <https://www.ewg.org/>

PART 2: ECO-FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR:

Choose one of these "carbon" calculators to take (climate-change footprint) and do the assessment. **List your score here & tell me which one you did.** _____

Nature Conservancy Carbon Footprint Calculator OR

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/consider-your-impact/carbon-calculator/>

EPA greenhouse gas emissions calculator (just carbon dioxide)

<https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/>

Then also take this eco-footprint calculator assessment from the Global Footprint Network (overall footprint, not just climate-oriented). **List your score here.** _____

<https://www.footprintcalculator.org/>

Answer these questions:

Q: *What do you think of the two assessment tools* and how they measured you (methodology)?

Are the calculators comprehensive or are they flawed? If the latter, what info is missing and from which?

Q: What ideas did you get of ways that you could *change your lifestyle to have a lighter footprint* on our biosphere (the planet)?

Q: What kind of things are *hard for you to change* based on infrastructure or economics or personal obstacles?

Based on those obstacles, *what kind of changes could institutions make (systemic changes* by governments or companies or landlords) to make it easier for you and others to have a better personal ranking on the eco footprint calculator?