Determination of Ecological Footprint Assignment

1. When carbon dioxide is released into the air, it absorbs some of the heat energy that the earth emits, keeping more heat locked up on the earth’s surface. The more heat the carbon dioxide molecules store, the warmer the world’s average climate will become. This is causing global warming.

2. When humans use appliances/vehicles… that are powered by fuels in order to satisfy our wants and needs, the fuels that are being burned release carbon dioxide molecules into the air.

3. While Canada’s CO2 footprint is 16.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide, mine is only 8.4. Mine is 7.9 tonnes less, and about 48% less than Canada’s.

4. To lessen my ecological footprint, there are several changes that can be made in my daily life, like not charging my phone all the way if I know I’m not going to need it, turn unnecessary lights and lamps off, opening the windows in the car instead of using the air condition, etc…

5. My travelling consists of going to school in the morning (half of the time by car, half of the time by bus), returning home after school (by bus), and occasional outings which I am driven to on the weekends. On the mornings where I take the bus, it is about an hour long ride. Because the ride is so long, a lot of gas and CO2 is being released. On the ride back from school, half the time it is an hour long bus ride for me, and the other half of the time, it is only a seven minute bus ride. If I were to add up all the time I spend on buses throughout the school year, I’m sure the amount of CO2 would be insanely high, but if you divide it among the amount of people there are on the buses every day, it evens out to a lot less carbon dioxide per person, than if taking a car or motorcycle. Just on one of my buses in the morning, there are about 50 people.

6. My dad and step-mom are fortunate enough to work at the same place, and they both get to work using cars. Due to their different jobs within the company, they must be at the office at different times, causing them to drive to work separately almost every morning. Something they can do is make the sacrifice that one of them has to come in to the office earlier, so that both of them can travel to and from work using one car instead of two. That would reduce my family’s car usage by almost half. My brother works relatively close to our house (not a reasonable walking distance close, but still close), and is able to get to his work with the bus in under 15 minutes. However, when there is a car available at my house, he takes the car, as it is more convenient for him. Something he can do is always take the bus to work, as it is not unreasonable and it will cut my family’s CO2 emission.

7. To lessen my land footprint in regards to travel, whenever I have the opportunity to walk or bike somewhere rather than taking city transportation or a car, I will do it. It will benefit both the environment and I. If I have the choice of taking the bus to school or being driven, I will choose the bus. It is one less car drive that doesn’t need to be driven.

8.    My food choices include eating meat more often than not. There will be about one or two nights a week where there is no meat involved in my supper, but the other nights, meat is usually the main focus of the dish, or meat is incorporated into the main part of the dish. My fast-food restaurant habits are pretty well. My family and a rarely eat fast-food, as we only eat at fast-food restaurants about once a month. I used to drink a lot of soda, but I am happy to say that I have cut down quite a bit, and will now usually choose juice or water over a soda. I will only drink about two cans of soda a week, including if we go out to a restaurant to eat, in which I will usually order soda there.

9. In my home, I can suggest that more meals be without meat in them, and even offer to cook some meals, so that I will be able to approve the dishes I make with less or without meat. I can completely cut those monthly fast-food outings, and replace them with a home-cooked meal. It is healthier for me, and it is better for the environment. The rest of my family are not big soda drinkers, I am the one who drinks the most. I can stop drinking soda completely at my house, and ask my parents to stop buying it so that I won’t have it there in front of me. Finally, I can make sure that if there are leftovers from lunch or supper, we keep them to eat another time instead of throwing them out. We usually do keep our leftovers, but there are a few times that we don’t, so I can change that.

10. Fast food restaurants always have processed meat and other foods that come from factories, and all of their utensils, cups, napkins, individual cardboard boxes… also come from factories. Especially with huge fast food chains like Mc Donald’s, Burger King, KFC… their factories release an enormous amount of CO2 every day. If we don’t go to fast food restaurants, the less they will have to produce of their items, the less gases will be released from their factories.

11. Instead of going to big grocery store chains, we could go to local stores or markets in our city. They don’t have their products shipped from anywhere far, unlike regular grocery stores. All the shipments that are being made to deliver foods to certain grocery stores are expelling a lot of CO2 in their travels. So buying something from somewhere like China, Australia or Russia, may not be the best thing, as it has to be delivered to us from so far.

12. Soft drinks are one of the biggest products being produced today, as everyone is drinking them. For example, Coca-Cola is the fifth biggest company in the entire world! Followed by Mc Donald’s, which sells millions of soft drinks every single day. Soft drink companies must take up a good percentage of the amount of factories in the world, leaving them with many greenhouse gases being released. Also, the amount of sugar in soft drinks needs a lot of water to be produced, which is really not good. A lot of our drinkable water is being put into a drink that is not healthy for us or the environment.

13. My family’s lawn is mowed once a week during the summer season, with a mower that has an engine powered by gasoline. A way I can help reduce my ecological footprint in this area, is if my family bought a manual push mower. It would benefit the environment because no gases would be released at all. And, it’s a lot quieter, too. My family does not water our lawn, it only gets watered when it rains, so we are saving a lot of water that way already.

14. My house is heated by electricity, which must consume a lot of energy. A way that we can help lessen the amount of electricity we use is by installing solar panels. We have a solar panel for our pool, and it is effective, so hopefully getting a solar panel for the house would be just as effective. Another thing to do to help reduce the amount of electricity we use is to watch and adjust the thermostat. In my house my father is always checking the thermostat to see if it is at the temperature we prefer (21°C), and if it is ever over that, he is always quick to put it back down.

15. I think the area my ecological footprint must jump up is in the area of hygiene .I shower about once every two days, but I have to admit that my showers are longer than they should be. I could reduce using a lot of water if I cut down my shower time by half. Also, when brushing my teeth, I do leave the water running when I’m not using it. If I were to turn the water off when I’m actually brushing my teeth and not using it, I could save a lot of water that way, too.

16. Front-load washers have been proven to be more efficient, meaning they use less water and they take less amount of time. I have a top-load washer, which is not as efficient. Although our washing machine may not be the best choice, we are very good with our laundry habits. We only do full loads, and we only do about four loads a week, which is great considering we are a family of 5. We usually wear clothes twice if they are not dirty before putting them in the wash, but maybe we can wear them one more time if they are really not dirty.

17. When I leave a room, I tend to turn off the lights and the television (if there is a television in the room), but other appliances, I don’t really turn off. My family unplugs things like the toaster, the tea-maker… but usually leave the refrigerator and stove plugged in. It is important to unplug appliances when they are not in use, because they are using electricity for no reason. Our choice of lightbulb is important because LED lights are 80% more efficient than regular lightbulbs. They don’t use as much energy, and they last longer. The fact that in my house we use incandescent lightbulbs must increase my ecological footprint a lot.

18. The more garbage there is, the worse it is for the environment, obviously. My family fills about 3-4 garbage bags a week. Compared to some other families, that is not bad, but I know that there is more I can do to help reduce the amount of garbage we throw away. To reduce garbage in my family, there a few things we can do. For example, when we use Ziploc bags, we use them once and then throw them away. If the bags are still usable, we can reuse them. That would reduce the amount of garbage we throw away a lot. Also, we can buy items with less packaging, so there won’t be as much packaging to throw away. What we can do at our school is instead of only having garbage cans in the hallway, we can get those bins with two separate sections, where you can throw away your garbage in one section and put your recyclables in another section. I believe we do have one of those in the cafeteria, but the real places you need to put them is in the hallways. Another thing is that people at our school tend to throw away old papers when they do not need them anymore, but they should keep them and use them as scrap paper.

19. My personal lifestyle requires me to use 3.83 earths.

20. Compared to the rest of Canada, my CO2 footprint is better, the amount of earth’s I need is better, although my reductions are worse. As I mentioned before, while Canada’s CO2 footprint is 16.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide, mine is only 8.4. Mine is 7.9 tonnes less, and about 48% less than Canada’s.

Conclusion: The main cause of global warming is us humans using machinery and other tools that produce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, for our own benefit. What needs to be done to stop global warming is all on us. We need to start reducing the amount of electricity (or other lighting and heating source), and stop using gas-powered machines that produce CO2 when used. I completely believe that I as an individual, or anybody else as an individual, have the power to help reduce global warming, because as they always say, it only takes one person to make a difference. Global warming is a major problem, in which I plan taking action on.