

MOST*



Calculating Your Carbon Footprint

Materials • Computer

- Instructions**
- 1** Pick an hour when you will turn off all electronics and not use any electricity.
 - 2** This hour of no electricity not only saves you on your electric bill but is also helping the environment by reducing the amount of greenhouse gases and the size of your carbon footprint.

Vocabulary

Greenhouses gases are gases like carbon dioxide that contribute to the greenhouse effect by absorbing the radiation that comes from the sun.

The **greenhouse effect** is when gases in our atmosphere trap the heat the comes from the sun and makes the earth on the whole warmer.

A **carbon footprint** is the amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds that are emitted due to the use of fossil fuels like coal and oil. These emissions pollute the air and water and contribute to climate change.

Climate change is the change in global temperature usually used in refence to the change in temperature due to our use of fossil fuels.

- 3** If you are not using a renewable energy source like solar panels then mostly likely fossils fuels like coal are used to create your electricity. Renewable energy sources are sources that don't go away when used or can be replenished in our lifetime. This is unlike fossils fuels which get used up and take a long time to create since they come from the remains of organic materials from a long time ago.
- 4** Use the link to calculate your carbon footprint. To get an accurate number you will need your utility bills to calculate your usage over the year.
- 5** Once you have calculated your footprint you can work on ideas to reduce it. This could be anything from using less electricity, reducing the waste you throw out or driving less.