

# Ecological footprint exercise

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Section One If everyone lived like me, we would need 4 planet earths to support everyone. It takes 18. 2 acres of the Earth’s productive area to support me – 18. 1 tons of carbon dioxide.

#### Section Two

One of the biggest areas that needed improvement is that a lot of the food I eat is prepackaged and not grown locally. I changed my scenario to include 75% of my food as being grown locally, and to include fresher, unpackaged foods. Making this small change means that we would need 3. 9 planet Earths to support everyone if they lived like this, which is a small improvement. It also meant that, to support my lifestyle, we need to use only 17. 2 global acres of the Earth’s productive area, and brought my carbon dioxide emissions down to 16. 5 tons.

#### Section Three

Another change that I made was to reduce the gas and electricity usage for my household by half (based on the amount spent on bills). By making this change, I reduced the number of planet Earths needed to support my lifestyle to 3. 8. This also reduced the number of global acres of usable land area to 17, and the carbon dioxide emissions to 15. 8 tons.

#### Section Four

My footprint was still high. To attempt to make it lower, I changed my residence to a green-design residence which I shared with 5 other people. I said that the building was made from aluminum rather than brick, and that all of the electricity now came from renewable sources – a value that was less than 5% previously. This only brought the total number of Earths needed to support a lifestyle like mine down to 3. 7, which was not much of a change

for a huge investment. Because of this, I also decided to change my diet to a vegan diet, with no meat, fish or dairy, bringing the total number of Earths needed down to 3.4 – it was surprising how diet made a larger difference than moving house. Removing all my transportation brought the total down to 3.2 Earths. I then went through and started the quiz again, giving the greenest answers possible. It was fairly surprising to find that the lowest amount of Earths needed to support someone in this country is 2.8 – much higher than is sustainable.

#### Section Five

This was a really enlightening exercise. Probably the most surprising thing I discovered, as previously mentioned, is that diet plays a huge role in calculating your ecological footprint, and that even cutting down meat and dairy by half can have a huge difference – more than moving into an eco-friendly house and cutting off your electricity! It was interesting to see that the ‘Services’ section of the pie chart never went down in size by removing ecological problems, suggesting that this is linked to the country that you are residing in. It would be interesting to see what makes up these services to ascertain if these could have a better ecological footprint too.

If I was telling a friend about it, I would encourage them to answer as honestly as possible because it really does show you a lot about the way that you’re living and how small changes can have a global impact, particularly on carbon dioxide emissions, which seemed to improve the most with changes.