

BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCY: EDUCATORS MUST PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN CREATING CLIMATE-SMART CLASSROOMS



Challenging yourself to reducing your carbon footprint in the classroom doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming. Little actions can be taken by educators and classroom assistants, as well as students and their parents, to create a climate-smart classroom.

Ways to reduce carbon footprint in the classroom:

- › Create a recycling container for snack packaging.
- › Use cardboard as an alternative to paper for various projects.
- › Create bulletin board art instead of purchasing premade items.
- › Buy refillable dry erase markers instead of throwing away old ones.
- › Recycle dried up markers instead of throwing them in the trash.
- › Instead of throwing away old or broken crayons, melt them to form new ones.
- › Instead of paper towels or tissues, use fabric scraps and washable hand towels.
- › Use reusable drinking containers instead of single-use plastic ones.
- › Use compostable or reusable straws in place of plastic straws.
- › Instead of plastic folders, use paper.
- › Use wet glue and sponges in place of glue sticks.
- › Instead of using paper just one time, reuse it, then recycle.
- › Utilize reusable food storage containers in place of plastic snack bags.
- › Instead of paper plates and cups, try reusable ones.
- › Challenge your class to have a zero-waste party.
- › Use natural light from exterior windows in the classroom to reduce the use of overhead lighting whenever possible.
- › If available, use an outdoor classroom for science and conservation lessons.



Switch your classroom bulbs to LEDs and turn off lights when you leave a room. A 60-watt incandescent bulb, running six hours each day, costs about \$14.40 per year to run compared to \$3 per year to run an equivalent LED bulb for the same time.

Challenging students to get involved in your climate-smart classroom can be a fun way for them to learn about protecting the environment while taking initiatives on their own. One way to encourage them to get involved is by developing a rewards system for good conservation behavior. Encourage them to be creative.

Examples of actions your students can take are:

- › Recycling plastic, glass, and paper.
- › Composting food scraps.
- › Riding a bike to school instead of having their parents drive them, if possible.
- › Bringing lunch and snacks in reusable food storage containers.
- › Adopting conservation behaviors in their homes.

Sources

1 "Frequently Asked Questions: Lighting Choices to Save You Money." Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, energy.gov/energysaver/frequently-asked-questions-lighting-choices-save-you-money. Accessed December 2019.

