



# Planet Protector TOOLKIT

## You Have A Superpower!

You probably love your home, planet Earth. The planet takes care of us by providing air to breathe, water to drink and food to eat.

Maybe you've seen litter on the ground or in a body of water, or perhaps you know about pollution in the air. Maybe you've heard that our planet is getting warmer over time, which is causing problems for plants and animals, including humans. This is happening because, unfortunately, people haven't always taken such good care of the planet.

But did you know that you have a **superpower**? If you love the planet Earth, then YOU can be a Planet Protector! People of all ages can do big and little things to help the planet. In this Toolkit, you'll find instructions for:



- Writing a letter to your government representative
- Cleaning up litter while playing a fun game
- Creating a special craft to help you reduce the amount of plastic you use
- Measuring your water use
- Making compost cake!
- And more!

The activities in this pack were inspired by things that children do all over the world. Young people just like you can make a huge difference. Will you find your superpower? **Will you pledge to be a Planet Protector?**

### PLANET PROTECTOR PLEDGE

I pledge to learn how to take good care of my home, planet Earth, and to teach my friends and family to do the same.

I pledge to be a Planet Protector!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_





# Write a Letter to Your Government Representative!

Stacy Clark, author of *Planet Power*, has helped many kids write letters to their government officials. Here are her tips!

We know that your voice matters, and we want to help you put it into action! One great way to use your voice is by writing a letter to your local government representative to let them know that you believe **protecting the planet is important**.

## Below is a guide for writing your letter:

**1) Think about an issue that is important to you.** Make a list of things you'd like to change or do differently to protect the planet. Do any of these ideas need new laws, funding, or technologies in order to happen in your community? Those are the ideas that a government representative might be able to help with.

**2) Find a local government representative to whom you want to write.** You can search online for the leaders who represent your neighborhood. If you live in the U.S., go to <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials> where there are links to your local, state and federal officials. If you live outside of the U.S., you can also search "Who are my elected leaders?" online or ask your teachers or family for help. (Note: In different countries, local lawmakers may be called something other than a "representative." Be sure to check to be sure that you are addressing your letter correctly).

**3) Begin your letter by introducing yourself.** My name is (your first and last name) and I am a student / homeschooler who resides in your district.

### 4) Explain why you are writing. What do you want?

Here are some examples:

- You may want to ask for electric vehicle charging stations at your school or library
- You may want a solar farm built in your neighborhood
- You may wish to see a local river or ocean jetty be used to harness electricity

### 5) Include a fact or two that you have learned about the subject.

For instance, you could write that you read a book or attended a science fair. You learned that renewable energy reduces the need for fossil fuels, and burning fewer fossil fuels means healthier communities and the chance to reverse climate change.

**6) You'll want to explain why your request is important to your life and the lives of your family and friends.** Depending on where you live, you could mention that wildfires / hurricanes / droughts / arctic thawing — all made worse by climate change — are changing the world and making it unsafe for you and your future.

**7) Thank your representative for their time.** You may also ask your representative to write back to you. Be sure to include your name and address on both your letter and envelope. And don't forget to sign your letter!

*(Note: You can include a drawing to illustrate your vision!)*

On the next page you'll find an editable template you can use if you would like additional help. Simply type your information in the blank spaces and print it out!



# LETTER TO MY GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

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The Honorable

RE:

Dear  :

My name is  and I am a  year-old who lives in your district.

I am writing to you today to let you know that I asked my family to buy electricity from a company that provides renewable power, but they were unable to find one. All of the companies in our area sell electricity that comes from a coal or natural gas-fired electricity plant. I am hoping that you can help me change that.

I know from reading books that burning coal and natural gas pollutes the air and makes climate change worse, so switching to renewable energy is a good idea.

It is important to me and my family that we can buy clean electricity. We hope that you will support the development of wind, water and/or solar projects so that my family and friends can look forward to a brighter future.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I would appreciate it so much if you would kindly write back to me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



# Let's Plog!

## Plogging (Sweden)

In Sweden and beyond, runners enjoy an Earth-friendly activity called “plogging.” The name combines the words “plocka upp” (PLO-kah OOP, Swedish for “pick up”) and “jogging.” Cleaning up while jogging is healthy for the planet and also for you — adding bending, squatting and stretching to your jog as you pick up litter makes for a great workout!



### You'll Need:

- washable, reusable bag
- gardening gloves
- athletic shoes



- 1 Put on athletic shoes and gardening gloves to protect you while you plog. Grab your bag.
- 2 Go outside! With your adult helper, choose a safe place for plogging far from cars or other dangers.
- 3 Jog at an easy pace so you have time to spot things to pick up.
- 4 When you find litter, put it in your bag and then keep jogging. Make sure you look closely! Don't pick up anything sharp or dangerous. If you're not sure about something, ask your adult helper.
- 5 When you're done, recycle or throw away the items you picked up. Make sure you wash the bag for your next plog and finish by washing your hands!



## World Cleanup Day

Keep going! Join World Cleanup Day on September 15. This global movement started in Estonia in 2008, when over 50,000 volunteers gathered on the same day throughout Estonia to pick up trash. Can you start a cleanup day at school or near where you live?



# Not-So-Fantastic-Plastic

## Plastics Penalty Pot (Rwanda)

Plastic waste can impact life on land, in the air and in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams. Rwanda, known as the Land of a Thousand Hills, is serious about preventing plastic pollution. It was the first country in the world to ban all single-use plastic bags. People who break the rules there must pay a fine.



### You'll Need:

- clean, empty jar
- white paper
- pencils, pens, or paints
- scissors
- glue or tape



- 1 Cut a piece of paper to fit around your jar. Write a label on the paper: "Plastics Penalty Pot."
- 2 Decorate the paper. Rwanda is known for the bold graphic designs woven into traditional **agaseke** (*ogg-ah-SEK-ay*, baskets like the ones below). Try drawing a similar pattern on your paper.
- 3 Glue or tape the paper to your jar.

### Using Your Penalty Pot

Talk with your family and agree on some new plastic rules, like taking reusable bags when shopping, packing lunches in reusable containers and/or refusing plastic straws when offered (if possible). Whenever someone breaks one of the plastic rules, they place a small fine in the Plastics Penalty Pot.



# Water Is Life

## Tracking Water Use (United Kingdom)

As water supplies become scarcer around the world, people are finding new ways to measure, supply and save clean water. Inventors in the United Kingdom and other countries have devised ways to track water use in homes to help save more water. You can track water use yourself, too!

- 1 Start a project in your home or classroom to track water use, waste less water and collect water from alternative sources.
- 2 Put a cup in the sink when you are washing your hands or a bucket to catch the water when you shower. Notice how full it becomes in a very short time.



- 3 Now that you can see how much water is being used, challenge yourself to see how fast you can shower and still get clean or how little water you can use while brushing your teeth. Make changing your habits into a game!
- 4 Once you've changed your habits, challenge someone else to do the same! Ask a friend or family member to track their leftover water for a day.

### Collect Water

When it's raining, put a bucket outside to gather the rainwater. This can then be used to wash your bikes or the family car, or water indoor plants.



### Walk for Water

Millions of children who do not have running water in their homes must carry it home each day from a source like a well or body of water. Try to put yourself in their shoes for one day. See how far you can walk carrying a large jug of water. Count your steps or measure the distance you can walk.





# Compost Cake

Did you know that you can use your food scraps to help grow new plants? Instead of throwing out leftover fruits, vegetables, peels and coffee grounds, keep them in a sealed container. Read on to learn how to use them to create compost!



## You'll Need:

- spade or fork
- tape measure
- bundle of small branches
- wheelbarrow of “browns,” such as dried leaves or straw
- wheelbarrow of “greens,” such as fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, crop leftovers or grass clippings
- small bucket of soil from the garden
- 30 in x 30 in (75 cm x 75 cm) square of heavy gauge wire screen (for an adult helper)

- 1 Clear a flat area in the garden about 2.5 ft (1 m) square. Spread the bundle of small branches onto the square.
- 2 Add a layer of browns on top of the branches, about 6 in (15 cm) high. Sprinkle with water until the pile is damp.
- 3 Add a layer of greens on top of the browns, about the same height. Sprinkle again.
- 4 Add a 1 – 1.2 in (2.5 cm) layer of soil. Sprinkle again.
- 5 Repeat the layering until almost all of your materials are used and your pile is 5 ft (1.5 m) tall and moist like a damp sponge. Save a small amount of browns.
- 6 Cover your pile on all sides with a thin layer of browns. Use a fork to pull outwards on the top corners so that it looks like a big nest.
- 7 Water your pile when the weather is dry and cover it when it rains heavily, so it stays damp.
- 8 Let the decomposers do their work. In about 4 – 6 months, you should have a pile of fresh compost. Sift the finished compost through the wire screen and add it to your garden beds.





# More Ways to Make a Difference

There are so many things you can do to take care of your home on Earth and the people you share it with. Here are some ideas!

## Saving Fuel

Just as you need food to give you energy and help you grow, vehicles like planes, trains and cars need fuel to power them. Most fuel comes from oil or coal, but humans are using up these types of fuel faster than the earth can create them. Using fuel from oil or coal releases gases that are bad for the environment. These gases cause our planet to get hotter and hotter, which is called climate change.

Walking, biking, skateboarding or pushing a scooter are ways of getting around that use no fuel. Carpooling and taking buses or trains allow people to share a ride, so each person uses less fuel than they would if they went alone.



### GET TOGETHER!

Whenever you can, walk, bike, carpool, or use buses or trains.

## Recycling

When you throw something away, it doesn't disappear — it just goes somewhere else. Often, waste ends up in a landfill (where it is buried in the earth) or at an incinerator (where it is burned). Landfills and incinerators both produce gases that are bad for the environment and cause climate change.

We can recycle some things instead of throwing them away. Recycling is a way to make things new again. For example, when you recycle a food or drink can, it is cleaned, melted down and made into a new can. Composting is similar to recycling, because it turns food waste into fertilizer for plants.



### GET TOGETHER!

Learn about recycling services near where you live, and let your family and friends know what you find. Whenever you can, reuse and recycle things.

## Giving Back

Everyone needs help sometimes. Can you think of a time in your life when another person helped you? Maybe a doctor cared for you when you were sick or a teacher showed you how to do something new. You can help other people too!

When we help each other, we make the world a better place.

### GET TOGETHER!

Think of small ways you can help others in your family, at school and wherever you go. You can also find a place to volunteer in your community like a shelter, food bank or library.



## Activism

Activists speak up about things they care about and invite other people to join them to make change happen. Kids can be activists too! There are many things you can do to make changes in the world.

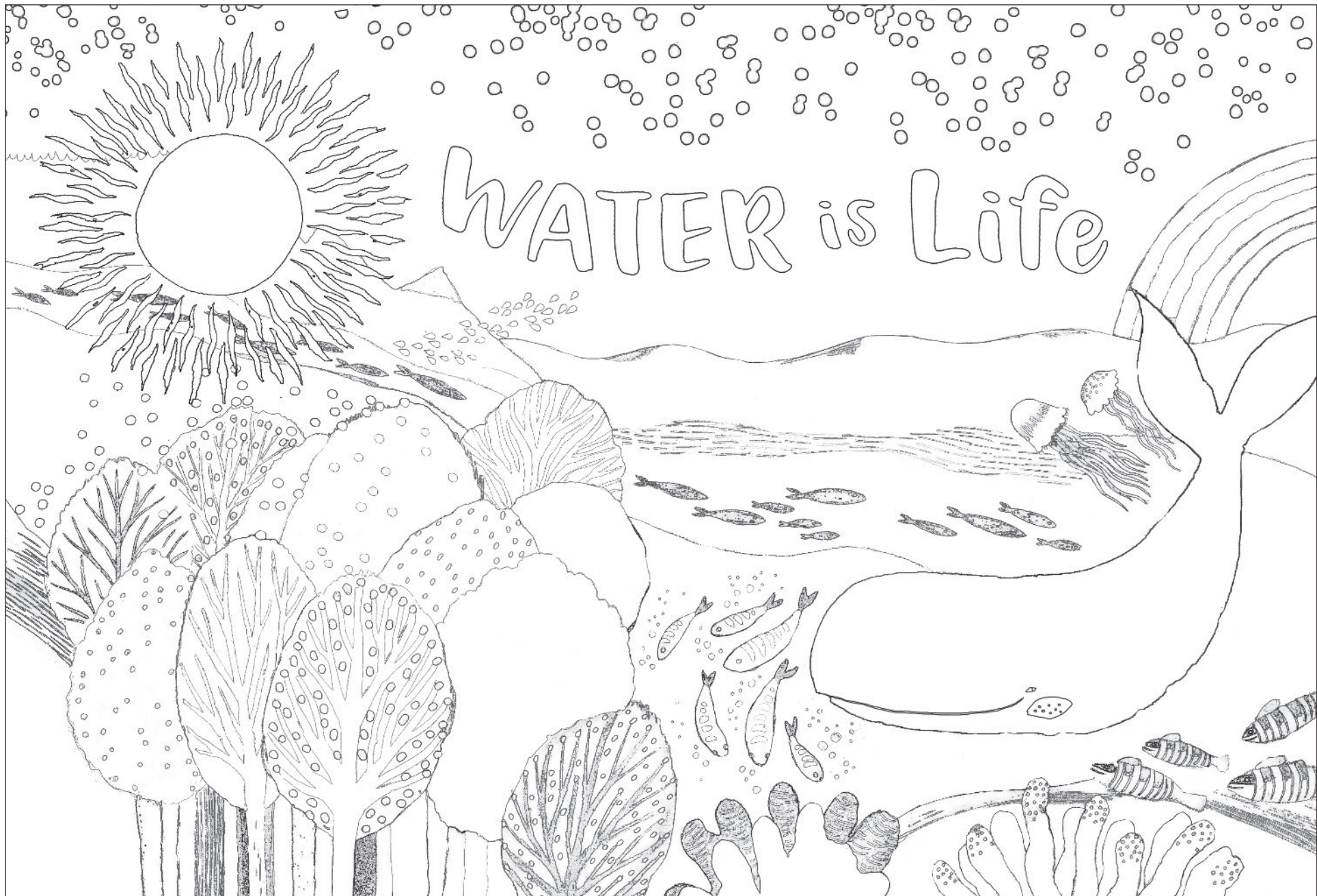
For example, in 2016, an 8-year-old named Mari Copeny found out about a water crisis in her hometown of Flint, Michigan, in the United States. Her family's running water had lead from old pipes in it that made them sick. They had to use bottled water instead of running water in their homes. She wrote a letter to US President Barack Obama asking for his help, and he visited her in Flint to make sure the whole world knew what was happening. Since then, she has raised a lot of money to send clean water to children and families in Flint.

### GET TOGETHER!

Do you want to save a forest, cure a disease or get more books for your classroom? You can write letters to people who make decisions or raise money for a cause. You can also set up a petition, a written request that lots of people sign to show that they care about the same thing.







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**Barefoot Books**

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