

GUIDELINES “WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN”



This game is a great way to show how the Ecological Footprint can be applied at a national level with political implications.

BEFORE THE GAME

- Have students take the Ecological Footprint quiz at www.myfootprint.org. Have students record their initial results, but ask them to retake the quiz and change answers to find out what happens when they change a part of their lifestyle to be more sustainable.
- The class may discuss different reasons for why their footprints were large or small, and what they can do to improve their sizes. Be sure to emphasize that an Ecological Footprint is a measure of *the area of land* required to provide one’s resources and to absorb their wastes.
- Tell the class that now they are going to see how population and consumption affect Ecological Footprints over time at national levels. They are going to create their own countries and see how natural as well as economic factors play a role in Ecological Footprint size and degradation of the land.

DURING THE GAME

Guidelines to ensure a well-played, educational game:

- Cut pieces of butcher paper that are smaller rather than larger. The less room they have to place chips, the more likely the game will have effective results.
- Ensure that students fill in all the empty spaces on their countries with pictures, as all land may be used.
- Have students draw definitive borders on their countries.
- Include “Corporations” as a component for countries so as to build on “Infrastructure.” The more corporations a country has, the more affluence and consumption. This will make it easier to distinguish between the three groups.
- If students choose to use renewable energy sources, recycling plants, or any other sustainable practice in their country, allow them to stack chips on those resources (one per generation only). They may do so because sustainable practices can last from generation to generation with less impact on the land.

AFTER THE GAME

- Use the “Factors Affecting the Ecological Footprint” Handout to show how population and consumption/affluence play a role in ecological impact.
- Discuss different policies that countries may adopt to improve their Footprints. You may hand out the briefs “What about Population?”, “Footprints and Energy,” and “Eating up the Earth” as supplemental readings.
- Discuss examples from history of how various types of governments establish policies that affect national footprint size (ex. population limits in China vs. policies in Kerala).
- Discuss significant events in history that have led to structures that have caused some countries to be more/less populous and more/less industrialized.
- Technology may also play a role in environmental impact. It can either increase resource efficiency or be more use resources more intensively. What technologies can help countries decrease Ecological Footprints?