

the great gulp

School Campaign Kit

Take a synchronized GULP of tap water to raise awareness about drinking water and the importance of reducing single-use plastic waste!

In celebration of [World Water Day](#) (March 22), during the month of March, schools across Canada are invited to take part in The Great Gulp by organizing a school-wide, synchronized drink of tap water from a reusable bottle, glass, or mug, in regions where safe and healthy tap water is accessible.

For schools where tap water is unsafe to drink, students can participate in a symbolic 'Great Gulp'. A symbolic 'Great Gulp' would have all participants come together to learn about tap water in their region, and then take an imaginary synchronized gulp of water. If you live in a community where tap water is not safe to drink, please contact EcoSchools Canada so we can explore how to join advocacy efforts in your area.

The Great Gulp creates an inclusive, simple, and memorable experience where students have the opportunity to learn about tap water and single-use plastic waste in their community, region, and country.

GULP!

Take photos or videos of your event and share them via Twitter for a chance to win a prize!

#TheGreatGulp
@EcoSchoolsCAN



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How to run a Great Gulp at your school

1

4 weeks before

Plan your event: Set a date and time for your Great Gulp event and invite your whole-school to participate, including staff and parents! Whether it's one large event or multiple activities happening throughout the day, be sure to finalize your plan.



TIP: Make it easy for everyone to participate. Ensure that you communicate all the details about your Great Gulp event and keep the environmental messages clear. This will help the whole school community get on board.

2

3 weeks before

Promote your event: Now that you have a good plan for your Great Gulp event, you can start getting the school community excited to participate. Host a poster contest, share morning announcements, write a piece for the school newsletter, and engage followers on social media.



TIP: Getting buy-in and support from parents/guardians is crucial to any successful Great Gulp event. Check out the letter template in this kit!

3

2 weeks before

Focus on the details: Go through all the logistics of your Great Gulp event. Make sure you are on track and have assigned roles for all those involved. Send reminders and check-in with special guests to ensure they have all the important details.

4

1 week before

Send reminders and raise awareness: Leading up to your Great Gulp event make sure that you share important reminders with participants, such as reminding everyone to bring a reusable bottle, mug, or glass on the day of the event. You can also share facts on tap water in your region, on water issues in Canada, and on single-use plastic waste.

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On the day of your event

GULP! Take lots of photos or a video of your event and share them via twitter to raise awareness about single-use plastic waste and for a chance to win a prize! Share a photo or video on Twitter using the hashtag **#TheGreatGulp** and tag **@EcoSchoolsCAN**.



TIP: Track your success! Track how many people participated in your Great Gulp event using the Great Gulp Tracking Poster and be sure to celebrate!

Water issues and facts

Incorporate facts and trivia about water and single-use plastic bottles into your daily announcements, school newsletters, and campaign posters. Encourage students to share their own knowledge and reflect on what they learn.

- Plastics production has surged over the past 50 years, from 15 million tons in 1964 to 400 million tons in 2015, and is expected to double again over the next 20 years. (1)
- 91% of plastic waste is not recycled. Since most plastics do not biodegrade in any meaningful sense, all that plastic waste could still exist for hundreds or even thousands of years. (2)
- It is estimated the one disposable plastic water bottle will take over 1,000 years to biodegrade. (3)
- It takes more than 200 years for one plastic straw, more than 450 years for one plastic cup, and more than 500 years for one plastic brush to decompose in the landfill. (4)

1. World Economic Forum 2016.

2. National Geographic. (2017). [Planet or Plastic?](#)

3. The Water Project (n.d) In a thirsty world, bottled water seems wasteful. Retrieved from: [The Water Project](#).

4. World Wildlife Fund. (2018). [The Lifecycle of plastics](#).

5. Eriksen M, Lebreton LCM, Carson HS, Thiel M, Moore CJ, Borrorro JC, et al. (2014) Plastic Pollution in the World's Oceans: More than 5 Trillion Plastic Pieces Weighing over 250,000 Tons Afloat at Sea. PLoS ONE 9(12): e111913. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0111913>

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Suggested Activities for your Great Gulp Campaign

Consider expanding your Great Gulp event with planned activities throughout the day or extended over a week.

- **Assemblies:** Host a 30 minute whole-school assembly to raise awareness about drinking water in your region, access to safe and healthy tap water, and the importance of reducing single-use plastic waste, in Canada.
- **Class presentations:** Allow students to be creative through song, visual arts, or an informative presentation.
- **Learn:** Learn about Indigenous perspectives related to the importance of water.
- **Get Creative:** Decorate a school water fountain. Create a mural or posters to show how much you love your tap water and to raise awareness of the benefits of tap water.
- **Track change:** Already have a water refill station with a counter? Track your monthly diversion rates and aim for greater diversion during the month of March.
- **Wear blue:** Encourage staff and students to wear blue on the day of your Great Gulp event.
- **Spread the word:** Share your Great Gulp story on social media. Share facts about tap water and single-use plastic waste. Get others to join-in on your Great Gulp event remotely or by running the campaign at their school.





Letter to Parents/Guardians

[Insert Date]

Dear Parents/Guardians,

[World Water Day](#) is a global event celebrated each year on March 22nd. On this day, people around the world take action to conserve water, educate others, and celebrate this vital resource!

This year, **[Insert School Name]** will be participating in a national day of action supported by EcoSchools Canada called The Great Gulp!

On March **[day, week]** we have organized a school-wide, synchronized drink of tap water from a reusable bottle, glass, or mug. Through this simple action we hope to raise awareness about drinking water, access to safe and healthy tap water, and the importance of reducing single-use plastic waste.

To support this initiative we are asking students and staff to bring reusable water bottles, glasses, or mugs and join in on taking a Great Gulp. Simple daily actions at home, such as using a reusable water bottle, can have a big impact on the environment. We encourage you to also join in!

Thank you for your support. We look forward to hearing about the unique ways your family participated in raising awareness and taking action!

Sincerely,

[Insert EcoTeam Name]

[Insert School Name]