



the great gulp

For remote and in-person schools

ecoschools
écoécoles
CANADA



You are invited

to join students, educators, families, and workplaces across Canada to raise awareness about drinking water and reduced single-use plastic bottles.

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

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The Great Gulp is inspired by the Region of Peel and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.



HOW TO RUN THE GREAT GULP

1 Start Planning

- **Set a date:** Select a day during the month of March to take a Great Gulp as a class, school, or household.
- **Promote your event:** Now that you have a date, you can start getting people excited to participate. Share information about the event through emails or social media (check out the email template on page 5).
- **Raise awareness:** Leading up to your Great Gulp share facts on tap water in your region, on water issues in Canada, and on single-use plastic bottles. Check out the facts on page 3 and the extended learning suggestions on page 4 to get you started.

2 Get Gulping!

On the day of your Great Gulp ensure every participant has their favourite reusable bottle, mug, or glass filled with tap water.

1-2-3 take a GREAT GULP!

The Great Gulp during COVID-19:

No matter where you are learning from, the Great Gulp is a fun and easy way to engage people in important conversations about water and plastic waste in Canada. Please practice strict COVID-19 safety measures and follow government guidelines when participating in this action.

Gulping from school? Bring your reusable water bottle filled with tap water from your home. Alternatively, this can be a fun challenge to have students and teachers conduct from home.

Gulping from home? Try conducting the Great Gulp over an online platform with your class. Alternatively, conduct the Great Gulp together with your family at a time that works for you.

3 Share your GULP on social media!

- Take a photo or a video of your GULP
- Share it via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#), tagging [@EcoSchoolsCAN](#) and using [#GreatGulp](#)
- For more information, check out ecoschools.ca/thegreatgulp

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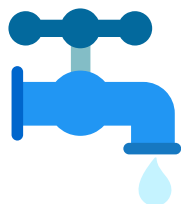
EXTEND THE LEARNING

Complement your Great Gulp with additional learning activities to develop skills in numeracy, arts, science, literacy, and more!



Take action to reduce plastic waste

Start researching to understand how plastic relates to water. Consider pairing your Great Gulp with **Reduce Harmful Single-use Plastics, Waste-free Lunch**, or another action to continue reducing plastic waste in your school community!



Get to know your water

Find out where drinking water at your school comes from. Consider conducting the **School Water Audit** action to learn more about where your water comes from and how it is used at your school.



Get creative and spread the word

Draft a social media post or email. Share facts about tap water and plastic waste. Get others to join-in on your Great Gulp remotely or to conduct a Great Gulp at their home. See the email template below!



Advocate for safe drinking water

Learn about Drinking Water Advisories and why some Indigenous communities in Canada still don't have access to drinking water. Write a compelling letter to the Prime Minister (or create a video) communicating your request for action and change.



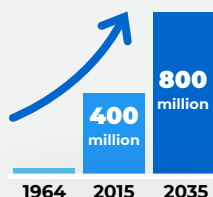
Learn about the SDGs!

Research the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#). Create an informative poster about one of the SDGs that best connects to the issues of water or plastic waste.



WATER ISSUES AND FACTS

Incorporate facts and trivia about water and single-use plastic bottles into your daily announcements, school newsletters, and social media.



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



There are 5 trillion pieces of plastic afloat in the world's oceans.⁵

References:

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, Borerro 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.

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The Great Gulp Email Template

Use the email template below to engage your family, friends, and community in raising awareness about drinking water and reduced single-use plastic bottles.

Dear [family, friends, community],

Simple daily actions, such as using a reusable water bottle, can have a big impact on the environment.

On [date] our [class, school, household] will be participating in The Great Gulp, by taking a 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 in Canada.

We encourage you and your family to join us in this initiative by organizing a Great Gulp with members of your household, or with family and friends virtually. You can also find other activities to do at home to extend this learning, by checking out the ecoschools.ca/thegreatgulp.

We look forward to hearing about the unique ways your family participated in raising awareness and taking action!

From,

[Insert class, school, family name]

Send!