

Personal Environmental Sustainability Quiz©

Directions:

- Number a piece of paper from 1 to 50 or print out a copy of the quiz
- Use the scale to indicate how frequently you perform the behaviors described
- *If it doesn't apply to you, then put "NA" (non-applicable) in the blank before the item or if you don't know, put "DK" (don't know)*
- "Rarely" means you only do it approximately 25% of the time
- "Sometimes" means approximately 50% of the time
- "Usually" means 75% of the time.
- Honesty is important to receive an accurate result. When in doubt, underestimate how often you do something as most people tend to believe they do things more often than they do.

Never 0	Rarely 1	Sometimes 2	Usually 3	Always 4
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- _____ 1. I put my computer into "sleep mode" instead of using the screen saver.
- _____ 2. I make a deliberate effort to buy products with little packaging.
- _____ 3. I only print documents when I absolutely need to.
- _____ 4. I recycle paper at my residence instead of putting it in the regular trash.
- _____ 5. I recycle glass at my residence instead of putting it in the regular trash.
- _____ 6. I recycle plastic products at my residence instead of putting them in the regular trash.
- _____ 7. I shut off my computer completely when not in use.
- _____ 8. I keep electronic devices (e.g., computers, toasters, printers, chargers, etc.) unplugged when not in use.
- _____ 9. I walk, bike, carpool, or ride the bus to work or school.
- _____ 10. I take short showers (less than 10 minutes long).
- _____ 11. I drink tap water instead of bottled water.
- _____ 12. I compost my kitchen trash.
- _____ 13. I take my showers in a shower with a low-flow showerhead.
- _____ 14. When I buy an appliance or TV, I buy an energy-efficient one.
- _____ 15. I use recycled paper.
- _____ 16. I use recycled or refillable printer cartridges.
- _____ 17. I check my car's air filter at least every 3000 miles and change it if it's dirty.
- _____ 18. I keep my car's tires properly inflated.
- _____ 19. I use compact fluorescent bulbs.
- _____ 20. I only run the dishwasher with a full load.
- _____ 21. I only do full loads of laundry.
- _____ 22. My water heater is set no higher than 120 degrees.
- _____ 23. I eat a plant-based (rather than meat-based) diet.
- _____ 24. I "trip-chain" (planning so I can combine most of my errands in one trip).
- _____ 25. I don't drink beverages from disposable cups.
- _____ 26. I don't dry clean my clothes.
- _____ 27. I receive and pay my bills online.
- _____ 28. I turn off the water while brushing my teeth.
- _____ 29. I use the cold water setting on my washing machine.
- _____ 30. I reduce the amount of junk mail I receive by "opting out" and calling companies that send me merchandise catalogues I don't want.
- _____ 31. I don't buy food at the grocery store that is packaged in individual servings.
- _____ 32. When shopping, I bring and use my own bags.
- _____ 33. When shopping, I decline a bag for my purchase unless I really need it.

- _____ 34. I buy organic food.
- _____ 35. I turn my television off when I leave the room for more than a few minutes.
- _____ 36. I drive a fuel-efficient car.
- _____ 37. I don't drive when I can bike or walk.
- _____ 38. At home, I don't use disposable plates.
- _____ 39. When washing dishes by hand, I use as little water as possible.
- _____ 40. I use my clothes dryer efficiently, for example, drying my clothes on a clothesline or rack when I can, drying loads in quick succession, and not drying clothes any longer than needed.
- _____ 41. I reduce home energy leaks by plugging seams, cracks, and openings to the outside.
- _____ 42. If no one else is in the room, I turn off the lights as I leave.
- _____ 43. I request alternative packaging (such as aluminum foil) when getting takeout or leftovers from a place that uses non-recyclable Styrofoam.
- _____ 44. I don't run the furnace or air conditioner when no one is at home.
- _____ 45. I support organizations working for environmental sustainability (e.g., I do things like sign their petitions, give them money, or volunteer).
- _____ 46. In the colder months, I keep my thermostat at 68 degrees during the day and reduce it to 60 degrees at night.
- _____ 47. I contact my congressional representatives to encourage them to support legislation to environmental legislation.
- _____ 48. I try to make things last rather than buying new things.
- _____ 49. I dispose of used batteries, electronics, and cell phones, by taking them to state-designated drop-off sites; I don't put them in the regular trash.
- _____ 50. When I carry water with me, it's in a reusable (not just recyclable) water bottle.

Scoring:

1. Sum your item scores: _____
2. Second, divide your sum by the total number of items you answered: $\frac{\text{sum}}{\text{(#items)}} = \frac{\text{mean score}}{\text{mean score}}$

Score Interpretation

Excellent 3.6-4 You're clearly doing what you can to be environmentally responsible. You're an inspiration to us all.

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Good 3-3.5 You're doing a good job of behaving in an environmentally responsible way.

Fair 2.6-3 You're doing some things right but could do a lot more to reduce your negative impact on the environment. Would you consider adopting a few more proenvironmental behaviors?

Poor 2-2.5 You're not doing much to reduce your negative impact on the environment. Would you consider adopting a few more proenvironmental behaviors?

Abysmal (below 2) Seriously? You're not doing anything to reduce your personal environmental impacts? Would you consider adopting a few proenvironmental behaviors?

Look over the items and mark those that you scored low on (0, 1, or 2). Initial next to those behaviors you will seriously try to adopt so that you can do your part to promote environmental sustainability. For each one you select, create a plan of action—what do you need to do to make it happen? Make a pledge, post reminders, set up your home, car, or workplace to make it easier to remember or do the desired behavior.

Notes.

1. This is a broad measure of personal environmentally sustainable behavior and is by no means a complete list of the sustainable actions you can take. Items were developed based on recommendations from the US Department of Energy and US Environmental Protection Agency, and the book “Cooler, Smarter: Practical Steps for Low-Carbon Living” by the Union of Concerned Scientists.
2. This test has not undergone psychometric validation.
3. It’s easy to promote environmental sustainability by donating money or participating in electronic campaigns offered by the Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, and the League of Conservation Voters.