



Earth Day



What is Earth Day?

Fifty years ago, a new holiday was created: April 22 became Earth Day.

In the 1960s, there was a growing awareness that humans were doing many things that harmed the earth. Animals and wild spaces were threatened, and we were polluting the air, water, and land that we depend on to live. Earth Day was founded so people could come together to learn more about the earth and how we—as individuals and as a community—can better care for the planet.



What Can We Do?

We each have different ways of valuing the places that we live in and love. You can go for a walk, and list five things in nature that you think are important. You can spend ten minutes learning about an animal. Or you can go much further, and completely change a habit.

We're providing you with a few activities you can do to **learn about the planet** and **help the planet**.

Earth Day is an international event celebrated by millions, so there are many more resources and ideas online—if there's something you're interested in learning more about or doing, seek it out!

LEARN ABOUT THE PLANET

Make Your Own Glacier

Why does land look the way it does?



Source: Montana Natural History Center

If you came to Travelers' Rest 14,000 years ago, much of Montana would have been covered by ice, and Missoula and Lolo would have been completely underneath a gigantic lake. These ice sheets and glacial lakes helped create the landscape that we see today, carving out valleys and gorges and leaving behind boulders.

Montana still has glaciers, although some formed more recently than 14,000 years ago. A **glacier** is a very large mass of ice—so large that it remains ice even in the summer and slowly moves due to its own weight being pushed down by gravity.

LEARN ABOUT THE PLANET

Make Your Own Glacier

1. Put about an inch of sand or gravel in a cup or yogurt container. Add a couple inches of water, and freeze.
2. Repeat the first step until the cup is full.
3. Meanwhile, take a board and hammer a nail partway into the middle of one end. (A pushpin and any flat surface can work too.) Lean that end on a brick, or something else sturdy, so that you have an incline. You might want to set this up outside!
4. Run warm water around the outside of your cup, to loosen your “glacier” until it slides out.
5. Put a rubber band around the middle of the glacier, and hook the rubber band on the nail or pushpin.
6. Watch what happens! How long does it take your glacier to move? What direction does it go? What happens to the water? What happens to the sand and gravel? Do you notice any patterns?

LEARN ABOUT THE PLANET

Why Learn About Glaciers?

They tell us about the past—and the future.

Glaciers have shaped the landscape and have also left rocks behind—as you probably noticed with your experiment!

Usually, glaciers lose some mass in the summer but gain it back in the winter, thanks to snow. However, with climate change, we can see that glaciers are, instead, getting smaller every year. If these glaciers disappear, Montana would get less water from the mountains in the summer, which could dry up water sources, leading to more wildfires and drought, and harming animals that depend on this water to survive.

LEARN ABOUT THE PLANET

Keep Learning

Try one of these to learn more about the planet:

- **NASA may run the space program. But they also have lots of great games, crafts, and info about our own planet for kids at spaceplace.nasa.gov/menu/earth.**
- **What do scientists do? You can now talk to one—in your own home! Check out skypeascientist.com to learn how your family can connect with a scientist.**
- **Now is your chance to visit zoos, aquariums, and museums around the country—virtually. Go to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, or try a home safari with the Cincinnati Zoo.**

LEARN ABOUT THE PLANET

HELP THE PLANET

Use Trash for your Crafts!

Each person in the United States generates about 4.5 pounds of waste...daily. If possible, recycle things rather than throwing them away—but it's even better to find a new use for them in your own home.

Make Art

Turn old magazines and ads into lovely flowers:

www.teachkidsart.net/recycled-magazine-flowers/



Go Bowling

Instead of pins, use cans or plastic bottles. Decorate your set!

Start Engineering

Make a marble jump out of toilet paper tubes and boxes. How far can your marble (or toy car!) go?



HELP THE PLANET

Build a Bug Hotel

Create a home for insects...and give a bottle a new purpose!



Source: www.redtedart.com/simple-bug-hotel-for-kids/

1. Cut the top and bottom off a plastic bottle, to make a cylinder.
2. Collect sticks, pine cones, and other sturdy natural materials.
3. Arrange the material inside the plastic cylinder. Make sure that everything is stuffed in tight, and there are lots of good hiding spots.
4. Leave your hotel on the ground, or tie a string around it and hang it in a tree (or make two!). Check on it daily to see if you have new "guests."

HELP THE PLANET

Keep Doing

Want to do more to celebrate Earth Day?

- **Create a team on ecochallenge.org and choose some challenges to complete by the end of the month!**
- **We use a lot of energy at home. Track how much energy you're using in your house—and maybe create some alternative sources—using this website:
<https://tinyurl.com/ybe9o38o>**
- **Plant a tree, start a garden—or take some time to learn about native plants.**

HELP THE PLANET