



BLUEPRINT Student Ambassadors

We need your help to reduce waste in your school!

The BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy Project is designed to create solutions to our waste problems. It encourages us to increase our recycling, reduce the rubbish we produce, and love our stuff by reusing and repairing.

Check out our video to learn more about BLUEPRINT: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jyw6VHyEzJ4&t=34s

As student ambassadors, you can help us to spread these important messages by taking on BLUEPRINT challenges in your school. All you need to do is follow these three steps:



1. Introduce the BLUEPRINT Project to your teachers and peers. Explain what the circular economy is and why your school should get involved in the project. You can do this through a feature in your school's newsletter, posters around school, or sharing the BLUEPRINT video in an assembly.



2. Choose and deliver your BLUEPRINT challenge. As a single ambassador or as a group, you can pick one of our suggested challenges in this pack or create your own. These challenges are designed to raise awareness of waste and help us put circular economy principles into practice.



3. Showcase your hard work. The BLUEPRINT Project wants to find solutions to our waste problems. Reveal the results of your challenge to your peers in a blog/vlog, report, artwork or assembly and be sure to share it with the BLUEPRINT team!

Great for
your CV
and UCAS!

Skills you will develop by becoming a BLUEPRINT Student Ambassador:

Using your initiative

Organisational and communication skills

Event planning

Improve knowledge of environmental topics



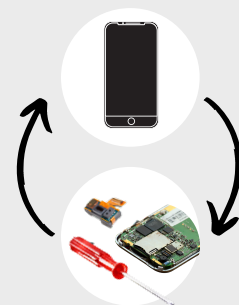
About the Circular Economy

The **circular economy** challenges the way we make, use and dispose of things. These wasteful patterns are known as the **linear economy**. This is where we:

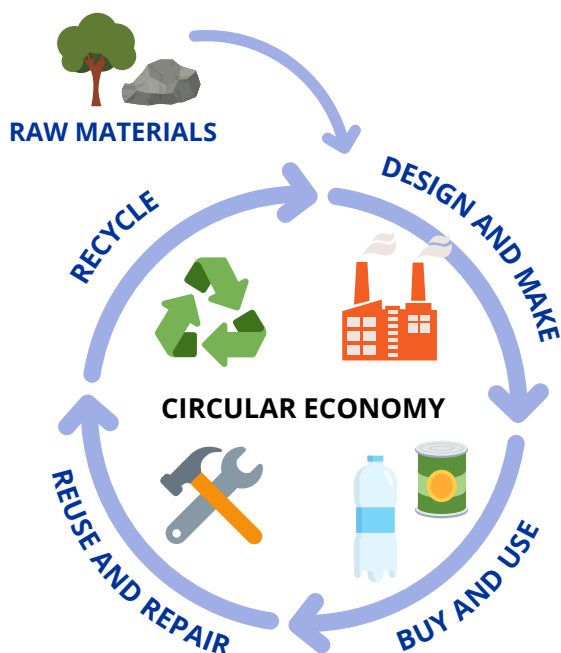
↓ **TAKE** resources
↓ **MAKE** products
✗ **WASTE** materials.

Items like single-use plastics and fast fashion clothing are examples of products that follow the Take-Make-Waste model.

Instead, the circular economy looks to keep materials in use for longer by reusing, repairing and recycling. This means we **make better use of existing materials** and **design out waste**. For example, we should be able to repair our mobile phones rather than buy the new upgrade.



The circular economy also prevents the extraction of raw materials and waste pollution, and helps to **restore natural systems**.



Want to find out more?

An overview of the circular economy:

Ellen MacArthur Foundation

ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/circular-economy-introduction/overview

What it looks like in practice:

Circle Economy

circle-economy.com/circular-economy/key-elements



The TV Challenge



"It's just one straw", said 7 billion people.

Many people are still unsure about using reusable products because they can appear less hygienic or too expensive. However, reusable products are one of the best ways to prevent unnecessary waste from single-use plastics. For example, one person alone could save 195 disposable coffee cups each school year just by using a reusable cup.

Your challenge is to persuade others to switch to reusable products by creating a TV advert.

1. What's the problem with single-use?

There is an expectation that plastic production will increase to 600 million tons by 2025. That's about double the weight of the world's population! Almost 40% of plastic produced is used for packaging (plasticsoupfoundation.org/en/plastic-facts-and-figures/).

Before you embark on your TV advert, research the problems with single-use items. This will help to justify why your reusable product is so important. This is also an excuse to watch David Attenborough's *Blue Planet!* Why was this documentary so powerful?



2. Choosing your swap

Now choose the reusable product that you'd like to 'sell' in your TV advert. Is there a particular product you use yourself and think is a 'must-have'? Or perhaps you could focus on the biggest single-use culprits like straws and coffee cups?

Watch out! Not all reusable products are the best solution to our waste problems. It can often be better for our environment to **reduce** the items that we use in the first place than to search for an alternative. Make sure to choose your product carefully.



The TV Challenge

3. Filming your TV advert

It is up to you how you create your advert. You could use actors, animations, pictures or home-shot films.

Your advert must meet the following criteria:

- It must be a maximum 30 seconds in length;
- The reusable product must be something your peers could easily switch to;
- It must explain what problem your product is solving and how it supports the circular economy.

4. Voting for the winner

As Ambassadors, you can decide how you would like your TV adverts to be adjudicated. Here are a few suggestions:

- Ask a panel of teachers to award scores to each advert based on the criteria above. The highest score wins the challenge.
- Broadcast your TV adverts around school and ask your school peers to vote. You could present it in assembly or on screens around school. Leave voting boxes around in common areas school and collect after a week.
- Ask a teacher to send your adverts to the BLUEPRINT Project team at PECT who can make the final decision! Email them to blueprint@pect.org.uk.



Showcase your hard work. Reflect upon your advert and the process of creating it. Ask yourself questions like, what were the hardest messages to communicate? Were your audience persuaded by reusable products? You can film or write up an interview with a cast member or viewer.



The Three Rs

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



Taking action

As young people, you inherit a world designed by the generations that lived before you. We can't change what has already happened, but we can focus on reducing, reusing and recycling moving forwards.

UNICEF has created a toolkit for young people to advocate for the things that matter to them. You can find it here: www.unicef.org.uk/working-with-young-people/youth-advocacy-toolkit/. Using these principles, create an action plan to reduce, reuse and recycle in your school.



Investigate

Identify the problem by doing some research. Ask questions about the current situation.

What is the best way of helping your peers reduce their waste?

Not everyone finds it easy to reduce waste. What would be the easiest solution for everyone?

Do your peers know why it is important to reduce waste?



Take Action

Speak to the right people in your school to set targets and actions.

Connect with your teachers to create actionable targets.

For example, you could:

- Reduce printing;
- Assign work online;
- Use a smartboard;
- Submit work digitally;
- Reduce single-use packaging at lunch;
- Host a competition to see which classroom produces less waste.



Evaluate

Evaluate your actions and see what worked well and what could have gone better!

Did you meet your targets?

Are your actions sustainable? Can you continue to do them?

Which class reduced the most waste?

What will you do next?

Reduce



The Three Rs

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reuse

What single-use items does your school use?

Does your school already encourage the use of some reusable items?

What could be done to improve reusability in your school?

You can find more suggested actions in this guide from the Missouri Botanical Garden. www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/Portals/0/Sustainability/Sustainable%20Learning/ResourceGuide_newlogos.pdf?ver=2019-02-13-125528-283

Can you create a campaign to encourage your peers to reuse? For example, encourage others to:

- Collect scrap paper and turn them into notepads;
- Ask the art department what 'waste' items they could use in their work and donate your items;
- Set up a waste-free lunch.

Which reusable items are the most popular?

Are there some single-use items that are difficult to reduce?

Which departments and classrooms are reusing the most?

Can you encourage repair in your next campaign?

Recycle

Does your school have a recycling system?

What information do your peers and teachers want to know about recycling?

Do you know how to recycle and can you show others how to do it correctly?

Small actions can make a difference. For example:

- Put recycling information by bins to encourage people to recycle more;
- Encourage your school to use collection schemes that target hard-to-recycle items like ink cartridges;
- Use recycled pens and paper.

What information was the most valuable for your peers to help them to recycle more?

Which items are the most difficult to recycle?

What support do you need to recycle even more?



Showcase your hard work. Write a letter to your head teacher informing them about your achievements and what you'd do differently next time. Work together to set your next targets.



The Big Classroom Clothes Swap



Tackling fast fashion

Fast fashion is low-price and low-quality clothing that is made in response to the latest trends. Clothes are often made cheaply and quickly and are forgotten about as soon as the next trend comes along. This results in huge amounts of waste, both in terms of the outfits which end up in landfill and the resources required to make them in the first place.

The Big Classroom Clothes Swap encourages students to value pre-loved clothes by donating and swapping outfits.

1. Discussing fast fashion

Research some facts about fast fashion to explain to your peers and teachers why your school should take part. You can use these in your communications with your teachers and in promotional materials for the event. Here are a few facts to get you started:

"Textile production contributes more to climate change than aviation and shipping combined." ([House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, 2019](#))

"It is estimated that over half of fast fashion produced is disposed of in under a year" ([The Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2017](#))

"Making a single cotton shirt requires 2,700 litres of fresh water. This amount equals a person's drinking needs for 2.5 years." ([European Parliament Research Service, 2020](#))



The Big Classroom Clothes Swap

2. Obtain permission from your teachers and agree on a date and venue

Be sure to ask for permission and supervision from your teachers to create this event. You will need to agree on a venue and a date for your clothes swap as well as a space to store your donations. Here's a template letter you can use to ask for permission.

Dear <name of teacher(s)>,

A group of students at <school name> have recently become BLUEPRINT Student Ambassadors. We're working to encourage our school to increase recycling, reduce waste and love our stuff by reusing and repairing.

As part of this, we would like to run a BLUEPRINT challenge called 'The Big Classroom Clothes Swap'. By taking part in this challenge, pupils will have a better understanding of how we can reduce our textiles waste and help protect the environment through donating and swapping our pre-loved outfits.

The Big Swap will require us to organise:

- a date and venue for donation day where students bring in their pre-loved clothes into school;
- a space to store and sort the donated items;
- a date and venue for The Big Classroom Clothes Swap (where students pick up pre-loved items in exchange for the clothes they donated);
- teacher supervision for both the donation and swapping days.

We are writing today to request your permission and supervision for this event and to agree on a venue and date. We have suggested <suggested dates of Donation Day and The Big Swap> and <suggested venue>.

Please let us know if this is something you are happy to support. We look forward to hearing from you,

Kind regards,
<Names of student ambassadors>



The Big Classroom Clothes Swap

3. Promoting your events

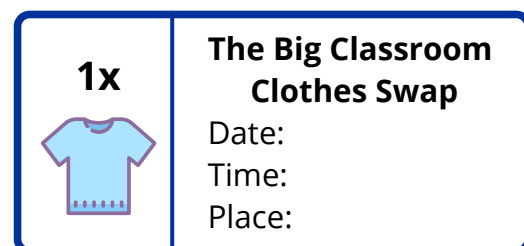
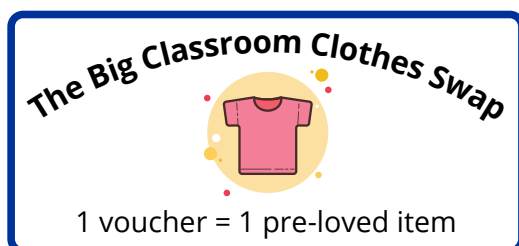
It's important to give yourselves plenty of time to promote your event to ensure you have enough clothes to swap and that people know when and where to find you. You could create posters, write articles for newsletters or promote the donation day and swap day in assembly.

Only accept clothes that are clean and of good quality to redistribute.

Thrift+ is an online second-hand clothes shop and has a quality control guide that may be a useful model for your own quality checks. Find it at: thrift.plus/pages/how-we-assess-condition.

4. Donation Day

Donation day is when students bring in their pre-loved clothes in return for a voucher for The Big Swap. For every item donated, the donor should receive one voucher that can be traded for a pre-loved item on the day of The Big Swap (up to a maximum of 3 vouchers). You will need to create your own vouchers, but here is some inspiration.



Now you have all of your donations, you can sort them into size, colour or style ready for swapping. Think about how you will display your items. Can you lay them out on tables, in boxes or on rails or hangers?



The Big Classroom Clothes Swap

5. The Big Classroom Clothes Swap

It's time to open the doors, but before you start, make sure you have the following roles covered:

- A student responsible for the 'till' station where students come to swap their clothes vouchers for their new pre-loved items;
- A student to tidy up the clothes throughout The Big Swap;
- A student to vlog/report on the event to include in your showcase;
- A teacher to supervise.

After your clothes swap, you may have clothes leftover. Make sure to donate them to a charity shop or to your arts and design departments to be reused.



Showcase your hard work. Write a news report about your event. How many people came? How many clothes were swapped and therefore diverted from landfill? What did people say about their new outfits? What happened to leftover clothes?

GO THE EXTRA MILE



During your Big Classroom Clothes Swap, you could also arrange to collect old school uniforms. There are lots of **school uniform exchanges** across the country which redistribute pre-loved uniforms to new homes. School uniform can be expensive but at the school uniform exchange, you can often receive jumpers, tops and trousers for free! Search for your nearest school uniform exchange and set up a donation in your school.



Waste-Free Lunches



Food for thought

Waste-free lunches are a great way to cut down on single-use items and help your environment. They also raise awareness of sustainability and healthier eating by discouraging processed food. Waste-free lunches can also cut costs by encouraging bulk buying and making the most of each ingredient.

1. Ways to be waste-free

There are lots of ways to be waste-free at lunch. Here are some suggestions. Can you think of any others?

- Use lunch boxes or reusable container instead of a plastic bag.
- Store sandwiches are in a reusable container or in wax wraps.
- Buy snacks such as crisps, nuts, biscuits etc. in bulk and bring in a reusable container.
- Keep whole fruits loose in the lunch box as opposed to fruit pieces in packaging.
- Carry water or juice in a reusable water bottle.
- If cutlery is brought in, make sure this is designed to be washed and reused.
- If students bring in napkins or kitchen roll, could this be replaced with a reusable cloth wipe?

All the above points are applicable to members of staff too!



Waste-Free Lunches

2. Running a waste-free lunch

Running a waste-free lunch challenge is a great way to encourage others to ditch disposable packaging in their lunchboxes. This guide explains how you can run this activity in your school.

- Explain the waste-free lunch challenge to students, including the benefits of using less packaging.
- Pick one day of the week to run a lunch waste audit – collect all waste from lunch boxes and sort the waste into recycling and general waste. If your school doesn't collect recycling, then just collect the waste all together. Take a photo or count the number of bags for comparison at a later stage.
- Send a letter to parents explaining the waste-free lunch challenge, including the date it is taking place, and clearly state which day this is going to take place. There is a template on the next page that you can use. We recommend doing the initial lunch waste audit and the actual challenge on the same day of the week for consistency.
- On the day of the challenge, do another lunch waste audit and take a photo for comparison.
- Hopefully, there has been a good reduction in waste! If the challenge was a success, why not try implementing a waste-free lunch day once a month? If this goes well, you could look to do more.



Showcase your work. Write a blog about your waste-free lunch sharing the pictures you took before and after the event. Email your blog to blueprint@pect.org.uk for us to share on our website and social media platforms.



Waste-Free Lunches

3. Letter to parents

Dear parents,

<School name> has recently signed the BLUEPRINT Waste-Free Pledge, which aims to reduce the amount of single-use plastic in our school. As part of this, we are running a waste-free lunch challenge on <date>.

On this day, we ask that your children's lunches contain fewer disposable items. Some ideas on how to do this can be found below:

- Use lunch boxes or reusable container instead of a plastic bag.
- Store sandwiches are in a reusable container or in wax wraps.
- Buy snacks such as crisps, nuts, biscuits etc. in bulk and bring in a reusable container.
- Keep whole fruits loose in the lunch box as opposed to fruit pieces in packaging.
- Carry water or juice in a reusable water bottle.
- If cutlery is brought in, make sure this is designed to be washed and reused.
- If students bring in napkins or kitchen roll, could this be replaced with a reusable cloth wipe?

By taking part in this challenge, pupils will have a better understanding of how we can reduce our waste and help protect the environment. If you have any questions or concerns about the waste-free lunch challenge, please don't hesitate to contact <name> on <insert phone number or email>.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

<Name/school>