

## Going Green for Real

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Perhaps the most important type of assignment that we can give our students is the one that not only makes them reflect on how each of them impacts the planet, but also makes them act on that understanding. The acts can be small (such as recycling plastic bags), and therefore the optimal subject for a short written reflection, or they can be part of a larger plan to opt for a green(er) lifestyle, in which case they should be the subject of a semester-long project. I suggest that, by way of example, most of the work be done online and stored digitally, in blogs and Blackboard posts, so the class uses the minimum paper possible.

An assignment that requires students to “go green” during the semester could be composed of the following steps:

1. Start an environmental blog of your own in *Blogger* (<https://www.blogger.com>). Record your expectations, fears, and questions about the assignment. Read at least two other blogs from your classmates and respond to them.
2. Read the solutions to help the climate crisis offered at the end of *An Inconvenient Truth* (pages 306-321). Which ones seem simple to do, and which seem complicated? What are some solutions *you* could implement, alone or with the help of your family and friends? Record your ideas in your blog. Read at least two other blogs from your classmates and respond to them.
3. Read the blogs “Green as a Thistle” and “No Impact Man” included in the LaGuardia companion website to *An Inconvenient Truth*. Choose one other blog and read that one also. What were some “green” actions that these individuals have implemented that attracted you? Why? Which actions did not make sense to you or you do not see yourself implementing? Why? Record your ideas in your own blog. Read at least two other blogs from your classmates and respond to them.
4. Read the “going green” tips offered by *The Green Book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time*. Select ten ideas that you would like to implement. List the ideas on your blog, explaining why you chose them. Read at least two other blogs from your classmates and respond to them.

**Note for teachers:** Books such as Elizabeth Rogers and Thomas Kostingen’s *The Green Book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007) or Josh Dorfman’s *The Lazy Environmentalist: Your Guide to Easy, Stylish, Green Living* (New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, 2007) have their tips divided by areas such as “Home,” “Travel,” “School,” “Pets,” and “Fashion.” You may want to direct students to specific areas to focus their reading and writing.

5. Put together a plan of action that identifies your objective, explains the steps that you must take, and the way that you plan to document those steps. Type it up and post it to the discussion board in Blackboard for peer and teacher feedback.

**Note for teachers:** It would be a good idea to come up with one or two default plans of your own in case some of your students become overwhelmed at this stage.

6. Read some background information on the action you plan to take by checking the web links under “*An Inconvenient Truth* Links to Help Solve the Climate Crisis” in the area “The Book” of the LaGuardia companion website to *An Inconvenient Truth*. You may also want to check the links at the end of *The Green Book*. Take notes so that later you can use this information to write the introduction to your paper.

7. (Ongoing) Record data.

**Note for teachers:** I would make it a requirement to include digital pictures as proof (most students have digital cameras in their phones and many may own a digital camera; in any case, photos from 35 mm cameras can be scanned at school).

8. (Ongoing) Publish summaries of your daily/weekly data with photos. For every entry, try to add a brief reflection on the data. Read at least two other blogs from your classmates and respond to them. Consider changing tactics if something is not working.

9. Using the data you have accumulated, write a first draft on a) what worked and why, b) what was hard and why, and c) what could not be done and why. Do not forget to include citations for any material from others you have used. Type the draft up and post it to the discussion board in Blackboard for peer and teacher feedback.

10. Write the introduction to the paper. Do not forget to cite your sources.

11. Write a reflection on the project: How did the project help you understand your importance/impact on planet Earth? How did it change the way you see the world (or not)? What do you plan to do now that you know what you know?

12. Work the introduction, the report, and the reflection into one draft. Include photos to illustrate points. Include a Works Cited page for any texts you have used writing the paper (this includes blogs and Blackboard posts). Turn it in for peer and teacher feedback.

13. Revise the paper and upload it to your e-Portfolio.

**Note for teachers:** If possible, publish your students’ papers on a website and send the link to me at [xgallardo@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:xgallardo@lagcc.cuny.edu) so we can include it in the section “Greening LaGuardia.”