

Taking action Toolkit



Welcome to our Taking Action Toolkit.

We have designed this toolkit to help your students take the skills and knowledge they have gained exploring the virtual Minecraft Education worlds and apply them in the real world.

The toolkit is based around an **action framework** that students can use to identify a sustainability or nature recovery issue in their school or wider community, then plan and take positive action to solve it.

Giving young people the skills, confidence, and agency to act can help them deal with eco-anxiety, while also providing an opportunity for those less engaged students to discover a new interest or passion – all while developing useful transferable skills in the process.

When to use this toolkit

Before running this project, have a look at the lessons preceding it: there are two lessons for the Offshore Wind Power Challenge for ages 11-14, four lessons for the Conservation Quest at Windsor Great Park for ages 11-14, and four lessons for ages 7-11. The gameplay and concepts covered in those lessons will set them up with some useful context, skills and knowledge that they can apply throughout their project.

How to use the toolkit

The techniques in the toolkit are based on the principles of community organising and can be flexed to suit your students' abilities, as well as your school's context and resources. Your students can work through a light-touch version of the framework in a few hours, but for the greatest impact we recommend spreading it across multiple lessons, a half-term or even longer - it really is up to you!. Your students' projects could even contribute towards your school's Climate Action Plan, if you have one.

Encourage your students to use the skills, knowledge and interests gained in the series so far, work together, be creative and have fun!

Resources in the toolkit

At the end of this toolkit, you will find a number of resources to use with students:

- **Action plan template** (pages 11-15)
- **Listening campaign tips** (page 16-17)
- **Community stakeholder template** (page 18-19)
- **Nature Recovery Challenge information** (page 20)

The nature recovery challenge

- Introduce students to their nature recovery challenge.
- Tell them their guiding question is *“how can you support nature and improve sustainability in your school, home or community?”* (You can choose to focus on the school or local community).
- Share the challenge information and make sure students understand.
- You can either set students into teams at this stage, or ask them to do some individual thinking on what issues interest them around this topic and then group students into like-minded teams.

Your Nature Recovery Challenge

You are all Conservationists, working to protect and enhance the ecosystem in your local area. You will have already learnt, while playing the Minecraft worlds, that there are lots of factors that can positively and negatively affect an ecosystem.

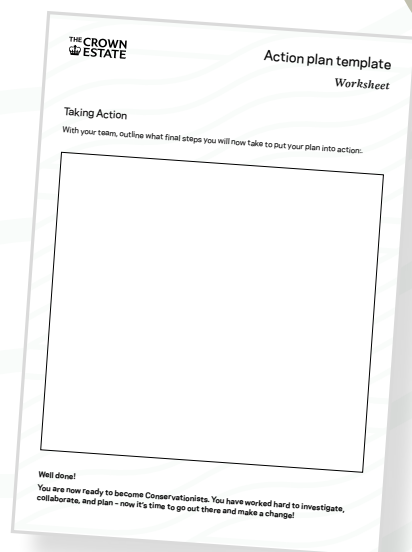


Your job is to identify important issues affecting your school or local community and create a plan to take positive action against one or several of these issues in teams.

Work with your team of fellow changemakers and the wider school community to make your own mark on nature recovery in your area. Together we can achieve great things!

Getting set

- Now that the challenge has been set, introduce students to the action framework. Explain that this is a series of steps which will help build their understanding of how sustainability issues affect their community, and ways they can take positive action to support nature recovery.
- Tell them this is an opportunity to make a difference to the things they care about – there are no right or wrong answers.
- Encourage teams to create a ‘contract’ for how they will work together, outlining their team rules. If you prefer, you can instead have the whole class create one shared set of rules.
- For example, one rule might be *“we will respect each other’s opinions and make everyone’s voice heard”*.
- Teams should record and sign their contract at the start of the **action plan template** (one for each team). They will return to this template later.



STAGE 1: Organise a listening campaign to identify the issues

- Remind students that this is a nature recovery challenge – their aim is to find ways to improve biodiversity in their community. Ensure all students are clear on the meaning of the terms biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Tell them that it's now time to think about the issues they would like to focus on.
- Remind them that these issues could be contained within the school gates, or might be ones that affect the wider community including families, commuters, other residents - so big, broad thinking at this stage is key.
- Explain that a listening campaign is a powerful way for groups to find out the issues that are important to a community. It's based around interviews with as many of the stakeholders within a defined community as possible.

RUNNING THEIR LISTENING CAMPAIGN:

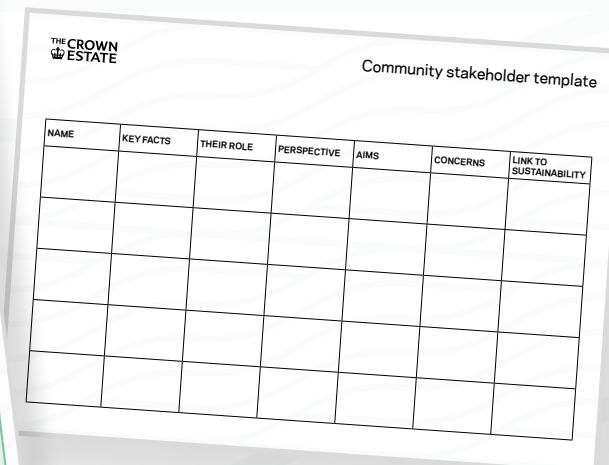
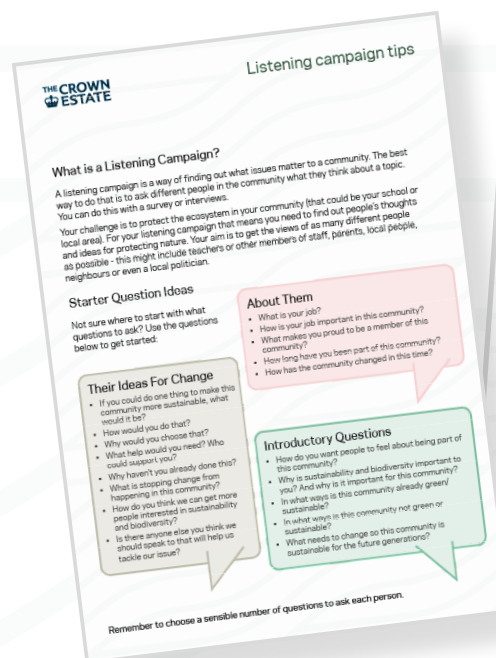
- Tell them to start building a list of questions they would ask to find out about biodiversity issues in their community.
- If they need help you can share the starter list of question ideas on our **listening campaign tips** document.
- Encourage them to draw on all their sustainability and biodiversity knowledge, especially the ideas they have gained from all the previous lessons. What issues do they think will be important locally? Which aspects of biodiversity do they want to investigate in their community?
- When they have developed their questions, ask students in their teams to think about who in their school/local community they would like to interview. Remind them that the more diverse the audience is, the better picture they will get of the issues.

IDEAS FOR INTERVIEWS

- Setting up interviews with other teachers or encouraging them to find teachers during break time.
- Encouraging peer students, especially from other classes or year groups.
- Can they interview the Headteacher or a senior leader for their perspective?
- Are there other specialist teachers (geography or science) who would be happy to share their perspectives on biodiversity in the community?
- A field trip with teachers, where they find people to interview on the high street, at a local sporting/cultural event, etc.
- Can you arrange guest speakers, experts, local businesses owners who would be happy to speak to students or come into class?
- Can they research organisations who will have a perspective on biodiversity/nature locally and send them some questions?
- Can they speak to their parents? Or interview parents after school? Would the PTA or parent groups be happy to get involved?
- Can they send some questions as a class to their local MP?

STAGE 1: Organise a listening campaign to identify the issues

- When students have set up their interviews and created their interview questions, ask them to decide the best medium for each interview.
- Tell them to decide who and how they will capture responses. (If you need some examples to get them thinking, you can ask: is one student in each team responsible for notes or do they share responsibility? Is there technology that can help them? Do they want to create a form in their team, or use flipcharts/large sheets of paper?)
- Encourage them to practise with each other. Share the principles of a good interview from our **listening campaign tips** document.
- Students should list everyone they interviewed (or tried to interview) on the **community stakeholder template**. They will use this later to map stakeholder perspectives.



STAGE 2: Refining their focus

Mapping the issues

- The listening campaign will have helped students identify key issues or opportunities across their target community.
- Once that step is completed, students should collate what they have heard. Encourage students to create a mind map to gather facts, and summarise the issues to help come up with ways to improve biodiversity.
- On a sheet of flipchart paper, ask teams to draw a mind map of all the issues they have noticed or that they have found out from others. Being able to visualise these is a great way of making them accessible for all students.
- Encourage them to do additional research to add depth to their findings – for example, looking up newspaper reports of local issues they found out about or add some facts.

Voting on their priorities

Now students need to find the best way to vote on the top issue they would like to solve.

- You may want students to vote in their teams (and pick a different issue within each team) or to vote on a single issue they want to take forward collectively as a class – this is up to you.
- Tell students that these votes and discussions are an important place for them to build their own agency and independence. Ask them to reflect on what matters most to them and what difference they'd like to make.
- Congratulations, your students should now have their top issues.

Identifying the people involved

- Explain that now students have chosen their issue, the next step is to consider everyone who needs to be involved or have their interests represented.
- Tell them that the more different perspectives they consider, the better their solution will be – and the more likely it is to be successful.
- Encourage them to revisit the **community stakeholder template** and begin to flesh it out with as many different people and organisations who may be involved as possible
- They can get started by thinking of everybody else they would have liked to interview.
- Then encourage them to research other organisations or jobs who would be involved or have expertise in this issue. If students are struggling to think of enough stakeholders, remind them they need to think about:
 - people who are affected by the issue,
 - people who might be affected by any action they take,
 - people who don't normally have their voice heard,
 - people or organisations with expertise on the topic,
 - people or organisations with responsibility for the topic.
- When they have populated their list, tell them to complete all the columns for everyone on the list with as much detail on everyone's perspective as possible.
- They should discuss each field as a team – reflecting as a group on the key questions on the template.

STAGE 3: Developing an action plan

- Explain that, teams have done all the research they need to come up with their plan of action to support nature or improve sustainability in their community.
- Tell them to use the **action plan template** to develop and record their idea. It should build on all the work they have done so far, respond to their chosen issue and meet the needs of the stakeholders they have considered.

DEVELOPING THEIR IDEAS:

- Encourage your class to think outside of the box in terms of what they could do to address issues, directly and indirectly. It could be helpful to ask them to come up with ideas in each of the following categories:
- **Physical action:** Undertaking physical projects, such as that planting more trees or bee friendly green spaces, 'adopting' a section of a local water way, etc.
- **Changing hearts and minds:** Creating a campaign that raises awareness around biodiversity issues, changes people's attitudes and helps supports nature friendly behaviour change. It could be contained within the school or target audiences outside the school gates.
- **Influencing decision makers:** Campaign to change or progress environmental policy. Does the school have a Climate Action Plan? If no – could they launch a campaign to create one? If yes, does it need strengthening from a nature recovery/biodiversity perspective?
- **Adding capacity:** Fundraise or volunteer for a local environmental group already doing great work locally.

- Another useful tool for deciding the best course of action is by doing a 'SWOT' analysis on their top ideas, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We have included space for this in the **action plan template**.

PLANNING THEIR ACTION:

- Once they decide what they are going to do, they need to use the rest of the **action plan template** to share how they plan to achieve it.
- Students should think about what practical things they need to succeed:
 - **Budget:** Do they need money to fund their idea? How will they raise it?
 - **Support from gatekeepers or decision makers:** Do they need help or approval from within the school? Can they bring in a senior school leader, the school's sustainability coordinator (if you have one), or the operations manager? What community stakeholders do they need to bring on board to make it work?
 - **Timeline:** How long do they need to get everything done and who is responsible for what? Are there any important upcoming dates in the calendar they should consider?
 - **What skills will they need?** What skills can each of the team members bring to the table? Who else could they ask for help if there are any gaps?
- Make sure their action plan includes information on who is involved and what skills and level of commitment will be needed.
- Encourage them to use all the tools in their **action plan template** to reflect and refine their plans.



STAGE 4: Taking action

- At this stage, your students should be all set to take their action - whether big or small, immediate or short term.
- Support them to take action - and congratulate them on all their hard work so far.
- Encourage students to track their progress through written, photographic or video diaries, celebrating and recording key milestones they've achieved along the way.
- Explain to students that all the work they have done on this project (mapping the steps involved, connecting with local stakeholders and understanding their perspectives, listening to different voices) should have given them the best chance of success.
- Tell them that this process has also given them valuable transferable 'green skills' that can be applied in school, in extra-curricular activities and in work.
- We would love to see all the amazing work taking place, so please share your students' nature recovery ideas and actions with us by tagging us @thecrownestate on Instagram, LinkedIn or X (formerly Twitter).

STAGE 5: Sharing their success

- Now students have taken action to support nature recovery and tackle the issues they identified, it's time to share what they have achieved with the community and celebrate their success.
- Students can think about who they want to share their ideas with and how they want to share them with that audience (this can include the people they interviewed during the listening stage, anyone else they identified during their stakeholder mapping, as well as the wider school community).
- There are lots of ways you can make this presentation stage work with your class – or give them the option to choose their preferred method.
- Explain that this is an important opportunity to show what they achieved, explain why it was necessary, and make sure the community supports the work.
- Tell them it's important for them to demonstrate leadership and think about all the techniques they know for persuasive speaking or writing.
- Encourage students to enjoy this stage – it's a rewarding moment to celebrate their hard work and the difference it's made.

IDEAS FOR SHARING

- Including the success as a case study in the school's Climate Action Plan
- Creating a poster
- Delivering a presentation in a community space, or an assembly to the school.
- Writing a play, or journalist style persuasive article for the school newsletter
- Taking photos or making a video

To be completed at the start of your project

TEAM MEMBERS

List your team members here

TEAM CONTACT

What does your team do to make sure you work well together? Write your team's rules here when you have all agreed on them together.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Signed by *(all team members should sign here)*

To be completed AFTER your listening campaign and you have refined your focus.

STEP 3: Identifying your key issue

Now that you've gathered lots of information, what issue have you decided to tackle as a group?

Our chosen issue is

Planning for Action

Come up with ideas of how you can tackle your issue
(e.g., planting, creating a campaign, fundraising).

PHYSICAL ACTION

CHANGING HEARTS
AND MINDS

Ideas to Tackle
Our Issue

INFLUENCING
DECISION MAKERS

ADDING CAPACITY

Developing your idea

Choose your final idea and develop it some more using this S.W.O.T. tool.



Creating Your Plan

Think about all the practical steps you will need to take to make your idea successful. Use the questions in the table below as a starting point and create a plan for the steps you will take.

BUDGET

Do you need money for your idea? How will you raise it?

OTHER PEOPLE

Is there anyone you need support from? Do you need to get permission for some parts of your idea?

TIMELINE

How long do you need for everything to get done? Are there any important dates to remember?

SKILLS

What skills do you need? What skills can each team member bring to the table? Is there anyone else you could ask to help fill in any gaps?

Taking Action

With your team, outline what final steps you will now take to put your plan into action:.

Well done!

You are now ready to become Conservationists. You have worked hard to investigate, collaborate, and plan - now it's time to go out there and make a change!

What is a Listening Campaign?

A listening campaign is a way of finding out what issues matter to a community. The best way to do that is to ask different people in the community what they think about a topic. You can do this with a survey or interviews.

Your challenge is to protect the ecosystem in your community (that could be your school or local area). For your listening campaign that means you need to find out people's thoughts and ideas for protecting nature. Your aim is to get the views of as many different people as possible - this might include teachers or other members of staff, parents, local people, neighbours or even a local politician.

Starter Question Ideas

Not sure where to start with what questions to ask? Use the questions below to get started:

Their Ideas For Change

- If you could do one thing to make this community more sustainable, what would it be?
- How would you do that?
- Why would you choose that?
- What help would you need? Who could support you?
- Why haven't you already done this?
- What is stopping change from happening in this community?
- How do you think we can get more people interested in sustainability and biodiversity?
- Is there anyone else you think we should speak to that will help us tackle our issue?

About Them

- What is your job?
- How is your job important in this community?
- What makes you proud to be a member of this community?
- How long have you been part of this community?
- How has the community changed in this time?

Introductory Questions

- How do you want people to feel about being part of this community?
- Why is sustainability and biodiversity important to you? And why is it important for this community?
- In what ways is this community already green/sustainable?
- In what ways is this community not green or sustainable?
- What needs to change so this community is sustainable for the future generations?

Remember to choose a sensible number of questions to ask each person.

Making Good Notes

To make sure you have made good notes of your interview, you should:

- ✓ **Decide in your groups how your notes will be recorded** – you might want to use a big piece of paper, a table, or maybe even an electronic device (ask your teacher first).
- ✓ **Decide who is going to make the notes** – if you're writing notes, you need to agree who will be doing this. Maybe some people will ask the questions while others work hard to record the information (which is just as important!). Or maybe you will all take it in turns to make the notes.
- ✓ **Only write down important information** – trying to write down absolutely everything means you may miss key points. You'll also be left with lots of unnecessary notes to go over.

Principles of a Good Interview

To carry out a good interview, you should:

- ✓ **Do your research** – make sure you know relevant facts about the people you are interviewing so you can get the conversation flowing.
- ✓ **Plan** – you should plan the questions you will ask people so the interview runs smoothly, and you get as much useful information as you can.
- ✓ **Be open** – don't just ask questions that would get a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Ask open questions that lets the person you're talking to dig deep so you can really find out what they're thinking.
- ✓ **Listen carefully** – the person you are interviewing might release some hidden gems that you weren't expecting. Concentrate on what they're saying and make lots of notes so you don't forget anything – you never know what will be important later on.
- ✓ **Practise** – you might want to practise interviewing family and friends who aren't part of your campaign. This will help you with your speaking skills and give you some great feedback.

After the interviews, use this table to record who you spoke to and answer the questions.

GROUP NAME 	KEY ISSUE
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NAME Who else would you like to have spoken to?	KEY FACTS A little bit about them: Who are they? What's their background?	THEIR ROLE What is their job? What role do they have in your community? (parent, politician, teacher, business)? What are they responsible for?	PERSPECTIVE What influences them? Why does their opinion matter? How does sustainability affect them?	AIMS What is important to them? What changes do they want to see happen in the community? What would make them happy?	CONCERNS What worries them? Which of their concerns can we address? What problem can we solve for them?	LINK TO SUSTAINABILITY What skills or knowledge do they have that could help you tackle these issues and improve biodiversity?

NAME	KEY FACTS	THEIR ROLE	PERSPECTIVE	AIMS	CONCERNS	LINK TO SUSTAINABILITY

Your Nature Recovery Challenge

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