

Take the Thermostat Challenge!



©Craig Taylor/polarbearsinternational.org



A Community Action Toolkit
for Inspired Youth (11–18 years)

Part of our **Save Our Sea Ice** campaign
www.polarbearsinternational.org



Community Action Toolkit Contents

Take the Thermostat Challenge!

Your guide to what, why, and how	1-2
Sample emails to businesses and schools	3
Talking points for businesses	4
Talking points for schools	5
Sample letter to the editor	6

Pledge cards and stickers

Thermostat Challenge pledge cards	8
Two Up, Two Down static cling decals or stickers	9

Tips for adult advisors

Your role in supporting enthusiasm	11
--	----





2 UP
2 DOWN FOR

POLAR BEARS

You're INSPIRED. You want to HELP. Here's HOW!



DID YOU KNOW that many people waste energy every day—and that carbon emissions from that energy is part of the reason the **polar bear's sea ice home** is melting? Also, pollutants from old thermostats can make their way up to the Arctic, entering the food chain and harming some polar bears. You can help by recycling old thermostats and taking the Thermostat Challenge! [Visit: polarbearsinternational.org/climate-change and thermostat-recycle.org/]

Take the Thermostat Challenge



photo © BJ Kirschhoffer

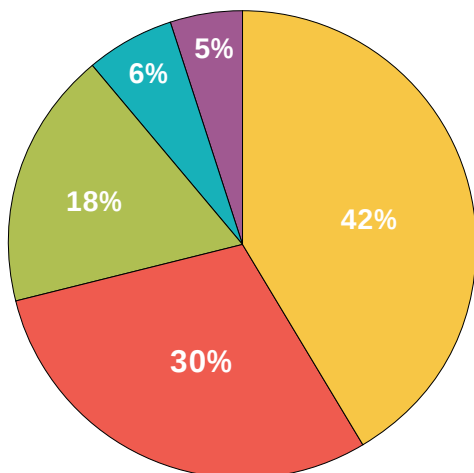


Winter or summer, adjusting the thermostat saves energy. Join us in setting your thermostat up or down (depending on the season) by at least two degrees to reduce your energy consumption—and adjust it even more at night and when no one is home.

What's the Impact? For each degree a thermostat is adjusted up or down for the season, if the setback period is eight hours long, a family, school, or business can save 1% of the cost. More important, this action stops wasting energy and reduces carbon emissions.

[Visit epa.gov/greenbuilding/index.htm]

Your Actions Matter!



How Energy is Used in U.S. Homes



In North America, depending upon where you live, most energy is used for heating, using electronics, heating water, and cooling our homes. Look up the [state](#) or [province](#) where you live to understand specifically what the percentages of energy use are. [Visit eia.gov/kids/energy.cfm?page=us_energy_homes-basics]

Chart source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) 2009.

Expand to Your Community

Part of the solution for reducing carbon emissions is for each of us to increase the actions we're already taking and to motivate others from family members to school districts and businesses to do the same.



Invite your friends, classmates, and extended family to join you in taking the Thermostat Challenge. Share information at a family gathering, give a speech to your class, or host a booth at a school event. Use the Pledge Card to sign people up and give them a sticker as a reward.



Request a meeting with your principal or, better still, the superintendent of your school district or campus facilities manager. Prepare a presentation on the Thermostat Challenge with the help of the Talking Points. Reward teachers or schools that join in with a cling decal for their window so others can see they are making a difference.



Do the same with local shops, churches, movie theaters, and offices. Use our Sample Emails to request a meeting. Be

prepared to make the case for why the Thermostat Challenge is important and what benefits each of us will gain by not wasting energy. (See the Talking Points.) Reward those who take the pledge with a decal or SOS sticker.



Think Big: Write letters to your local paper and your government representatives inviting them to take the Thermostat Challenge. A heartfelt letter from a young person who cares will help inspire action.



Spread the word by posting a photo of your action on social media with the hashtag #thermostatchallenge.



Reach even wider! Check with the sustainability director of your local government & your power provider. Would they be interested in helping with the Thermostat Challenge?



Tell Your Story

Celebrate your success! Share a photo about your participation on social media with the hashtag [#thermostatchallenge](#)



Sample Emails

Email template for a business in your community



Principals and business owners are busy! Before you can invite them to join the Thermostat Challenge, you must first set up a meeting. Following are sample emails to get you started.

GETTING STARTED. The purpose of this email is to introduce yourself and explain why you want to meet. At this point, all you want is a response regarding a meeting. You will describe your project and invite them to join the Thermostat Challenge later.

Before writing the email, do your homework and find out the name of the principal, school district supervisor, or business owner so you can address the email personally. After you've scheduled a meeting, see our resource, Talking Points, for suggestions on how to make your pitch.

TO: (NAME and TITLE of business)
FROM: (NAME)
SUBJECT: Ideas for saving energy from a ____th grade student at _____ [name of school]

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____:

My name is ____ and I'm ____ years old. [If applicable, personalize the note: My family and I like to shop in your store/eat in your restaurant/etc.]

I'm volunteering with a community project called the ____ [insert name of your city] Thermostat Challenge. I have some ideas on how you can save energy and money and show customers that you care about the environment. I have a cool window cling to share to show you're taking part!

Could I stop by on ____ (DATE and TIME) to introduce myself and talk about the project?

Sincerely,
[Your name and contact information]

Email template for your school or campus

TO: (NAME and TITLE)
FROM: (NAME)
SUBJECT: Ideas from a student on saving energy

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____:

My name is ____ and I'm a ____ [insert grade level] student at ____ [name of school].

I'm volunteering with a community project called the ____ [insert name of your city] Thermostat Challenge. I have some ideas on how our [school/campus] can save energy and money and show our community that we care about the environment. I have cool window clings to share to show our [school/campus] is taking part!

Could I stop by on ____ [DATE and TIME] to introduce myself and talk about the project? Or would another time be better?

Sincerely,
[Your name and contact information]



Talking Points for the Thermostat Challenge



The key to launching a successful Thermostat Challenge begins with obtaining permission.

A good way to start is by helping the business owner or school principal understand the benefits of saving energy.

Following are suggested topics to cover. Whether you put together a PowerPoint or one-page paper, these topics will help the listener feel your passion for the project, understand what you are asking for, and become motivated to join you. (See our Sample Emails resource for help with setting up a meeting.)

Talking Points to involve local businesses in your Community Action Plan

GET STARTED. Introduce yourself and talk about why the Thermostat Challenge is important to you. Clearly explain what you are requesting. *“Please join me in taking the Thermostat Challenge by adjusting your company’s thermostat up or down by at least two degrees, depending on the season, to help carbon emissions” and further adjusting it when you’re closed at night. AND if your thermostat is older and contains harmful pollutants, recycle it with the [Thermostat Recycling Corporation](#) to keep chemicals from reaching the Arctic and impacting polar bears.*

FIND COMMON GROUND. Over 97% of climate scientists agree that human activities are causing the current warming and related climate chaos. But not everyone accepts this! You’ll have more success with someone who believes the science versus someone who denies climate change. If you meet a denier, don’t waste time trying to convince them—just move on.

GET TO KNOW THEM. Talk with the owner or manager about their current procedures. Do they keep the heat up too high in winter? In summer, is the air conditioner set so low that staff and customers need to wear sweaters? Do they adjust the thermostat when they’re leaving at night? If their thermostat is outdated, do they

know that they should recycle it to prevent harmful pollutants from reaching the Arctic?

SHOW BENEFITS

- ◆ **Consumers want to reduce pollution and take action on climate change.** By taking part in the Thermostat Challenge and displaying the cling decal on a door or window, a business can show its commitment to saving energy and gain loyalty from customers.
- ◆ **Peer pressure works!** Have other businesses joined the campaign? Be sure to share this news and let the business know that the Thermostat Challenge is a community effort.
- ◆ **Money talks:** by adjusting the thermostat, businesses will not only stop wasting energy, they’ll reduce their energy bills.

STAY IN TOUCH

Nearly everyone enjoys an encouraging word and needs support. Use phone calls, emails, and visits to see how they are doing.

Be ready to help! Offer to make presentations to their employees or staff a table outside to talk with customers. Then, celebrate the success by posting a photo about the business and its participation with the hashtag [#thermostatchallenge](#).



Talking Points for the Thermostat Challenge

Talking Points to involve a school in your Community Action Plan



GET STARTED. Introduce yourself and talk about **why** the Thermostat Challenge is important to you. Clearly explain what you are requesting: *“Please join me in taking the Thermostat Challenge by adjusting your company’s thermostat up or down by at least two degrees, depending on the season, to help carbon emissions” and further adjusting it when you’re closed at night. AND if your thermostat is older and contains harmful pollutants, recycle it with the [Thermostat Recycling Corporation](#) to keep chemicals from reaching the Arctic and impacting polar bears.*”

FIND COMMON GROUND. Climate change is real. Over 97% of climate scientists agree that human activities are causing the current warming and related climate chaos. But not everyone accepts this! You’ll have more success with someone who believes the science versus someone who denies climate change exists. If you meet a denier, don’t waste time trying to convince them—just move on.

GET TO KNOW THEM. Talk with the owner or manager about their current procedures. Do they keep the heat up too high in winter? In summer, is the air conditioner set so low that staff and customers need to wear sweaters? Do they adjust

the thermostat when they’re leaving at night? If their thermostat is outdated, do they know that they should recycle it to prevent harmful pollutants from reaching the Arctic?

SHOW BENEFITS

- ◆ **Many students and parents want to reduce pollution and take action on climate change.** By taking part in the Thermostat Challenge and displaying the cling decal on a door or window, a school can show its commitment to saving energy and helping polar bears. Also, they can encourage families to recycle old thermostats through the Thermostat Recycling Company, demonstrating community leadership in helping to keep pollutants out of the environment.
- ◆ **Peer pressure works!** Have other schools joined the campaign? Be sure to share this news and let the principal know that the Thermostat Challenge is a community effort. (Keep in mind that at the school district level, action is more likely if the challenge can be easily duplicated in every school.)
- ◆ **Suggest a friendly challenge with another school.** Who can save the most energy?
- ◆ **Money talks:** by adjusting the thermostat, the school will not only stop wasting energy, but will reduce its energy bill.

STAY IN TOUCH

Nearly everyone enjoys an encouraging word and needs support. Stop by the office to see how it is going.

Be ready to help! Offer to make a presentation at a school assembly or staff a table at a school event. Then, celebrate the success by posting a photo about the school and its participation on social media with the hashtag [#thermostatchallenge](#).



Sample Letter to the Editor

A good way to spread the word to a wider audience is to write a letter to the editor of your local paper. Following is a sample. Feel free to adapt this to make it your own.

A Greener ____ [insert name of your city here]

My name is ____ and I'm a ____ [insert grade level] student at ____ [name of school].

I'm volunteering with a project called the Thermostat Challenge to help reduce greenhouse gas pollution in our community. My family has pledged to adjust our thermostat by at least two degrees up or down, depending on the season, to save energy. And we adjust it even more at night and when we're not at home.

Will you join us in this action? It's SO easy to do! The more families, schools, and businesses that take part, the greener ____ [insert name of city] will be and the brighter the future for our planet.

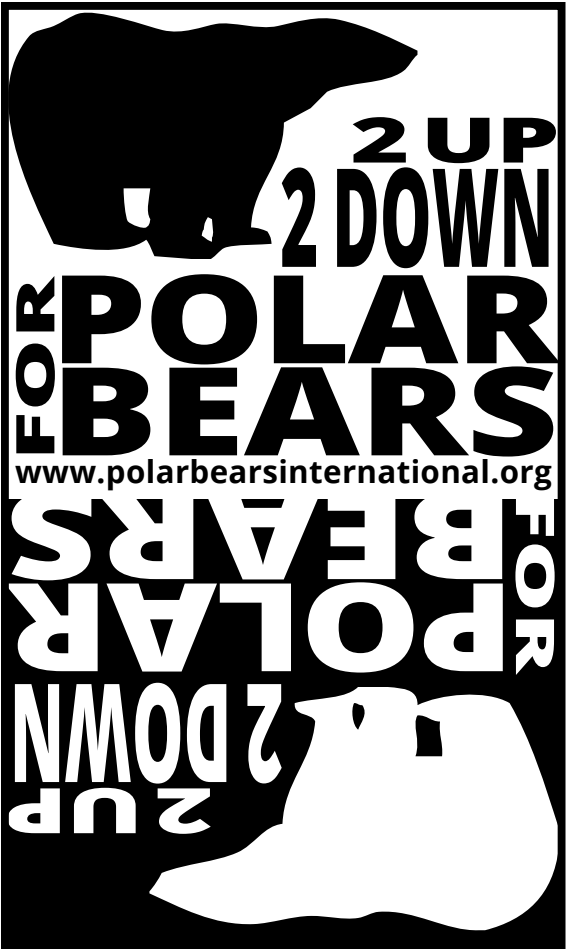
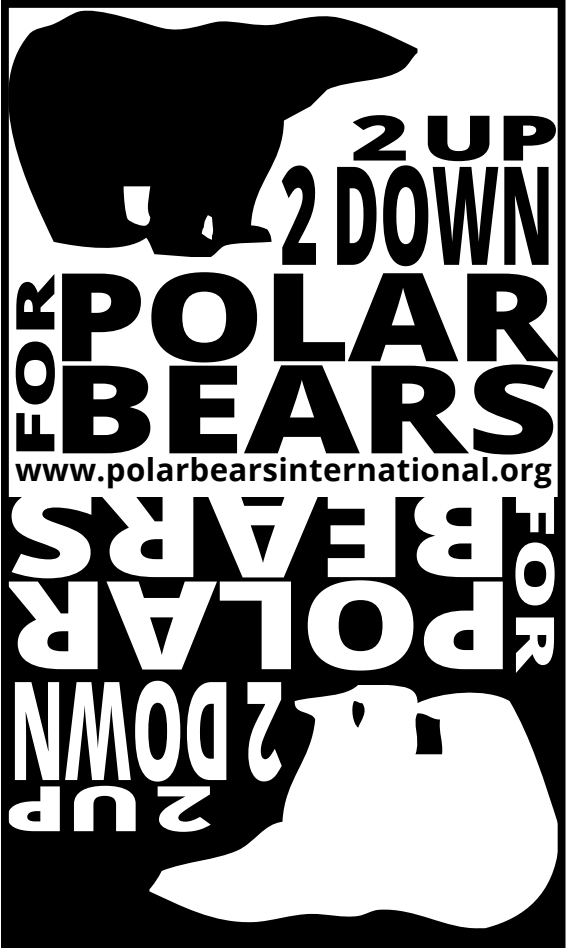
I think it would be cool to have EVERYONE take part. I learned about this on the Polar Bears International website. Let's show the world that ____ [insert name of city] cares about the environment and we're doing our part!

[Your name]

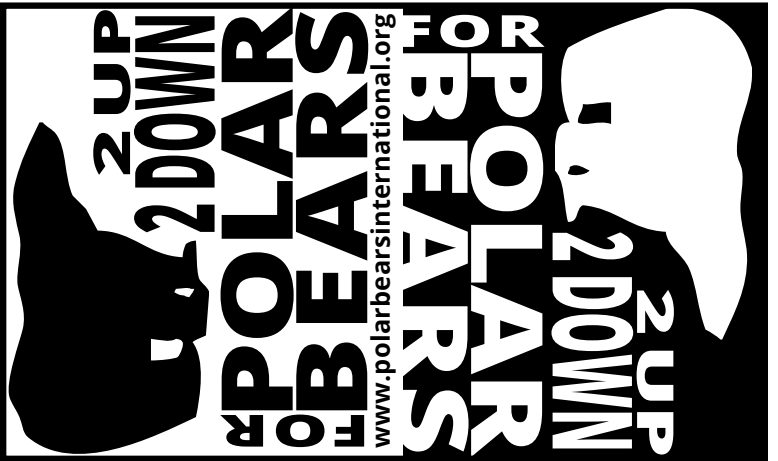
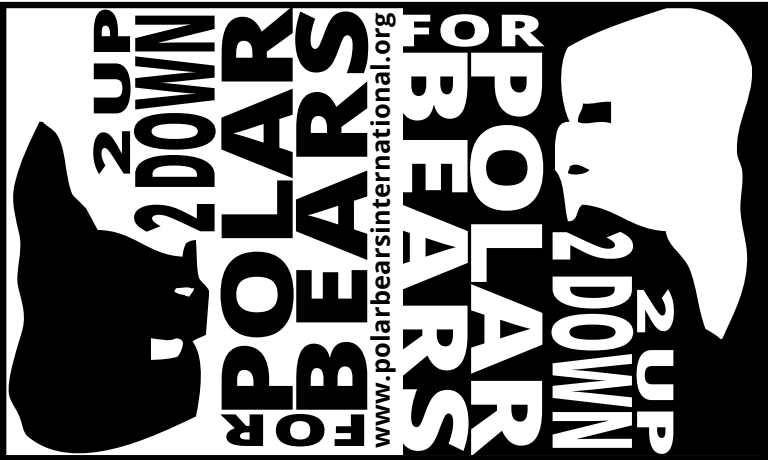
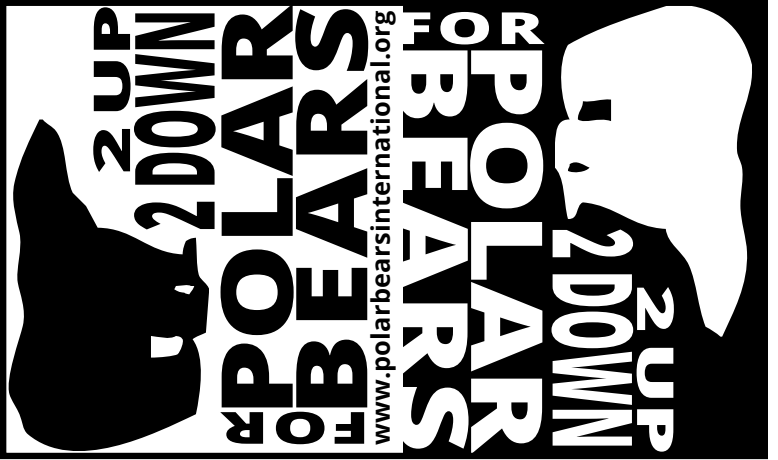
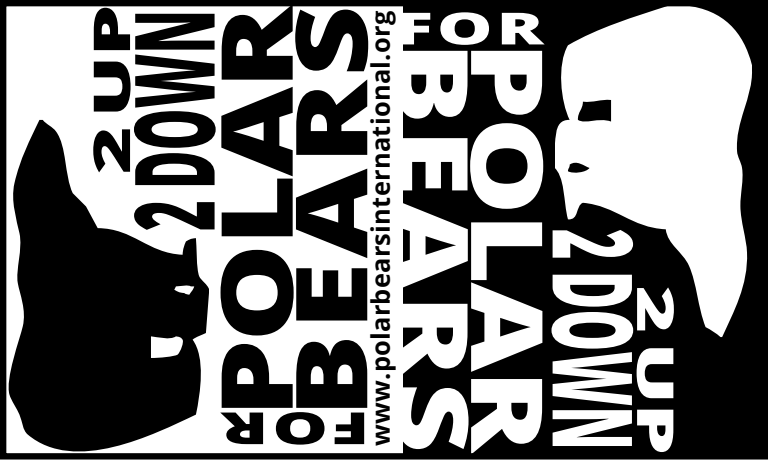
Thermostat Challenge Pledge Cards

Instructions: Print out this page, cut on dotted lines, and have pledgers sign their name.





For printing instructions and information about where to obtain sticker paper or print clings, visit [polarbearsinternational.org/specific_page](http://www.polarbearsinternational.org/specific_page)





Your Role as an Adult in Supporting Enthusiasm to Fix a Global Problem



Young people have an amazing capacity to make a difference. Here are a few tips to successfully support your budding activists, beginning with the golden rule: be a hands-off supporter! First, ask what type of support would help. Then, create an agreement about how you will communicate to make sure expectations are met.

MAKE IT FUN & SOCIAL

Collaborative work is fun and actually more productive. Help young people work through the challenges. Encourage them to learn from other successful projects. A good place to start is by looking in their local community for efforts they could join. Support excellence in teamwork by encouraging them to listen with an open mind, compromise, stay focused, and be respectful.

REMEMBER, IT IS THEIR PROJECT

If you want to do a community-based action project, go ahead, start your own effort! But let the young people do their own—your role is to mentor, coach, and most important, be a cheerleader, problem-solver, and supporter.

YOU HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE

Guiding young people in a project is a delicate balance. You want to provide sources of new information when they are stuck, not step-by-step instructions. Let them create their own path! You can help make that path smoother by looking ahead to the next step and anticipating challenges. Most important, provide encouragement.

JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT

A successful challenge arouses emotions that motivate individuals to take action. This holds true for young people trying to lead a community conservation action. As an advisor, your role is to apply just the right level of expectation and emotion—too much causes anxiety, too little causes apathy and disinterest.

TAKE TIME TO CELEBRATE

Community efforts are a process. Celebrate the steps that are accomplished, whether they are a success or not. If a school principle says “no” to the full proposal, celebrate the success of holding the meeting and having the opportunity to educate someone about the issues. Share your successes by posting a photo on social media with the hashtag [#thermostatchallenge](#).

Special thanks to the **Thermostat Recycling Corporation** for helping to sponsor this toolkit.

