



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

**Getting started is easy. Follow this step-by-step guide to find out how.
If you have any additional questions, please let us know!**

Step One: Register to Enroll

- If you have not yet enrolled, please visit our registration page to get started.

Step Two: Choose the type of portfolio you would like to create

- Visit the portfolio section to determine which method is right for you and your classroom based on your preferences and technological access. Both the digital and hard copy portfolios will be evaluated equally.
- Don't worry! If you change your mind about which type of portfolio you would like to pursue, you can always log in to your user account and change your preference.

Step Three: Get Started!

- Facilitate a brainstorming session with your students. Keep in mind the goal is to provide students with the opportunity to:
 1. Identify and focus on one environmental issue in their local area, learn about and investigate ways to address the issue, and develop and take action to improve the environment.
 2. Learn appropriate Content Standards in an authentic and engaging manner.
- Visit the sample lesson plans section and download lessons aligned to the specific standards of your state.
- Explore *Disney's Planet Challenge* through a teacher's point of view. Written by our 2008 Grand Prize winning teacher, Sylvia Rodriguez review our "Get Started" section to find out more about how you and your class can build a successful portfolio for *Disney's Planet Challenge*!

Step Four: Get your Students involved in Hands-on Learning

Once your students have chosen a project, provide them with hands-on experiences that lead to research and a solution to the environmental project the class has chosen. Examples include:

1. Taking them outside with notebooks or nature journals so they can experience and reflect on nature first hand.
2. Having them reflect on their feelings and experiences. Use the writing standards to develop related writing assignments.
3. Inviting guest speakers to the classroom. Arrange for experts working in fields related to the class project to guide students in studying and/or working on their project.





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Step Five: Engage Family and Community

- Family and community involvement is key to a successful project. Find ways to share the students' work and learning with as many people as possible. Allow others to contribute their knowledge and skills to making your class project a success. For instance:
 1. School-wide presentations, videos, and plays, can allow students to share their project with the community.
 2. Local media is a great way to let others know about the positive changes students are making in the community.
 3. Letters about the project from students to local, state, and federal politicians may provide new perspectives and resources.
 4. Input from family members on videos, photos, writing and artistic pieces etc. can be invaluable.

Step Six: Create a Final Product for the Judges

Throughout the project, all work should be documented and saved. Pictures, videos, letters **written to and by the students**, student research and writing are all ways of demonstrating how the class has learned about the project and worked toward a solution. It is the **teacher's** responsibility to showcase how standards were integrated. This documentation will become the foundation and art of the class portfolio. If you would like to have a copy of your class portfolio, you will need to make copies of student work or have the students make two of every page they create. *Disney's Planet Challenge* will hold on to your original portfolio that you send in for the competition.

1. Review the *Disney's Planet Challenge* scoring rubric with the students. Remind them that every page should connect to the theme of the project. For example, if the class project revolves around protecting the local watershed, then the pages on public speakers, grants, field work, etc. should reference how these experiences and events helped the students learn about and protect the watershed.
2. It can be helpful to split students into small groups that can each focus on 1-2 pages of the portfolio. Each page can focus on a different aspect of the project, but when put together into a portfolio, they should create a story of the journey from the beginning (generating ideas) to the end (how the project goal was or will be completed.)



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3. The pages should be created by the students and fully reflect their creative talents and understanding of the project.
4. Although the portfolio is driven by the student's it is important that the teacher demonstrate ways in which content standards were met and student learning was achieved when working on the project.
5. Every child should complete the **Student Reflection Page**. This page will help the children clarify their thoughts and can be used in creating the assigned portfolio pages. Up to (10) samples of these reflections should be included with the final portfolio. They do not count as portfolio pages.
6. Once all the pages are assembled, the teacher can review them in order to evaluate how the students have grown and what they were able to accomplish. Using the student-created portfolio, personal observations, and the questions from the **Teacher Reflection Page**, the teacher should write 1-2 pages reflecting on the completed *Disney's Planet Challenge* project.
7. Lastly, two cover sheets should be completed and included with the portfolio. **Cover Sheet A** is a brief description of the school and **Cover Sheet B** is a summary of the class project. **Don't forget that Cover Sheet B needs signatures from both the teacher and principal.**
8. Before mailing (or digitally submitting) the portfolio, reflections, and cover sheets, take time to compare the completed work with the **Portfolio Checklist** and *Disney's Planet Challenge* judging criteria in the **Scoring Rubric**.

Remember your portfolio must be post-dated on or before February 26, 2010.

Step Seven: Keep on Working

Remember, the completed portfolio does not mean the class work has ended. When given the opportunity to focus on a cause that is meaningful to them, students can be a powerful force and will prove eager to learn more. Keep up the good work and continue to create positive change in the school, local community and the world.

