

Our Earth

A Warmer

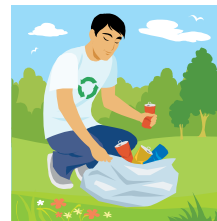
Read what these young people from around the world think about the problems our Earth is facing and their own experience of environmental issues near their homes.



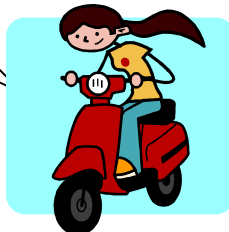
I saw a documentary about the **melting** ice caps last week. The polar bear is now **endangered** because their homes are disappearing! It's terrible.

People need to learn to **recycle** more of the **rubbish** they produce. My family recycles glass, paper, aluminum and so on – it really helps the planet.

I live on an island and we are very worried about **rising sea levels**. The summer storms are getting worse and the **coral reef** in the north of the island has turned white!



A factory near my house was **fined** because they put **toxic waste** into the river and **poisoned** hundreds of fish.



In the countryside near my home, the farmers cut down the forest to make new fields. This **deforestation** is bad for the Earth's atmosphere and some wild animals may also become **extinct**.

Outside my city, there is an old **power station**. They burn coal there to make electricity. Every day, I see a lot of black smoke coming from the power station and the **air pollution** in this area is very bad. My brother has some breathing problems.



B Vocabulary**Part One**

Match the words in **bold** in the first part of the lesson with the following definitions.

1. When a large area of trees is destroyed to make space for houses or farmland, etc.
2. When the air is dirty and may cause problems for people when they breathe.
3. When a species of animal or plant disappears completely. E.g. dinosaurs.
4. A colorful natural barrier to the waves of the sea, found in tropical areas of the world.
5. When a company or person has to pay money for something they did against the law.
6. When dangerous materials injure or kill animals/plants.
7. Similar to a factory, a place where oil/coal is burned to generate electricity.
8. To save certain materials to use them again later.
9. Things that you throw away. E.g. old paper, empty bottles, sweet wrappers, etc.
10. When the sea goes up above its previous level.
11. Materials that are dangerous for the environment.
12. When the temperature rises above 0°C/32°F and ice turns to water.
13. When a species of animal or plant is at risk.

Part Two

Which of the words from Part One are shown by these phonetics?

/ekstɪŋt/

/ri:saɪkl/

/pəlu:ʃn/

/tɒksɪk weɪst/

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C Reading

In this article, you will find out what two environmental experts think about the problems facing planet Earth. Don't worry about the words in **bold** yet.

The Experts' View

By Cynthia Long

Dr. Angela Philips works at the Earth Sciences department at the University of Denver in Colorado, USA. She is very worried about the changes happening on the surface of the planet.

"Colorado is such a beautiful state. It's hard to imagine that even here, **devastating** changes are happening. Some rivers in the state are now dry as **drought** conditions spread. In other parts of the world, this **desertification** is happening very fast. Areas that were once **arable** land are turning to sand dunes."

She is also concerned about the colder regions of the planet. "Up in Alaska, for example, the **permafrost** is melting. The ground is usually hard, like cement, but when it turns into soft mud, buildings collapse and roads are damaged by **subsidence**."

Meanwhile, at the Oxford University in England, **Professor Charles Dawson** is busy in the Environmental Studies department, thinking of ways in which individual people can contribute to reducing their **carbon footprint**.

"It's true that government agreements and **treaties** can do most to help the planet but we all have individual responsibility too." What can we each do to help? "Well, perhaps small things like taking the bus or walking instead of always using the car. These little steps make a big difference in a whole year. And don't forget the money you save too!"

"Some families are buying their own **solar panels** or **wind turbines** and they save a lot of money on their electricity bills. Even going to a mechanic to **tune up** your car may save you 10% on your gas bills."

So it seems like saving the planet can often also mean saving money! "Yes, that's absolutely correct," agrees Professor Dawson. "Even recycling saves you money. Instead of going to a **landfill**, your glass bottles, for example, are used again and the drinks company doesn't have to keep increasing their prices."

D Reading Comprehension

Answer **True** or **False** for the following questions.

1. Dr. Philips is very optimistic about the future.
2. Colorado has environmental problems, like the rest of the world.
3. Buildings are destroyed in Alaska because of the very hard ground.
4. Professor Dawson thinks we as individuals can do more than governments can.
5. Walking with little steps can save you money.

D Reading Comprehension

6. Taking your car to the mechanic can save you money.
7. Drinking fewer soft drinks can protect the planet.

E Vocabulary

Your teacher is going to read the definitions of the words in bold from the article, "*The Experts' View*".

Work with the other students in your group and write the correct word on your team sheet.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

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Teacher Notes

Target Language:**Vocabulary related to the environment, phonetics.****Duration:****65 minutes**

1 Structure and Timing (all times approximate)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| A. Warmer | (10 minutes) |
| B. Vocabulary | (20 minutes) |
| C. Reading | (15 minutes) |
| D. Reading Comprehension | (10 minutes) |
| E. Vocabulary | (10 minutes) |

Total: 65 minutes.

2 Procedure

A. Warmer

Your students' main task in this part of the lesson is just to read the young people's statements concerning the environment. Don't dwell too long if they are tripped up by the vocabulary at this point as you can concentrate on it more in the next part of the lesson.

If your class is quite strong, you may be able to go on and ask individual students if their local areas are facing similar problems.

B. Vocabulary

Students can work in small groups or pairs to work their way through the definitions, which match the words in bold in the first part of the lesson. It's likely they'll already know a good few of the words, especially as many will be similar in other languages. This should render the whole exercise more manageable for them. A strong class may finish quickly, giving you the chance to expand on some of the words and introduce some related terms.

You may want to choose to skip the phonetics section of this part of the lesson. I think it's a good idea to introduce phonetics early in a student's English learning, but I understand some teachers wince when they even hear the word "phonetics". Some interesting features of the chosen words are:

1. **Extinct.** The nasal consonant.
2. **Recycle.** The double consonant at the end of the word. Some dictionaries show this with a schwa, which is also equally acceptable.
3. **Pollution.** The use of the schwa early in the word where many students will be tempted to use an "o" sound to match the spelling. Another double consonant finish.

4. **Toxic waste.** The early "o" symbol may confuse many students. The diphthong in the second word.

NOTE: As always when you are doing a vocabulary section of a lesson, take this opportunity to ensure your students are following good vocabulary recording techniques.

Every couple of months, it's also a good idea to get students to pool ideas that have worked for them. If only one student tries something new that works successfully, the process has been worthwhile.

Answer Key

Part One

1. Deforestation
2. Air pollution
3. Extinct
4. Coral reef
5. Fined - to fine (v)
6. Poisoned – to poison (v)
7. Power station
8. Recycle
9. Rubbish
10. Rising sea levels
11. Toxic waste
12. Melting – to melt (v)
13. Endangered

Part Two

1. Extinct
2. Recycle
3. Pollution
4. Toxic waste

C. Reading

This text may prove to be quite tough for pre-intermediate level classes but, on the other hand, the comprehension exercise which follows it should be quite straightforward. This of course can be used to demonstrate to students that they need not understand every word to be able to successfully complete reading exercises.

You may choose to get your students working in pairs for this reading, which will leave the weaker ones less exposed.

After the class have finished reading the article, ask a few simple open questions to check understanding, such as:

- *Where do these experts work?*
- *What subjects are they experts in?*
- *Is the American expert worried?*

...the last of which can lead into the reading exercise in section D.

D. Reading Comprehension

If your students have had to battle hard to understand some parts of the article, this true/false exercise should prove a lot simpler. Again, keep your students in pairs or small groups when going through this exercise.

Answer Key

1. False, she's "concerned", "very worried".
2. True
3. False, it's the softness of the ground that destroys them.
4. False, both have a role.
5. False, the "little steps" refers to us doing more to help the environment.
6. True.
7. False, but recycling their bottles can.

E. Vocabulary

Divide your class into groups of 3-4 students each. Try to get a good mix of stronger and weaker students in each group.

There are 12 words in bold in the article. Gather together the dictionary definitions (from a pre-intermediate/intermediate level dictionary) of 8 of these words/phrases and read them out slowly. Each group must complete the table in on page four of the lesson plan. Stop students from shouting out the answers and review any difficulties only at the end of the exercise.

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