

THE ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLLUTION – B1

Main theme addressed	In this lesson, you will learn about the environment.
Key Goals	Here is an outline of what you will learn today: 1. Introductory activity in pairs or small groups 2. Words and expressions by topic 3. Exercises

1. Introductory activity in pairs or small groups

The aim of this activity is to help you brainstorm the vocabulary you know related to the environment, climate change and pollution.

With one or two classmates, discuss the following topics:

1. We should educate the general public about environmental issues by handing out leaflets.
2. Within a few years, we will have solved all the problems related to pollution thanks to technology.
3. We will soon only use environment friendly chemicals.

Here is a list of synonyms to help you express your thoughts with more variety:

Useful: beneficial, worthwhile, advantageous
Useless: pointless, futile, fruitless
Possible: conceivable, feasible, viable, achievable
Impossible: unattainable, impracticable, unfeasible
Likely: liable, probable
Unlikely: improbable, questionable, doubtful

2. Words and expressions by topic

Here is a list of words and expressions related to the environment, their definition, and one example, sorted by topic.

POLLUTION

Acid rain

- rain that contains harmful chemicals from factory and cars that damages trees and buildings.
- **Example:** Acid rain is inevitably cause by air pollution.

Contaminate

- to make something less pure or make it poisonous.
- **Example:** The food which had been contaminated was destroyed.

Emissions

- the act of sending out gas, heat, light, etc.
- **Example:** Environmental groups want a substantial reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases.

Exhaust

- to use something completely.
- **Example:** How long will it be before the world's fuel supplies are exhausted?
- the waste gas from an engine, especially a car's, or the pipe the gas flows through.
- **Example:** Car exhaust is the main reason for the city's pollution.

Fertilizer

- a natural or chemical substance that is spread on the land or given to plants, to make plants grow well.
- **Example:** organic fertilizer (= natural fertilizer), a chemical fertilizer

Greenhouse gas

- one of several gases, especially carbon dioxide, that prevent heat from the earth escaping into space, causing the greenhouse effect.
- **Example:** We need a global system for limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Immune

- not able to be punished or damaged by something.
- **Example:** Journalists, he insisted, must be immune (= protected) from prosecution.

Pervasive

- present or noticeable in every part of a thing or place.
- **Example: a pervasive smell of diesel**

Waste

- unwanted matter or material of any type, especially what is left after useful substances or parts have been removed.
- **Example: This city produces 20 million tons of household waste each year.**

NATURE

Biodiversity

- the variety of different kinds of animals and plants found in a particular region.
- **Example: A new national biological survey to protect species habitat and biodiversity.**

Deforestation

- the cutting down of trees in a large area, or the destruction of forests by people.
- **Example: Deforestation is destroying large areas of tropical rain forest.**

Drought

- a long period when there is little or no rain.
- **Example: This year (a) severe drought has ruined the crops.**

Ecosystems

- all the living things in an area and the way they affect each other and the environment.
- **Example: Pollution can have disastrous effects on the delicately balanced ecosystem.**

Erosion

- the fact of soil, stone, etc. being gradually damaged and removed by the waves, rain, or wind.
- **Example:** soil/coastal erosion

Pristine

- original and pure; not spoiled or worn from use.
- **Example:** The car seemed to be in pristine condition.

Exercise:

Fill the gaps in the sentences with words from the list. You can check the box in front of them as you go.

Words to use:

- acid
- biodiversity
- contaminated
- deforestation
- drought
- ecosystems
- emissions
- environmental
- erosion
- exhaust
- fertilisers
- greenhouse
- waste

1. Our way of life is putting an unprecedented strain on the Earth's _____.
2. We are confronting _____ challenges that are more taxing than ever before, and some of them might seem insoluble.
3. The air is polluted by _____ produced by cars and industry.
4. (a) _____ rain and (b) _____ gas are affected by these
(c) _____ fumes.
5. Climate change makes natural catastrophes, such as storms, floods,
and _____ more intense and frequent.
6. All these factors will inevitably have a negative impact on _____ and
therefore, on our ecosystem.
7. The soil is _____ by factories and power stations that can leave
heavy metals in the soil.
8. The clearing of trees take its toll on the quality of our soil: in other words,
(a) _____ has been shown to cause soil (b)
9. Some farming practices can pollution the land, especially the use of chemical
pesticides and _____.
10. Reducing _____ from households and factories and costs money.

Answers:

1. ecosystems
2. environmental
3. emissions
4. (a) acid, (b) greenhouse, (c) exhaust
5. drought
6. biodiversity
7. contaminated
8. (a) deforestation, (b) erosion
9. fertilizers
10. waste

IMPACT

Unprecedented

- never having happened or existed in the past.
- **Example:** This century has witnessed environmental destruction on an unprecedented scale.

Taxing

- difficult or needing a lot of thought or effort.
- **Example:** I just need an entertaining read for the beach - nothing too taxing.

Insoluble (of a problem)

- so difficult that it is impossible to solve.
- **Example:** Traffic congestion in large cities seems to be an insoluble problem.

Chronic (especially of a disease or something bad)

- continuing for a long time.
- **Example:** A chronic disease

Inexorably

- in a way that continues without any possibility of being stopped.
- **Example:** The bacteria spread inexorably through many insect populations.

Devastating

- causing a lot of damage or destruction.
- **Example:** The drought has had devastating consequences/effects.



Inevitably

- certain to happen and unable to be avoided or prevented.
- **Example:** The accident was the inevitable consequence/result/outcome of carelessness.

Vital

- necessary for the success or continued existence of something; extremely important.
- **Example:** A strong opposition is vital to a healthy democracy.

(Definitions and examples from Cambridge Dictionary

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>)

Exercise:

Write words from the “impact” list next to the synonyms below.

1. unspoiled: _____

2. unparalleled: _____

3. unaffected: _____

4. omnipresent: _____

5. persistent: _____

6. challenging: _____

7. crucial: _____

8. extremely harmful: _____

9. unavoidably (two synonyms):

9.a. _____

9.b. _____

10. insurmountable: _____

Answers:

1. pristine

2. unprecedented

3. immune

4. pervasive

5. chronic

6. taxing

7. vital

8. devastating



9.a. inexorably

9.b. inevitably

10. insoluble

Learn more:

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary/beginner-to-pre-intermediate/nature-1>

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/magazine/world-environment-day>

[https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/britain-is-great/green-is-great-part-](https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/britain-is-great/green-is-great-part-1)

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