

Earth in danger

environment: [noun] the natural world, including the land, water, air, plants and animals

environmentally conscious: [adjective] being aware of the environment and our effect on it

1 QUIZ - HOW ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS ARE YOU?

Circle your answers and then add up your points. The more points you have, the more environmentally conscious you are.

How often do you ...	always	sometimes	never
... drink bottled water?	-1	0	+1
... unplug/disconnect your TV over night?	+1	0	-1
... take a bath (instead of a shower)?	-1	0	+1
... go to school by car?	-1	0	+1
... walk or ride a bike to school?	+1	0	-1
... eat meat?	-1	0	+1
... recycle paper?	+1	0	-1
... recycle bottles?	+1	0	-1

2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Write the words from the article into the definitions. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

melt **trap** **disappeared**
cause **damaging** **climate**

- When something has _____, it no longer exists. (para 1)
- hurting or having a negative effect on someone or something _____ (para 1)
- the type of weather that a country or area has _____ (para 2)
- to change ice or snow into water _____ (para 2)
- to make something happen _____ (para 3)
- to keep something such as air, gas or energy in a particular place and not let it escape _____ (para 3)

drought **rubbish dumps** **diseases**
lids **pollute** **waste**

- illnesses that affect people or animals, especially ones that are caused by infection _____ (para 5)
- a long period of time when there is little or no rain and crops die _____ (para 6)
- to use more of something than you need _____ (para 7)
- a place where large amounts of rubbish are taken, usually outside a town _____ (para 8)
- to make air, water or land too dirty and dangerous for people to use in a safe way _____ (para 8)
- covers that go onto containers such as cooking pots and pans _____ (para 9)

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EARTH IN DANGER

by Toby Skingsley, Martin Simmonds and Talitha Linehan

1 The year is 2080, and the world is a very different place. London, New York and many other cities are underwater. The Earth has become a lot warmer. People are fighting because they don't have enough food or clean water. Malaria is common in Europe, and many of the animals and plants have disappeared forever. This sounds like the story of a Hollywood film. But it could really happen if we keep damaging the environment.



What in the world is happening?

5 Our climate is already changing. "In Bangladesh, there are more storms, which makes it difficult to grow food crops," says Claire. "Flooding is becoming worse and people are dying of diseases that are in the water." Some scientists think the Earth could be six degrees warmer by 2100. That doesn't sound like a lot but it would have terrible effects:

6 **Wild weather:** There could be more drought and desert in Australia and Africa, and dangerous heatwaves in Europe.

Wet wet wet: The level of sea water could rise, flooding areas like Bangladesh, the Netherlands and Florida. Even London and New York could be flooded.

Using too much?

7 Do you throw things away even though they're not really broken? Do you buy more food than you can eat and use more water than you need? Most people don't realize how much they waste. But we're cutting down trees, using too much energy and making more rubbish than nature can deal with.

Did you know?

A warmer climate means giant snakes! Cold-blooded animals grow much bigger when the weather is warm.

The facts

8 **Goodbye green:** Every year, we cut down 160,000 square kilometres of forest – an area the size of England and Wales! This is also bad news for climate change because trees absorb a lot of CO₂.

Helpless habitats: When we cut down trees or build new things, animals have nowhere to live.

Dirty dumps: Our rubbish dumps pollute the air and land, and our plastic ends up in the sea. There are even rubbish dumps for old aeroplanes and ships.

2 Many things affect the environment but which ones could cause the biggest problems in the future?

Claire Addison, 23, from Edinburgh, works for an organization called Envision in London, which teaches teens about the environment. "The biggest problem for our planet is climate change," Claire explains. "Greenhouse gases are causing higher temperatures around the world, which is causing ice to melt and sea levels to rise."

Did you know?

The energy used on a return flight from Europe to Australia could power your house for six years!

3 We all cause climate change. Lots of our favourite things – like mobile phones, televisions and computers – need energy to work. Most of this energy comes from burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas, which releases carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and other gases into the air. These greenhouse gases trap the heat from the sun, which makes our world warmer.

4 We all contribute to climate change whenever we:

- travel by car, by plane or on public transport.
- take a bath or shower with hot water.
- turn on the heating.
- use electricity that comes from fossil fuels.
- buy products that need lots of energy to make and/or come from far away.

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You can help!

9

Everyone knows we can save energy by turning off lights. But there are lots of other things you can do:

- ✓ Unplug your television and laptop. They use energy even when they're turned off. Always unplug your phone charger after your phone is charged.
- ✓ Turn down the heating by one degree.
- ✓ Take a short shower instead of a bath. A bath uses about 100 litres of hot water.
- ✓ Put the lids on pots and pans when you're cooking.
- ✓ Keep your fridge full. Empty fridges need more energy to stay cool.
- ✓ Don't boil more water than you need.

Did you know?

A running tap wastes around six litres of water per minute!

How to use less!

10

We need to use less. "We should live in a way that leaves enough for the future," says Claire from Envision. Recycling more and driving less are good ways to help. But try out these tips too:

- ✓ Use things for as long as possible. It takes energy to make new products.
- ✓ If your old things can still be used, give them to charity instead of throwing them away.
- ✓ Eat less meat! Meat production uses lots of energy, and rainforests are destroyed to make space for cattle.
- ✓ Wash fruit and vegetables in a bowl, then use that water for your plants.
- ✓ Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth. Use a normal toothbrush instead of an electric one.
- ✓ Drink tap water instead of bottled water.
- ✓ Keep water in the fridge so you won't have to run the tap until the water gets cold.
- ✓ Take your own travel mug to the coffee shop.

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3 FIND THE INFORMATION

According to the article, are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct any false sentences.

1. If the Earth keeps on getting warmer, London and New York could be underwater.
2. There could be more desert in Australia and Africa by 2100.
3. Burning coal and oil is good for the environment.
4. Using an electric toothbrush is bad for the environment.
5. We should drink more bottled water.
6. We should eat more meat.
7. We should keep our computers and TVs on overnight.
8. We are cutting down too many trees.

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4 OPPOSITES

The words on the left are all in the article. Match them with their opposites.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. full | a. more |
| 2. less | b. take off |
| 3. warmer | c. turn up |
| 4. turn down | d. plug in |
| 5. turn off | e. keep |
| 6. unplug | f. colder |
| 7. throw away | g. empty |
| 8. put on | h. turn on |

Choose the best words for these sentences and underline them.

- Don't forget to *put on* / *take off* your coat; it's cold outside.
- Please *turn up* / *turn down* the volume; the music is too loud.
- Turn on* / *Turn off* the television; it's time for bed.
- Don't forget to *unplug* / *plug in* your computer at night.

5 WEBQUEST

Our impact on nature is called our 'ecological footprint'. To find out what your footprint is, go to <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk>.

Do the online test. Think about your family and the people in your house and answer the questions. Compare your family's ecological footprint with that of another student's family.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL POSTERS

Using the information from the article and the information from the webquest, work in groups and make one of these two environmental posters:

- Earth in danger!**

Include information about what is happening to our climate and what might happen in the future if we do not change the way we live. Add facts, figures, website links, pictures, etc.

- Save our planet!**

Include information about what we can do to stop temperatures getting warmer and how we can use less energy. Add facts, figures, website links, pictures, etc.

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KEY

2

1. disappeared
2. damaging
3. climate
4. melt
5. cause
6. trap
7. diseases
8. drought
9. waste
10. rubbish dumps
11. pollute
12. lids

4

1. g
 2. a
 3. f
 4. c
 5. h
 6. d
 7. e
 8. b
-
- a. put on
 - b. turn down
 - c. turn off
 - d. unplug

3

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. F
7. F
8. T