

the environment

Age: Young adult / Adult



Level: Intermediate

Length: 45–60 minutes

Language Focus: key vocabulary associated with environmental issues

Skills: speaking, listening

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student, the audio file (downloaded in advance, or played via onestopenglish), laptops or devices for the warmer (if done in class)

Aims: to provide students with the language needed for talking about environmental issues and recycling habits



Teaching tip: Students could be invited to share their work on a class blog/website and create a word bank for use in the lesson. Some possible key words: *action, behaviour, damage, educate, environment, global, organization, planet, plastic, poison, pollute/pollution, protect/protection, recycle, reduce, sustainable/sustainability, waste*

What are red words?

Ninety per cent of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in the Macmillan Dictionary in red and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent and three-star words are the most frequent. 'Language for' lessons are based on red words and encourage students to improve their English through communicative tasks using collocation and commonly used phrases.

- 1 The following can be done either before class (set as homework in the previous lesson) or as a warmer at the start of class. Divide the class in half. Tell one half that they are going to find out about World Environment Day and the other that they will find out about Earth Day. Students should then pair up with another member from the other group and share their findings. As a final part of this exercise, ask students to write down four key words that they think summarize the idea of Earth Day or World Environment Day.
- 2 Explain to students that they are now going to listen to a man (Derek) and a woman (Lizzie) answering questions on their recycling habits and thoughts about protecting the environment. Ensure that students understand the term *ecological footprint* (= the amount of energy, water, etc a person uses). Ask them to listen out for a particular eco-friendly thing that both speakers say that they don't do. Play the audio, and check the answer as a class. You may need to explain the meaning of *compost* (= to make soil from decaying vegetable/food waste). Do any students do this? What sort of things can be composted? Why is it not always practical? Elicit a brief discussion as a class.
- 3 Ask students to read the questions in exercise 2b in preparation. Play the audio. Give students time to complete the exercise and then check answers as a class.
- 4 Before completing exercise 2c, explain that you're going to play the audio a final time and that students will need to listen out for the correct words to complete each of the extracts. Ask them to read the sentences and briefly think about what the words might be. Play the audio, pausing if necessary. Once all students have completed the exercise, check the answers as a class.

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- 5 Exercise 2d highlights some further useful vocabulary from the audio. Tell students to complete it individually and compare answers. If they need extra support, allow them to use the audio transcript so that they can see words 1–6 in context (they are in the order that they appear – 1 and 2 are in the speakers' answers to the fourth question, 3–6 are in their answers to the final question). Check answers.
- 6 Ask students to carefully read the comments in exercise 3a and work individually to complete the exercise below it, comparing their answers with a partner. Check answers as a class.
- 7 Who do the class think has the biggest environmental footprint? (= Silvia). Ask them to think carefully about their everyday lives and then share with a partner an honest answer about who, right now, they are most like, Silvia or Beth. Is there anything about their own attitude or habits that they would like to change?
- 8 Exercise 3c highlights some common collocations associated with discussing environmental issues. Ask students to complete it in pairs, suggesting that they first complete any matches they immediately see so that they can be eliminated. Invite the fastest finishers to give their answers and check answers.
- 9 Exercise 3d puts the phrases in 3c in context. Ask them to complete it individually, giving less confident students explanations of any phrases they are unsure about, or allowing them to use the Macmillan Dictionary for help. Check answers as a class.
- 10 Ask students to interview two other class members using questions based on the audio. Tell them to note down their answers but remind them they don't need to write down everything they say, just make notes of the key words to help them remember for when they report back later. They should then also answer the questions for themselves, comparing their own habits with those of the people they interviewed. When they have done this, ask them to find a partner (preferably not someone they interviewed), and share their results and ideas. They should then work together to create a presentation on 'green living'. Give out paper for students to write down their ideas if they don't have any themselves. Remind them to look at vocabulary featured in earlier exercises and their lesson preparation to help them.
- 11 If time permits, or in a follow-up lesson, invite students to give their presentations to the rest of the class.
- 12 As a wind-up activity, ask students if they know what *upcycling* is. Does anyone in the class have an *upcycled* product? What is it, and what is it made from? Has anyone ever *upcycled* anything? Share ideas and experiences as a class.



Teaching tip: Students can read more about *upcycling* in a BuzzFeed article at [onestopenglish.com](https://www.onestopenglish.com)

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KEY:

1a. *Earth Day*, occurring annually on 22nd April, is a day on which events are held worldwide to support the protection of the environment. The first Earth day was in 1970. The theme in 2018 was 'end plastic pollution'.

World Environment Day is the UN's most important day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of the environment. In 2018, it was on 5th June. The first World Environment Day was in 1974. The theme in 2018 was 'beating plastic pollution'.

1b. students' own answers

2a. Neither of them compost their food waste.

- 2b.**
1. T
 2. F – he lives in a first-floor flat (2nd floor in US English)
 3. F – they both think it is difficult
 4. F – he uses public transport
 5. T
 6. T
 7. F – she thinks it will take a long time

- 2c.**
1. separate out
 2. plastic bags
 3. bin, recycling
 4. general waste
 5. packaging
 6. throwing, away

- 2d.**
1. b
 2. f
 3. d
 4. a
 5. c
 6. e

- 3a.**
1. Silvia
 2. Beth
 3. Beth
 4. Beth
 5. Silvia
 6. Silvia
 7. Beth

3b. Silvia; students' own answers

- 3c.**
1. e
 2. d
 3. f
 4. g
 5. a
 6. c
 7. b

- 3d.**
1. landfill site
 2. household waste
 3. natural resources
 4. renewable energy
 5. ozone layer
 6. global warming / climate change

4. students' own answers

5. *upcycling* = reusing objects or materials to create something with a higher value than the original object or materials