

## Almost 2,000 children die every day from air pollution, report finds

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

- a. What are your biggest concerns about the environment? Make a list of your top three. Then, compare with a classmate. Discuss similarities and differences.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### 2 Key words

- a. Write the correct words from the wordpool to complete the definitions below. Then, find and highlight them in the article so that you can read them in context.

bear      burden      emissions      fuel      ozone      particle  
pollutant      predictor      priority      risk factor      suffer      wellbeing

1. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is something that increases risk or makes someone more likely to be harmed by something.
2. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to experience physical or mental pain.
3. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is a duty or responsibility that causes worry, difficulty or hard work.
4. To \_\_\_\_\_ something is to accept and deal with something unpleasant.
5. A very small piece of something is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Something that can show what will happen in the future is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Your general health and happiness is your \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is a substance that puts dirty or harmful substances into something, especially air and water.
9. A poisonous form of oxygen is called \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Any material that produces heat or power, usually when it is burnt, is \_\_\_\_\_.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ are gases that are sent out into the air.
12. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is something that you think is more important than other things and should be dealt with first.

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b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. If you play video games all day, what are your real \_\_\_\_\_ in life?
2. Before we have our barbecue, please check that there is enough \_\_\_\_\_ in the grill's propane tank.
3. That magazine article talks about improving people's health and \_\_\_\_\_ with meditation and exercise.
4. Is high blood pressure a \_\_\_\_\_ of heart disease?
5. After the surgery, the nurse gave her medicine to reduce her pain and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The lack of universal healthcare is a \_\_\_\_\_ for Americans.
7. That's really hot! How much spiciness can you \_\_\_\_\_?
8. Some chemicals and gases are \_\_\_\_\_ that can harm the air, soil or water.

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**Fiona Harvey**

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- 1 Nearly 2,000 children under five are dying every day from air pollution. This has become the second biggest health risk factor for young children around the world.
- 2 More than 8 million deaths of children and adults, were caused by air pollution in 2021, according to a new study. Both outdoor and indoor pollution continue to harm people's health.
- 3 Dirty air is now the second biggest killer globally. It is bigger than tobacco use and is second to high blood pressure among adults. Among children under five, poor nutrition is the biggest risk factor.
- 4 The State of Global Air report has been published by the HEI since 2017. It was produced this year in partnership with UNICEF. It shows that children in low-income countries are suffering more. The death rate linked to air pollution in children under five is 100 times higher in most of Africa than in high-income countries.
- 5 Pallavi Pant, the lead author of the report and Head of Global Health at HEI, pointed to the unfairness when she said, "Far too much of the burden is borne by young children, older populations, and low- and middle-income countries."
- 6 Tiny particles called PM2.5 – meaning they are smaller than 2.5 micrometres in diameter – cause more than 90 per cent of global air pollution deaths, the report found. PM2.5 particles can enter the blood, affect organs throughout the body and have been linked to a variety of diseases.
- 7 The report showed that PM2.5 pollution was now "the most consistent and accurate predictor of poor health outcomes" around the world.
- 8 Kitty van der Heijden, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, said that not acting has serious health and well-being effects on the next generation. She also said that it is very important for governments and businesses to develop "meaningful, child-focused action to reduce air pollution and protect children's health."
- 9 The impacts of the climate crisis are also making air quality worse, according to the HEI. More droughts and drier land mean more fires and dust storms, which can have a worse impact because more particles stay in the air for a longer period.
- 10 Higher temperatures in summer can also worsen the impact of pollutants, which can turn into ozone, a gas harmful to the lungs and body. Breathing ozone for a long time contributed to nearly half a million deaths in 2021, the report found.
- 11 Dealing with air pollution could also help the climate. About half a million children's deaths in 2021 were linked to dirty air indoors, mainly the result of cooking with dirty fuels, including paraffin and coal. Switching to cleaner fuels, such as solar cookstoves, reduces PM2.5 and carbon dioxide emissions.
- 12 About 2.3 billion people around the world lack access to clean cooking fuels. The International Energy Agency estimates that about \$4 billion a year is needed by 2030 to solve the problem in sub-Saharan Africa alone. Last month, \$2.2 billion was raised for projects to help people move to cleaner methods.
- 13 Fatih Birol, the Executive Director of the IEA, said the problem needed to be seen as a priority for governments around the world. The issue impacts health, the climate and national economies. It also impacts gender equality because women and girls are often the ones finding firewood. "This is an issue that has been ignored for too long," he said.
- 14 Previous reports have found that nearly every person breathes unhealthy levels of air pollution each day, and that half a million babies were being killed each year by dirty air.

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#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. According to the article, what rank (first, second, third, etc.) is air pollution a health risk factor for young people?
2. How many deaths were caused by air pollution in 2021 for children and adults?
3. What are the top two risk factors in mortality for children under five?
4. How much higher is the impact on children in Africa than in other places?
5. What are the tiny particles called, and why are they named that?
6. What percentage of global air pollution deaths happen because of these particles?
7. What is PM2.5 the “most consistent and accurate predictor” of?
8. What else is making air quality worse?
9. How do higher summer temperatures affect air pollution?
10. How can solar cookstoves help with air pollution?

#### 4 Key language

a. In the sentences below, underline the subject and double-underline the verb. If the doer is named, circle *by*.

1. More than 8 million deaths were caused by air pollution in 2021.
2. This year’s State of Global Air report was produced by the HEI and UNICEF.
3. Too much of the burden is borne by young children, older populations, and low- and middle-income countries.
4. About half a million children’s deaths in 2021 were linked to dirty air indoors by the report.
5. About \$4 billion a year is needed by 2030 to solve the problem in sub-Saharan Africa alone.
6. \$2.2 billion was raised last month for projects to help move people to cleaner methods.

b. Change the sentences above from passive to active.

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#### 5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “Nearly every person breathes unhealthy levels of air pollution each day.”
- “Pollution affects too many people in too many ways.”
- “Clean air and water are essential for good health.”

#### 6 In your own words

a. Do some research about air pollution or another type of pollution. Answer these questions.

- What are three big impacts of this type of pollution?
- How many people and/or animals are affected?
- What are some ways people are cleaning up the pollution?
- What are some changes that would help the situation?
- What is stopping these changes?
- What is your opinion about the issue?

b. Report your findings to the class and share the facts you learned and your opinions. Here are some phrases to help you make transitions during your report.

Contrast

- However, ...*
- On the other hand, ...*
- Nevertheless, ...*

Combination

- Besides, ...*
- In addition to, ...*
- Furthermore, ...*

Intensity

- In fact, ...*
- Without a doubt, ...*
- Surely, ...*