

A soft-focus background image of a desk. At the top, a small potted plant with green and yellow leaves sits on a white surface. Below it, a white notebook is open, and a black pen lies diagonally across it. The overall scene is bright and clean, with a light green and white color palette.

IELTS

Vocabulary & Ideas

Environment

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Environmental problems and solutions

Climate change – Global warming

Global warming is a gradual increase in the earth's temperature that causes changes in climate.

Not only does the Earth's temperature continue to rise, but the sea levels are rising, too. Both the ocean and the earth are growing warmer.

Global temperatures are climbing. Ice caps are melting. Droughts, wildfires, and super hurricanes are becoming more common.

to contribute to global warming

to combat/fight/tackle global warming

Causes:

- Greenhouse gasses – CO2 emissions
- Deforestation

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Greenhouse gases - Carbon dioxide (CO₂)

the emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere

The burning of fossil fuels releases large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which leads to global warming.

Fossil fuels are coal, gas and oil.

Greenhouse gases are the leading cause of climate change.

Solutions:

- Using renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, will assist in the fight against climate change.

to install solar batteries on the roofs of buildings

to build wind farms

- Planting more trees as trees absorb carbon dioxide.

to reduce the carbon footprint of a factory

businesses that are committed to reducing their carbon footprint

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Deforestation

By 2030, only 10 per cent of the *rainforests* may be left; the rest will have been cut down for wood or cleared for agricultural use.

Problem 1. Greenhouse gases

There are fewer trees to *produce oxygen* and *absorb carbon dioxide*.

Deforestation is *contributing to* global warming because trees absorb carbon dioxide.

Problem 2. Endangered species

When forests are cut down, the plants and animals that live in the forests are destroyed, and some species are at risk of being made *extinct*.

to go/become extinct

Species lose their habitat.

Ecosystems die out.

Causes:

- People cut down forests to build cities or clear land for agricultural use.

Solutions:

- To preserve the remaining forests, humans should simply stop cutting down trees.

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Forests are in major need of *preservation*.

- For every tree that is cut down, a new one needs to be planted in its place.

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Endangered species

- a type of plant or animal that might stop existing

species of fish, animals, birds

flora and fauna – plants and animals

One out of every ten plant and animal species is expected to *become/go extinct* by 2050.

extinct - no longer existing

almost/nearly extinct

critically endangered species

Loss of Biodiversity

Biodiversity, or the variety of life in the world, is declining.

The levels of *biodiversity* across the world have significantly decreased in the last three decades.

Causes:

- *Lost habitats* mean losing the species that live there. (deforestation)

With the *rising temperatures* of the Arctic, sea ice melts, which *eliminates the habitat* of polar bears and various other animals. (global warming)

- Many species of plants and animals have *become extinct* due to human activity.
- Wild animals are being *poached* on a massive scale, with millions of individual animals worldwide killed or captured illegally.

to poach – to hunt illegally

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Solutions:

save/protect endangered species

- Focus on *wildlife conservation* – protect *wildlife habitats* by controlling pollution and creating *nature reserves*
- Stop deforestation
- Limit green gas emissions
- Support organizations dedicated to fighting species extinction

Pollution

to pollute air/water/soil/the environment

contamination - the process or fact of making a place dirty by adding a substance that is dangerous or carries disease

Environmental contamination resulting from human activities is a major health concern.

Contaminated waters are undrinkable.

Polluted air causes health problems.

Contaminated soil destroys habitats. (endangered species)

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Air pollution

Most major cities *suffer from dangerous levels of air pollution.*

People who live in areas with high levels of air pollution are more likely to *die from cancer or other diseases.*

poor air quality

Good air quality is essential for our health, quality of life and the environment.

Causes:

- Most air pollution is the result of *combustion of fossil fuels to generate power and heat, and to power vehicles.*
- Power stations, factories, and vehicles *emit harmful gases* into the atmosphere.
- *Emissions from car exhausts* cause pollution around cities.

Solutions:

cut/reduce/limit emissions

- The most basic solution for air pollution is to end its *root cause* and *move away from fossil fuels*, replacing them with *clean, renewable energy.*

renewable energy = alternative energy: solar, wind and geothermal energy

Shifting to electric vehicles and promoting public transports could reduce air pollution.

- It is important to *conserve energy* because sources of energy such as electricity, diesel, gasoline, and wood *contribute to air pollution.*

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Waste disposal

Waste disposal poses a threat to not only the Earth and its environment but humans as well.

a *landfill* - an area of land where large amounts of waste are buried under the earth

factories that *empty toxic waste* into rivers and oceans

The *dumping of toxic waste* has *contaminated the area*.

Plastic pollution

Most plastics do not *biodegrade* which means no natural process can break them down.

Plastics are *littering* cities, oceans, and waterways, *contributing to health problems* in humans and animals.

Plastic is often *dumped in the ocean* where it is consumed by wildlife.

Solutions:

- *Recycle plastic*
- *Use biodegradable packaging* in supermarkets
- *Limit the production of single-use plastic*

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Protecting the environment

sustainable - causing little or no damage to the environment

sustainable growth, sustainable development, sustainable communities, sustainable energy sources

renewable energy - energy that is produced using natural resources such as the wind, sun, etc.

reduce the impact on the environment

environmentally friendly - behaviour and products that do not harm the environment

environmentally friendly products/businesses/practices/technologies

to preserve the environment for future generations

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