

A

The problems and their causes

A variety of environmental problems now affect our entire world. As **globalisation**¹ continues, local issues become international ones, so today there are few places in the world that do not suffer from environmental problems. Some of the major problems now affecting the world are **acid rain**², **air pollution**³, **global warming**⁴, **hazardous waste**⁵, **ozone depletion**⁶, **smog**⁷, **water pollution**, **overpopulation**, and **rainforest destruction**⁸. People are also worried about the **greenhouse effect**, where an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide [CO₂] and other **gases**⁹ in the Earth's **atmosphere**¹⁰ causes a gradual warming of the surface of the Earth. This global warming is leading to the thawing of the **polar ice caps**¹¹ and all this is causing concern about **climate change**. Both human behaviour and climate change have led to many animal and plant **species**¹² becoming **endangered**¹³ or even **extinct**¹⁴.

- ¹ increasing business, cultural and other contacts between countries ² rain which contains harmful chemicals as a result of burning substances such as oil and coal [acid = a type of liquid that reacts chemically with other materials, sometimes dissolving them] ³ damage caused to the air by harmful substances or waste
⁴ rise in the world's temperature ⁵ dangerous ⁶ reduction in the ozone layer [layer of air above the Earth containing ozone which prevents harmful ultraviolet light from the sun from reaching Earth]
⁷ air pollution found in cities caused by a mixture of smoke, gases and chemicals (the word has been formed from smoke + fog) ⁸ destroying (cutting down) forest in a tropical area which receives a lot of rain
⁹ substance in a form that is neither solid nor liquid ¹⁰ the mixture of gases around the Earth
¹¹ ice covering the areas at the North and South Poles ¹² types ¹³ very few in number, at risk of becoming extinct ¹⁴ not existing any longer

Language help

The prefix **over-** means *too much*. **Overfishing** means that people have fished so much that it is having a serious effect on fish populations. **Overpopulated** means there are so many people living in an area that life is difficult there.

B

Dealing with the problems

Worldwide efforts are being made to improve the situation. **Green** parties and green or **ecological** policies are mainly concerned with **protecting the environment**. **Conservation** organisations are developing nature **reserves** where plants and animals are protected. Some farmers produce **organic** food, which avoids the use of harmful chemicals. More companies try to behave in a way that is **environmentally friendly** or **ecologically sound**. Societies attempt to **dispose of waste** in a more responsible way, by, for example, **recycling** as much as possible. People aim to **reduce their carbon footprint** by using cars less so that they cut down on their use of **fossil fuels**, for example.

C

Word families

noun	verb	adjective	adverb
globalisation	globalise	global	globally
environment, environmentalist		environmental	environmentally
pollution, pollutant	pollute	polluting	
destruction	destroy	destructive	destructively
disposal	dispose	disposable	
reduction	reduce	reduced	

Exercises

24.1 Answer each question, using a word or expression from the box.

acid rain carbon dioxide endangered species ~~extinct~~ global warming
 globalisation hazardous waste ozone layer polar ice caps destruction of rainforests
 smog water pollution

- 1 What happened to dinosaurs about 65 million years ago? *They became extinct.*
- 2 What is the name for a special layer in the Earth's atmosphere which helps protect our planet?
- 3 What word can be used to describe the increasing contact between countries that has a major impact on life today?
- 4 What causes problems because it is difficult to dispose of safely?
- 5 What have scientists shown to be melting worryingly fast at the North and South Poles?
- 6 What does the chemical symbol CO₂ represent?
- 7 What has been happening in the Amazon area and in other tropical areas like Indonesia and Malaysia?
- 8 What problem is a type of air pollution?
- 9 What can cause harm to plant or other life when it falls on the land or sea?
- 10 What is the Siberian tiger an example of?
- 11 What has caused much plant and animal life in rivers in industrial areas to die out?
- 12 What is the term for the phenomenon describing the rise in the Earth's average temperature?

24.2 Match words to form compound nouns.

- | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 acid | fuel | <i>acid rain</i> | 6 greenhouse disposal | |
| 2 carbon | change | | 7 nature | reserve |
| 3 climate | party | | 8 organic | depletion |
| 4 fossil | footprint | | 9 ozone | effect |
| 5 green | rain | | 10 waste | food |

24.3 Choose a word from the opposite page to complete each sentence.

- 1 An *environmentalist* is a person who does what they can to help protect the environment.
- 2 items like plastic cups and paper plates are labour-saving but have a harmful effect on the environment.
- 3 The government says it is aiming for a significant in this country's use of fossil fuels over the next ten years.
- 4 The company plans to part of a nature reserve in order to build its new warehouses.
- 5 Carbon monoxide (CO) is an example of an air
- 6 The melting of the polar ice caps will have a impact on the environment.
- 7 Staff can of all recyclable items in these green bins.
- 8 Air pollution may the lives of people with respiratory illnesses.
- 9 This company is proud of its friendly policies.

24.4

Over to you

Answer these questions.

- 1 Which of the environmental problems in A exist in your country?
- 2 Do you think climate change is having any impact in your country?
- 3 How much support do green parties have in your country?
- 4 What could power cars instead of petrol or diesel?
- 5 Suggest three things people can do to reduce their carbon footprint.