



<b>Time</b>	90 minutes
<b>Level</b>	upper-intermediate
<b>Skills</b>	speaking, reading
<b>Knowledge goal</b>	to introduce key global environmental problems with a special focus on developing countries
<b>Materials</b>	Ss' worksheet: p. S1–S3 – Ex. 1–4 (one copy per student) p. S3 – a set of statement cards (one copy per class)

### 1 Lead-in

- Ask Ss to name some global environmental problems. Note them down on the flipchart/board leaving some space next to each problem. Not everybody has to agree with the stated global environmental problems at this point. Help the Ss with vocabulary. Ss should come up with at least 10 issues.

**Possible answers:** deforestation, global warming, air pollution, dirty water, waste, high energy consumption, loss of animal and plant species.

- After all ideas have been written down, ask the Ss to allocate points to each problem ranging from five for very serious problems to 0 or 1 for trivial problems. Write the points next to each problem on the board or ask the Ss to come and write them down. Count the points and highlight the ten most important ones.

**Variation: Pairwork/Groupwork.** Tell your Ss to write down ten global environmental problems which, in their opinion, are the most serious ones. Ss may use dictionaries. After they have finished, ask one pair/group to write down on the board their list of problems, then invite the others add what have not been noted down yet.

### 2 Main activity – Top 10 Global Environmental Problems

- Ss go through Ex. 1 on p. S1 and compare how many of the top 10 are included in their list of problems.
- Then continue with the Ex. 2, 3 and 4 according to the instructions on the worksheet.
- Give Ss some pictures related to the global environmental problems. Find them in newspapers/magazines or download them from [www.globalissues.eu](http://www.globalissues.eu) (Additional materials). Ss choose one picture, describe it and say which problem it relates to. Ask them further questions:

*What do you remember about the problem?*

*What are the main causes of the problem?*

*What are the consequences of the problem?*

If you are short of time, skip this last activity. You can do it in the following lesson as a revision of the vocabulary.

### 3 Follow-up – Game

- Cut up the statements from p. S3 and write the corresponding capital letter on the back in large letters. Spread out all the statements in the classroom so that there is some space around them and the Ss can see the cards. The cards can be spread in a row or placed around the classroom. Turn the cards upside down so the Ss can only read the letter.
- Ask the Ss to stand up and move freely around the classroom. Each student or Ss in small groups choose a starting point at any card they want. Preferably each student/group should start at a different letter. Tell the Ss that the goal is to answer all questions correctly. If their answer is not correct, they will be sent back to the questions which they have already answered and they have to go through them again until they get to the wrongly answered question and try to answer it correctly the second time. Encourage them to use dictionaries. You can set a time limit – e.g. 15 min.
- Discuss the statements which were false. Did the Ss work out why they were false? Provide them with the information from the Key. Ask them if they were surprised by any of the information and what was new for them.

### 4 Follow-up

- Write the following slogan on the board: “Think globally, act locally”. Discuss its meaning with the Ss.

“**Think globally, act locally**” suggests that ecological consciousness should begin at home. We can change something just by considering ecological, economic, and cultural differences of our local surroundings first.

- Brainstorm what each of us can do against global warming and various environmental problems. What can the Ss personally do to help the environment? Some tips on how to save the environment can be found here:  
<http://environment.about.com/od/globalwarming/tp/globalwarmtips.htm>  
<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/la21/tips>  
<http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/tips/index.html>

## 5 Ideas for Homework

- A. Each student prepares a 10-minute presentation. They can present e.g.:
- one of the global problems
  - an organization working in the field of global environmental problems
  - a case study of how global environmental problems affect local people.
- B. Ss write an essay about how to face increasing environmental pressures. If they are pessimistic about possible solutions, they should give reasons to support their opinion.
- C. Ask the Ss to make a poll. They should ask 10–20 people (their parents, relatives, friends or simply strangers in the street) about which environmental issues are according to them the most burning ones. Afterwards the students will present their poll to their classmates and discuss the results.

## KEY

### 2 – Main activity

#### Exercise 2:

1. overfishing, disposal site, overcultivation, deforestation, overgrazing, exploitation
2. Bad sanitation, droughts, floods, exploitation, deforestation
3. Bad sanitation, overfishing, greenhouse gas, genetically modified crops, overgrazing, overfishing, fertilizers, deforestation
4. melting glaciers, floods, droughts, carbon dioxide, greenhouse gas
5. droughts, contamination, irrigation
6. fertilisers, pesticides, overcultivation, overgrazing, genetically modified crops, carbon dioxide
7. droughts, irrigation, overgrazing
8. contamination, disposal site, carbon dioxide, greenhouse gas
9. contamination, disposal site
10. overfishing, animal and plant species, deforestation, genetically modified crops, pesticides

#### Exercise 3:

1. cause, greed, consumption, threats; 2. population, developing, drinking, serious; 3. result, resources, grow; 4. issue, consequences, droughts; 5. issues, enough, parts; 6. produce, polluted, produces, controversial; 7. expanding, incorrect, global; 8. soil, caused, transportation; 9. worldwide, solution, safe; 10. exploitation, forests, fuel, supports, threatened.

#### Exercise 4:

- 1-G, 2-D, 3-H, 4-B, 5-J, 6-E, 7-I, 8-C, 9-A, 10-F.

### 3 – Follow-up

Statement	Answer	Go to
A	<b>False:</b> 25,000 sq km does not represent an area of land larger than <b>Russia!</b> The area of Russia is 17,075,400 sq km. E.g. the area of <b>Belgium</b> is slightly more than 25,000 sq km (30,528 sq km). For comparison: The area of the Czech Republic is 78,864 sq km.	I
I	<b>False:</b> Much more water is needed to produce 1 kg of beef (about <b>10,000 litres</b> )	E
E	<b>True</b>	C
C	<b>True</b>	D
D	<b>True</b>	F
F	<b>True</b>	J
J	<b>False:</b> Not 50 <b>billion</b> – 50 <b>million</b> people a year already have to deal with flooding caused by storm surges.	L
L	<b>True</b>	B
B	<b>True</b>	G
G	<b>False:</b> Much more water is lost due to inefficient irrigation methods ( <b>about 60%</b> ).	H
H	<b>False:</b> This is not a statement by <b>George W. Bush</b> , but by <b>Gandhi</b> (1869-1948), a major political and spiritual leader of India and the Indian independence movement.	K
K	<b>False:</b> The Green revolution does not date back to <b>1860s</b> , but to <b>1960s</b> .	A

#### Sources:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn>  
<http://www.canadianwild.ca>





**TOP TEN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**



**1 Here is a list of top ten global environmental problems. Which of them are on your list? Which of them have you not thought about?**

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Human greed                     | 6. Unsustainable agriculture |
| 2. Poverty in the developing world | 7. Desertification           |
| 3. Growing human population        | 8. Industrial pollution      |
| 4. Global warming                  | 9. Nuclear waste             |
| 5. Lack of fresh water             | 10. Biodiversity loss        |

**2 Do you know the meaning of the following words? Which of them can be related to the problems stated above?**

- |                  |                 |                            |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Bad sanitation   | Overfishing     | Animal and plant species   |
| Melting glaciers | Contamination   | Exploitation               |
| Floods           | Disposal site   | Deforestation              |
| Droughts         | Irrigation      | Greenhouse gas             |
| Fertilisers      | Overcultivation | Genetically modified crops |
| Pesticides       | Carbon dioxide  | Overgrazing                |



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**3 Read the following texts. Complete them with the words in brackets.  
Does the text mention any more problems which are on your list of global environmental problems?**

**1. Human greed**

It is us, people, who are the \_\_\_\_\_ of most environmental problems below. Human \_\_\_\_\_ and disrespect for the rest of the world combined with uncontrolled resource and energy \_\_\_\_\_ and armed conflicts and wars are the most serious \_\_\_\_\_ to nature locally, regionally and globally.

*(threats, cause, greed, consumption)*

**2. Poverty in the developing world**

More than one billion people, i.e. one-sixth of the world's \_\_\_\_\_, live in extreme poverty in slums or in rural areas of \_\_\_\_\_ countries. Bad sanitation and lack of \_\_\_\_\_ water, food and wood for cooking lead to \_\_\_\_\_ environmental destruction.

*(developing, serious, drinking, population)*

**3. Growing human population**

Today over 6 billion people live on the Earth and the \_\_\_\_\_ is huge pressure on the world's \_\_\_\_\_. Over the next 25 years, the global population will \_\_\_\_\_ by another 2 billion.

*(resources, grow, result)*

**4. Global warming**

Global warming is becoming a critical \_\_\_\_\_ with wild weather occurring all over the world. The \_\_\_\_\_ are drastic: melting glaciers, frequent hurricanes, floods and \_\_\_\_\_ are only some of them.

*(issue, consequences, droughts)*

**5. Lack of fresh water**

Lack of fresh water could become one of the biggest \_\_\_\_\_ in the 21st century. There is already not \_\_\_\_\_ clean fresh water in the Middle East and in many \_\_\_\_\_ of Africa.

*(parts, issues, enough)*

**6. Unsustainable agriculture**

We all need to eat, but the way we \_\_\_\_\_ our food today raises a number of questions about the environment. Water is \_\_\_\_\_ by fertilisers and pesticides; agriculture \_\_\_\_\_ about 25 % of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas. Genetically modified crops are also highly \_\_\_\_\_.

*(polluted, produce, controversial, produces)*

**7. Desertification**

Currently many deserts are \_\_\_\_\_ much faster than they have in the past. The main reasons for desertification are overgrazing, over-cultivation, \_\_\_\_\_ irrigation methods, deforestation and \_\_\_\_\_ climate change.

*(incorrect, expanding, global)*

**8. Industrial pollution**

Air, water and \_\_\_\_\_ contamination are the major forms of pollution \_\_\_\_\_ by industry and \_\_\_\_\_.

*(caused, transportation, soil)*

**9. Nuclear waste**

The disposal of nuclear waste is one of the most problematic issues related to nuclear power. Governments \_\_\_\_\_ are spending large amounts of money on finding a long-term \_\_\_\_\_, but so far no \_\_\_\_\_ disposal site has been created.

*(worldwide, safe, solution)*

**10. Biodiversity loss**

The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ for wood, \_\_\_\_\_ and agricultural land has led to massive deforestation. Deforestation is a major contributor to the fast loss of plant and animal species.

Similarly life in oceans which \_\_\_\_\_ the greatest variety of life on earth is \_\_\_\_\_ by overfishing, petrochemicals, coastal development, the effects of climate change and many other factors.

*(supports, forests, fuel, exploitation, threatened)*

**4 Match two halves of each sentence.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. A great number of environmental problems | A. live in rural areas.                            |
| 2. More than 1 billion people in the world  | B. threatened by overfishing.                      |
| 3. Soon there will be lack of               | C. pressure on resources.                          |
| 4. Life in oceans is                        | D. live in extreme poverty.                        |
| 5. Lack of fresh water is                   | E. caused by deforestation.                        |
| 6. The fast loss of species is              | F. waste must be solved.                           |
| 7. The major contributor to air             | G. are caused by people.                           |
| 8. The growing human population puts        | H. clean fresh water in some regions of the world. |
| 9. A lot of poor people                     | I. pollution is industry.                          |
| 10. The problem with nuclear                | J. one of the biggest issues of the 21st century.  |

**Sources:**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn>, <http://www.canadianwild.ca>

**TOP TEN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

<p align="center"><b>Statement A</b></p> <p>Deforestation is the major contributor to the loss of endangered species across the planet. For example, the rate of destruction of the Amazonian rainforest increased by 40 % between 2001 and 2002. More than 25,000 sq km were cleared in a year, mainly for farming. That represents an area of land larger than Russia.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to H                      False: Go to I</p>	<p align="center"><b>Statement I</b></p> <p>Meat production continues to increase. As a country, China now consumes more meat than the USA (although its consumption per person is much lower). One of the arguments for eating less or no meat is the inefficient use of resources. It takes 1,000 litres of water to produce 1kg of beef but only 500 litres for 1kg of potatoes.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to F                      False: Go to E</p>
<p align="center"><b>Statement H</b></p> <p>"There is enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed." George W. Bush.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to E                      False: Go to K</p>	<p align="center"><b>Statement G</b></p> <p>Irrigation allows wastage on a huge scale, with around 10 % of the water getting away or evaporating before it can do any good.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to L                      False: Go to H</p>
<p align="center"><b>Statement L</b></p> <p>In the last 50 years we have lost 300,000 species. Species are disappearing between 100 and 1,000 times as fast as they were before humans arrived.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to B                      False: Go to K</p>	<p align="center"><b>Statement D</b></p> <p>Fossil fuels still provide almost 80% of the world's total energy needs and more than six billion tonnes of carbon emissions are produced annually from burning fossil fuel.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to F                      False: Go to B</p>
<p align="center"><b>Statement F</b></p> <p>By the year 2032, more than 70 % of the Earth's land surface is likely to be destroyed, fragmented or disturbed by cities, roads, mines and other infrastructure of human civilisation. The present level is about 50 %.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to J                      False: Go to C</p>	<p align="center"><b>Statement K</b></p> <p>The Green revolution of the 1860s combined better varieties of wheat and rice with pesticides and chemical fertilisers. This brought great benefits to production in countries such as India but at extreme environmental costs.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to G                      False: Go to A</p>
<p align="center"><b>Statement C</b></p> <p>The amount of pesticide sprayed on crops around the world has increased 26 times in the last 50 years.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to D                      False: Go to I</p>	<p align="center"><b>Statement E</b></p> <p>By 2025, the number of people who do not have enough water is expected to reach 2.5 billion.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to C                      False: Go to A</p>
<p align="center"><b>Statement J</b></p> <p>Some 50 billion people a year already have to deal with flooding caused by storm surges. If the sea rises by one metre, it will flood 1 % of Egypt's land, 6 % of the Netherlands and 17.5% of Bangladesh.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to D                      False: Go to L</p>	<p align="center"><b>Statement B</b></p> <p>The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide, which is produced by burning of fossil fuels. Levels in the atmosphere have increased by a third since the industrial revolution started in the 1760s.</p> <p align="center">True: Go to G                      False: Go to J</p>

