

Environmental problems

Topic

Environmental problems

Aims

- To develop students' understanding of the important causes of environmental problems and some solutions
- To develop vocabulary related to climate change and environmental issues
- To develop pronunciation and dictionary skills
- To develop reading skills and use expressions of certainty to talk about the future

Age group

Teens

Level

B1 +

Time

60-90 minutes

Materials

- Environmental problems student worksheet
- Dictionaries or access to online dictionaries

Introduction

This lesson introduces learners to some of the main issues related to climate change. Learners focus on dictionary skills and the pronunciation of strong and weak syllables in long words. Focusing on the lexis in detail will help them recognize and use these terms outside of the classroom. There is a discussion activity which allows students to share their opinions about the environment in the future.

Procedure

1. Lead- in

- Write "Environment" on the board. Ask students to write down three words (in English!) that they think of when they hear that word. Ask student to compare their

	<p>three words in pairs, and explain to their partner why they chose those words.</p>
2. Task 1: Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students the worksheet and tell them to look at Task 1 – are any of their words from the lead-in on the sheet? • To help learners learn ways to record vocabulary ask them to check the meaning of the words in the table in task 1 and discuss why they might be recorded using different kinds of type, like in the table. (The words in normal text are environmental problems, and the words in bold are environmental solutions). With a higher level class you could read out the words and ask them to organize them into two groups.
3. Task 2: Pronunciation: Word stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students dictionaries or direct them to a good online dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dictionary for example) • Ask them how many syllables are in the word “Alternative” and then ask them to check in the dictionary. How can they tell how many syllables a word has (they will be marked with dots or small symbols, as in the example). • Model the word stress in the words in the table. You can say the words and show the stress using your hand (open wide for stressed syllables and closed for unstressed) or by clapping on the stressed syllables. • Ask students to work together to complete the table – you could then ask them to make this into a poster, for example <p><i>Answers:</i> Al TER na tive, CLIM ate, DE sert, di OX ide, e lec TRIC i ty, ex TINC tion, gen er RA tion, GLO bal, pol LU ted, pol LU tion, re CY cling, re NEW a ble, WAR ming</p>
4. Task 3: Jigsaw Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 6 cards in Task 3 with short texts about the topics from Task 1. Cut these up before the class • Divide the students into pairs, and give each pair one or two cards, depending on the size of your class. Explain that they have to read and summarise the main information from their text, but they should NOT read the text. Encourage them to take notes on the main points. Monitor and help with any vocabulary. • After 5-10 minutes, tell students to put their cards away and regroup the students so into groups of six, where each member of the group has a different card. The students should explain their topics to each other. Encourage the rest of the group to take notes (tell them that there will be a quiz later!)
5. Task 4: The environment Quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quiz is to check the learners’ understanding of the texts. You can either do this as a race: cut up the questions onto different strips of paper. Tell students to write the numbers 1-8 on a piece of paper in their groups. One member from each team should come to the front and ask you for a number between 1-8. Give them the appropriate question. They should go back to their team, read out the question and try to answer it. They write their answer next to the appropriate number on their paper. They should then bring the question back and ask for a different number, as

	<p>so on until one team has answered all the questions. Then check the answers and award points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatively, you could do this as a pub quiz. In teams students should have an answer sheet. Read out the questions to the class, and each team should (quietly!) write down the answer. At the end of the round, get teams to swap papers and check their answers. The team with the most correct wins. You could award bonus points for extra information <i>Answers: 1. The increase in greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide), 2. They cause soil pollution, which is a threat to food security, 3. It is when heat gets trapped in the Earth's atmosphere by greenhouse gases, 4. They absorb carbon dioxide, 5. Poor quality soil, which means that it gets washed away by rain and may turn into desert, 6. Iceland and Costa Rica, 7. The environmental impact can be 90% less, 8. Choosing products that use less plastic and paper</i>
6. Task 5: Expressions of certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell students to look at the four sentences in Task 5. Elicit where the underlined expressions should go on the table. Ask students to work in pairs to put the other expressions into the correct places on the table. Remind them that some expressions (e.g. may and might) express the same level of certainty so can go next to each other in the table. Go over the answers – some might be a little subjective, so encourage students to think critically and justify their answers.
7. Task 6: Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to look at Task 6 on the worksheet. Students should read each of the statements and write a, b or c next to them, depending on their opinion about how likely these things are. They can decide where on the table they would put these statements. In pairs, or small groups, students should discuss their answers, justifying their opinions – they can try to reach an agreement. If you have time, you could then join smaller groups together to compare their final answers and again, discuss why they have these opinions. Set a time limit, and then ask for feedback from the whole class.
8. Optional extra: Mindmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindmaps are great tools to help learners organise and summarise information. They can work alone or in pairs to review the information and vocabulary from the whole lesson and organise it in a visual way to help them to remember it. Encourage them to think about categories that they can use that are meaningful for them. If you have internet access, show them https://www.mindmup.com/ You can also read more about mindmaps here: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/graphic-organisers

Contributed by

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