

# The Climate Connection

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# Episode 8: Present tense

#TheClimateConnection  
[www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection](http://www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection)



## Episode overview

Anxiety about the climate is a serious and growing problem, in particular amongst young people. In Episode 8, Caroline Hickman from the Climate Psychology Alliance explores this phenomenon. She discusses how eco anxiety emerges, how it can affect learning, how it can be managed, and how language can act as a 'safe space' where these anxieties can be addressed.

In *From the Field*, we hear from Malaika, an incredible school in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is doing all it can to be self-sufficient and to embed climate responsibility in everything that it does, and how this can create resilience. *The Green Glossary*, meanwhile, focuses on the etymology of 'fossil fuel', and considers the process of 'register shift', that is, how the meaning of words can change over time.



Caroline Hickman

## In this episode

Eco anxiety is an emotionally healthy response to the reality of what we are looking at is happening in the world today. It's not a mental illness, it's not a pathology.

We have seen first-hand how educating girls and women can transform an entire community.

Reusable sanitary pads help girls to stay in school and receive the same education as boys.

We also want to be taught how to have complicated conversations with parents who don't want to talk to us about climate change.





# Teaching ideas

Why not use extracts from the podcast in your classroom? Here are some ideas of how you can use the interviews with Caroline Hickman in episode 8.

## Interview: Caroline Hickman

### Before listening: Reflection task

1. Present the following quotation about 'eco anxiety', made by a young British person. The quotation comes from [this article](#) on the BBC website.

*'When you go to sleep, but you start thinking about everything – the state of the planet, really, and the potential future of it – and knowing that there's only so much you can do as one person. I think that's the anxiety – because you just feel a bit powerless in it all.'*

2. Ask your students to discuss this quotation in groups (or as a whole class). Specifically, they could discuss these questions:
  - Do you share these feelings?
  - If so, why? How do you manage them?
  - How can we feel less powerless about the environment? What can we do?
  - What role can language learning play in this?

### Before listening: Exploration and discussion

1. Listen Caroline makes the following statements in her interview. Discuss them with your students:
  - 'Eco anxiety is an emotionally healthy response to the reality of what we are looking at is happening in the world today.'
  - 'What happens is our anxiety is raised, realistically, but then it can't go anywhere because the people with the power to act are failing to act.'
  - 'Children are often feeling quite betrayed, neglected and abandoned by adults who are failing to talk to them about it.'
  - 'My generation has failed, your generation is failing the younger generations, and the generations before me have failed.'
  - 'By reflecting on my own eco anxiety it allows me to empathise and feel compassion for people around the globe who are feeling that immediate terror today.'
  - 'You can't ask children and young people to respect you as a teacher, if you're not listening to them and taking their concerns seriously.'
  - 'Language transcends all of these borders and barriers and differences, because we are then again talking about that language of humanity of care and concern and compassion.'



## After listening: Discussion and extension task

1. Caroline talks about an 'Eco Awareness Day' at a school. You can show, or play students, the following extract:

'Young people organised it, they spent a year organising it, which is brilliant, and they were getting the children wild swimming, cooking food, digging gardens, lots of practical, engaged, and all of the whole of the Upper School was involved in this. So what was brilliant about this was it wasn't an add-in to the curriculum, everybody was involved for the day, all the teachers and all the children.'

2. In groups, students should design their own Eco Awareness Day.
3. Each group shares their plan for the day. As a class, they can identify the best bits of each presentation, and create a 'class plan'.
4. If possible, put the plan into action!

## Glossary

The following words and phrases appear in episode 8. You may wish to look them up if you are unfamiliar with any of them.

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|------------|--------------|---------------|
| ▪ Accrue   | ▪ Forefront  | ▪ Mineral     |
| ▪ Anxiety  | ▪ Geologic   | ▪ Neglected   |
| ▪ Astute   | ▪ Groundwork | ▪ Organism    |
| ▪ Bacteria | ▪ Horde      | ▪ Pathology   |
| ▪ Betrayed | ▪ Impression | ▪ Perspective |
| ▪ Dinosaur | ▪ Legitimise | ▪ Petrified   |
| ▪ Disavow  | ▪ Lobbying   | ▪ Rage        |
| ▪ Dovetail | ▪ Logical    | ▪ Rift        |
| ▪ Empathy  | ▪ Mechanism  | ▪ Tangible    |

## Bonus material

Visit the podcast website, [www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection](http://www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection) for bonus material.

You can find a link to the podcast and the transcript of this episode at <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/podcast>

## Social media

Please share your views about this episode, and the series as a whole, on social media using the hashtag **#TheClimateConnection**. Let us know your thoughts, reflections, comments and whether you have been able to use any of the ideas in your teaching.



# Podcast feedback survey

Please tell us what you thought about this episode of the podcast and our podcast show notes by completing this short online survey.

Survey link: <http://bit.ly/PodcastFeedbackSurvey>



## Links



British Council TeachingEnglish  
[www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

Oxford**Languages**

Oxford Languages, the home of language data  
[languages.oup.com](http://languages.oup.com)



# Detailed notes

Use these notes to find out more about the contents of Episode 8.

Phrase	Explanation and Further Information
<b>Interview: Caroline Hickman (1)</b>	
Wiltshire	A region in England.
Equator	The equator is the imaginary line around the middle of the Earth. It is halfway between the North Pole and the South Pole, at zero degrees latitude. An equator divides a planet into a Northern Hemisphere and a Southern Hemisphere.
Climate migrants	People who are forced to leave their county for climate reasons, e.g. rising sea levels or extreme heat. <a href="#">This article</a> contains some interesting information about this growing concern. It is also discussed by Ros Appleby in <a href="#">Episode 7 of The Climate Connection</a> .
Heathrow	The main airport in London, UK.
Teach the Future	Teach the Future is an inclusive, well-organised and persistent campaign by secondary and tertiary education students to greatly improve education on the climate emergency and ecological crisis in the UK. Visit <a href="https://www.teachthefuture.uk/">https://www.teachthefuture.uk/</a> .
Science Teachers Trust	A UK organisation which promotes science teaching in schools. Visit <a href="https://pstt.org.uk/">https://pstt.org.uk/</a> .
Eco Awareness Day	When an educational institution focuses all the lessons on one day on the environment.
Wild swimming	Outdoor swimming in, for example, rivers, ponds and lakes.
Vicarious trauma	Vicarious trauma is the emotional stress and duress felt when someone hears about the first-hand trauma of another person. They can experience symptoms that mimic PTSD. Teachers, teaching assistants, counsellors and other school staff may be vulnerable to vicarious trauma.
Rupture and reparation and repair	More about this aspect of psychology can be read <a href="#">here</a> .
Trigger	A trigger in psychology is a stimulus such as a smell, sound, or sight that triggers feelings of trauma. People typically use this term when describing posttraumatic stress (PTSD).
Anthropocene	An unofficial unit of geologic time, used to describe the most recent period in Earth's history when human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet's climate and ecosystems.



The Climate Psychology Alliance	The Climate Psychology Alliance welcomes anyone and everyone to its membership who wants to engage in addressing the psychological aspects of the climate emergency. Find out more about their work at <a href="https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/">https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/</a> .
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## Vox pop

Kilimanjaro	A 5,895-metre-high mountain which is actually a snow-capped volcano, located in Tanzania.
Menstrual period	The time in a month when a woman has her <a href="#">period</a> .
Reusable sanitary pads, which help girls to stay in school	There is a lot of evidence which shows that menstruation and poor sanitary product access has a very negative impact on adolescent girls' education. If girls have better access to sanitary pads and better toilet facilities, their educational outcomes and experience will be significantly improved.

## The Green Glossary

Fossil fuels	A range of different sources about fossil fuels can be accessed using the following links: <a href="#">Natural Resources Defence Council</a> ; <a href="#">National Geographic</a> ; <a href="#">Our World in Data</a> ; <a href="#">OECD</a> .
Fossil	Fossils are the preserved remains, or traces of remains, of ancient organisms. Fossils are not the remains of the organism itself! They are rocks. A fossil can preserve an entire organism or just part of one. Bones, shells, feathers and leaves can all become fossils. Discover more at the <a href="#">National Geographic Society</a> .
Petrified dinosaur bones	Dinosaur bones which have turned into stone.
Sinclair uses an Apatosaurus as its icon	<a href="#">Visit this fun, interesting page</a> on Sinclair's website to find out more about the history of how they use dinosaurs in their advertising.
Renewable energy	Discover more at the <a href="#">International Renewable Energy Agency</a> .
Divestment	Divestment is the opposite of an investment – it simply means getting rid of stocks, bonds, or investment funds that are unethical or morally ambiguous. In recent times, an increasing number of individuals and companies are divesting from companies and institutions which they think are having a negative effect on the climate crisis. Read an interesting article about divestment from the Guardian newspaper <a href="#">here</a> .

## Interview: Caroline Hickman (2)



Language for Resilience	The British Council's <i>Language for Resilience</i> research identifies five ways language builds resilience, whether that's giving a voice to young people and adults, building social cohesion in host communities or providing individuals with the skills they need to access work, services, education and information. Find out more at <a href="https://www.britishcouncil.org/language-for-resilience">https://www.britishcouncil.org/language-for-resilience</a> .
I use puppets in the same way with young people and adults	See <a href="#">this article</a> for more on how puppets can be useful in this way.
HS2 train line	HS2 is a new train line which is being built in the UK. Critics of the project say that the construction process is bad for the environment. Arguments for and against the project can be read on <a href="#">this BBC webpage</a> .
Sally Weintrobe	A psychoanalyst who writes, talks and blogs on Climate Change. Visit <a href="https://www.sallyweintrobe.com/">https://www.sallyweintrobe.com/</a> to find out more.
Youth Climate Strikers	Visit <a href="https://globalclimatestrike.net/">https://globalclimatestrike.net/</a> to discover more about this.
Bath	A city in the UK.
Pint of Science	A worldwide science festival which brings researchers to pubs, cafes and other communal spaces in order to share their scientific discoveries. Visit <a href="https://pintofscience.co.uk/">https://pintofscience.co.uk/</a> .
<b>From the Field</b>	
The Malaika Foundation	The main focus of Malaika's work is to empower Congolese girls and their communities through education and health programmes. In addition to providing education, Malaika has created 20 wells in the DRC to supply residents with drinking water and created a community centre which provides education, health and sports programmes to over 5,000 youths and adults per year. Visit <a href="https://malaika.org/">https://malaika.org/</a> for more information.
The Democratic Republic of Congo	DR Congo is a large country in central Africa with a population of around 88 million. Find out more in <a href="#">this BBC country profile</a> .
Noëlla Coursaris Musunka	Find out more about Noëlla's fascinating and inspiring life <a href="#">on her website</a> .

