

Environment

Topic

The environment

Aims

To develop and practise (depending on stages chosen):

- vocabulary: words connected to the environment
- structure: imperatives, present simple questions
- curricular work: environmental importance, issues and good practice
- integrated skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Age

Older primary (9–11 years)

Time

90 minutes approximately (depending on stages chosen)

Materials

1. Story, activity sheet, answers and transcript: 'Planet Earth'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/short-stories/planet-earth>
2. Flashcards
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/flashcards/environment-flashcards>
3. Song, activity sheet, answers and lyrics: 'It's up to me and you'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/songs/its-up-me-and-you>
4. Game: 'Clean and green'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/games/clean-and-green>
5. Word game: 'Environment'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/environment>
6. Video: Change the world in five minutes
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/video-zone/change-the-world-five-minutes>
7. Your turn: 'World Environment Day'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/your-turn/world-environment-day>
8. Worksheet: 'Helping the environment'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/worksheets/helping-the-environment>
9. Picture of the earth (stage 1)
10. Recyclable materials or old magazines for craft activity (stage 5)

For a complete list of all 'Environment' content on LearnEnglish Kids, click here:

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/environment>

Introduction

In this lesson, learners will be introduced to vocabulary to describe environmental issues. They will watch a story about different environmental issues and sing a song about ways of helping the environment. Then they will think about what they do or can do to help the environment by conducting a class survey. Finally, they will talk about recycling and either make a poster or write a poem, and do a recycling craft activity.

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw or show a picture of Earth on the board. Elicit what it is from the learners. Tell learners to imagine a museum called 'Planet Earth'. What do the learners think they would learn about at the museum? Brainstorm some ideas on the board.
2. Story (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell learners they are going to watch a story called 'Planet Earth', in which some school children visit the 'Planet Earth' museum. Ask the learners to watch the story and find out what they learn about at the museum. • Play the story. After the story, ask learners to tell you what the schoolchildren learned about. Try to elicit the four different zones that they visited: forests, oceans, the Arctic and rivers. Use the environment flashcards to help. • Ask learners to complete exercise 1 of the activity sheet: write the words under the pictures. Check answers as a class. • Play the story again. Stop after the narrator talks about why we need forests. Check learners understand the importance of forests (for animals, plants and oxygen). Now play the next scene which talks about the environmental problems facing forests. Then stop, and elicit or teach 'deforestation' and check learners understand the problem. • Continue replaying the story, zone by zone, checking each time learners have understood both the importance of the zone and the environmental problems facing each zone. Use the environment flashcards to help. • Now give learners a copy of the transcript and ask them to read it and complete exercises 2 and 3 of the activity sheet. Monitor and help as necessary. • Finally, play the last part of the story again and answer the question the narrator asks: 'Wouldn't you like to live here?' What examples of good environmental practice can they see in the picture?
3. Song (10–20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners what things they think people can do to help with the environmental issues they saw in the story. Some ideas were prompted in the story (e.g. the story talks about throwing away paper, so one way would be to recycle paper) so try to elicit some, and some learners may have further ideas. Write the ideas on the board. • Now ask learners to listen to the song 'It's up to me and you', and see which of their ideas were in the song. Were there any ideas in the song which they didn't think of? Ask learners to complete exercise 2 of the activity sheet. • Check answers and, as you do, elicit some ideas for actions for each environmentally friendly habit. Drill some of the phrases if necessary. Now play the song again and encourage your learners to do the actions and sing along! If your learners enjoy the song, you could try singing in different ways, for example half the class sings the first part of the line (e.g. 'Brush your teeth') and the other half sings the second part (e.g. 'but turn off the tap') or vice versa.

4. Class survey (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners what they do at home to help the environment. Do they think they are very environmentally friendly? • Now put learners into pairs. Tell them they are going to make a survey to see how ‘green’ their classmates are. They can write questions about the topics that were in the song, or their own ideas, for example ‘Do you walk to school?’ • Ask learners to write five yes/no questions in pairs, leaving space for recording the answers. Monitor and help as necessary. When learners are ready, ask them to mingle and survey their classmates. Get them to tally how many learners say yes and how many say no to each question. • After they’ve finished, ask them to draw a bar chart for each question showing how many learners said yes and no. Demonstrate how to draw a bar chart on the board first. They can colour in the chart and write sentences about the results. Display the work around the room. Let learners go round and see the results. Are they as environmentally friendly as they thought they were? Encourage them to make some resolutions to improve!
5. Recycling (30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much rubbish do your learners throw away every day? Ask them to make a list in their groups of all the things they’ve already thrown in the bin today. • Draw the recycling symbol on the board. Do the learners know what it is? Talk about recycling and what it means (turning the materials from waste into something new). Brainstorm what materials can be recycled on the board. Ask learners about what recycling they do at home, what materials they recycle and how often. Why is it important to recycle? • Now play the ‘Clean and green’ game with your learners. Make sure learners know what compost means. Ask them if they can spot things in the room which could be recycled before starting the game. Then ask learners to play in teams to recycle the rubbish in the room! • As a class, brainstorm more things that are made of each material. Then ask learners to work in pairs and choose one material. They need to design a poster to encourage people to recycle that particular material. Monitor and help as necessary. Or, they could choose a particular object, for example a jam jar, and design a poster encouraging people to reuse that object and giving ideas of how it could be reused, for example as plant pots, storing marbles or buttons, or pencil organisers. • Alternatively, ask your learners to write an acrostic poem using the word ‘recycle’. If your learners haven’t done an acrostic poem before, demonstrate a simple one to the class on the board. Brainstorm ideas for the different letters of ‘recycle’. Depending on your learners, you can ask them to either write one word per line or a sentence per line. Remember, the letters of ‘recycle’ don’t have to begin the word or line, they can also be in the middle or at the end. Monitor and help as necessary. • Finally, if your learners like crafts, you can do a recycling craft activity with them. Younger kids will enjoy inventing a robot, a spaceship or an insect – but they must only use recyclable materials, such as toilet/kitchen roll tubes, washing-up liquid bottles, plastic lids, leaves and twigs, scrap pieces of fabric, old buttons and so on. You might need to save up materials for a while at home, or ask the learners or your colleagues to do so then bring them in. Whatever they create, ask them to write about their creation, give a presentation about it or imagine a role play where it interacts with people or another learner’s creation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older kids may prefer to create a mosaic image out of old magazines as a recycling craft activity. They can draw a simple picture first, for example the globe, then cut small pieces of coloured paper from old magazines and stick them on to make a mosaic picture. Ask them to write about or talk about their picture when they're finished.
6. Round off activity (5–10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners can sing the song again, or they could play the 'Environment' word game in teams. Alternatively, if you have a little more time, you might like to try the 'Change the world in five minutes' video and accompanying activities.
7. Setting homework (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners can watch the story or listen to the song again at home, or play any of the games. If they are members of LearnEnglish Kids, they can also read comments on the 'World Environment Day' Your turn then leave their own comment on the page. Alternatively, you could give them the 'Helping the environment' worksheet to complete. You could also ask them to recycle at least one thing, or to start a 'green' habit (e.g. turning off the lights when they leave a room) before the next lesson. In the next lesson everyone can talk about what they recycled or what they did.

Contributed by

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