



Live Lesson Notes

The Environment

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Some useful links

Boost your vocabulary with The VOCABULARY VAULT

<https://courses.keithspeakingacademy.com/p/the-library>

USE COUPON CODE: **CHEAP**

6 Main Environmental Issues

<https://gamma.app/docs/Environmental-Issues-4ihwwyimdrbcbpd?mode=doc>

European Agency on Environment

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/environmental-themes>

Eco-linguistics - the importance of the words we use when talking about the environment

<https://helendoron.com/english/eco-linguistics-learning-english-and-caring-for-the-environment/>

Follow me on **social media**

<https://www.youtube.com/@EnglishSpeakingSuccess>

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Warm Up

Which environmental issues do you care about?

Here are 6 of the main environmental issues and related subtopics.

1) Pollution

Air / noise / light / water / land pollution

2) Overpopulation

Food shortage / habitat destruction

3) Waste disposal

Recycling / land use / food waste / plastics and packaging

4) Climate change

Global warming / extreme weather / floods / storms / heatwaves

5) Energy

Renewables / electric vehicles

6) Biodiversity

Natural resources / wild life / extinction / farming animals / bees

See a **simple presentation** of the above here.

<https://gamma.app/docs/Environmental-Issues-4ihwwyimdrbcbspd?mode=doc>

IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: Renewable Energy

Renewable (adj.) /rɪˈnjuːəbəl/

Renewable energy sources include wind and solar power.

Renewables (n. Pl.)

Renewables include wind and solar power.

Renewable energy = energy from sources that won't run out (they are always being renewed.)

Clean energy = energy from sources that don't release air pollutants

Green energy = energy from natural sources

To pollute (v.) /pəˈluːt/

Pollutant (n. C) /pəˈluːtənt/

Pollution (n. U) /pəˈluːʃən/

Wind (n./adj.) /wɪnd/

Collocations

Wind energy

Wind power

Wind turbines

Wind farms

A windmill

Wind turbines are an eyesore!

An **eyesore** = something not nice to look at.

Solar energy (n.U) /'səʊ.lə/ = energy from the sun

Solar energy
Solar panels
Solar heating

It's not cheap to install solar panels

To install = to put up, to connect (solar panels)

Hydropower (n.U) = power from water

Hydropower energy
Hydropower plant
Hydropower dam

I don't know the ins and outs of hydropower, but it seems to be popular in many areas.

Hydropower dams do need some deforestation.

To **know the ins and outs** of something
= to know the details of something

Zero emission (adj.) = energy sources that give off no waste or pollutants

Scientists are developing zero emission motors

Net zero (adj.)

= the carbon we put in the air is no more than what we take out.
The result is total greenhouse gas emissions in the air would never increase.

Many countries aim to be net zero by 2050

Listening Activity



Listen to Jack and Sarah talking about renewable energy.

<https://soundcloud.com/keithohare/environment-conversation>

1) How many energy sources do they mention?

2) Listen to the conversation again. Fill the boxes with the **missing word** you hear.

1. only _____ forward

2. it pays _____

3. defeat the whole _____

4. mess _____ wildlife

5. _____ the planet

6. magic _____

Answers at bottom of PDF

Full script on next page

Full Script

Jack: Hey, Sarah. I read this thing about renewable energy yesterday. Honestly, I don't get why people are so obsessed with it.

Sarah: Are you serious, Jack? It's cleaner, better for the environment, and it's the only way forward. How can you not see that?

Jack: Sure, it sounds nice in theory, but do you know how much it costs to set up solar panels? Regular people can't just afford that.

Sarah: Come on, Jack. Yeah, it's pricey at first, but it pays off over time. And there are programs and subsidies to make it easier for people to switch.

Jack: Oh yeah? And what about when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing? How do you get your "clean energy" then?

Sarah: Ever heard of batteries? We can store the energy now. Plus, you can use renewables alongside other sources when needed. **It's not rocket science.** (*=it's not too difficult*)

Jack: So basically, we're still using coal and gas. Doesn't that **defeat the whole point?** (*= destroy the idea*)

Sarah: It's better than doing nothing, Jack! At least it's a step in the right direction.

Jack: A step that destroys the environment in other ways. Have you seen those wind farms? They ruin landscapes, **mess up** wildlife, and kill birds.

Sarah: Oh, please. You're telling me wind turbines are worse than burning coal? Be serious!

Jack: I'm just saying they're not as eco-friendly as people like to think. You can't just ignore the **downsides** (*=disadvantages*).

Sarah: And you can't keep making excuses for not changing! Fossil fuels are wrecking the planet, and we're running out of time.

Jack: I'm not making excuses. I'm being realistic! Renewable energy has its **flaws** (=weaknesses, problems), and people need to stop pretending it's perfect.

Sarah: No one's saying it's perfect, Jack, but doing nothing is a million times worse. What's your solution then? Just keep burning coal forever?

Jack: No, but we need proper solutions, not just trendy ideas that sound good on paper.

Sarah: Trendy ideas? Wow, Jack. Maybe you should start thinking about the future instead of staying stuck in the past.

Jack: And maybe you should stop acting like renewables are some kind of **magic fix**. (= a magic solution / a magic bullet / a silver bullet)

Sarah: Whatever, Jack. You do you. I'll stick with progress.

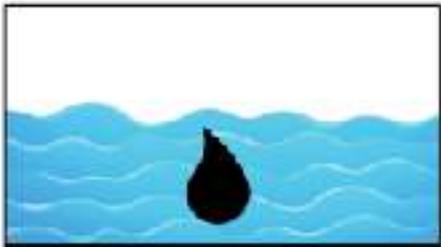
Jack: Fine. Just don't expect me to jump on the bandwagon.

Sarah: Trust me, I wasn't counting on it.

IELTS Speaking Idioms: Environment

Can you guess these idioms?

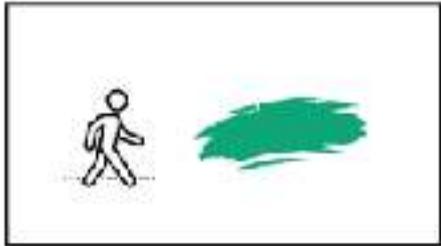
1



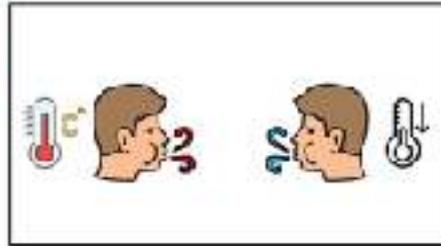
2



3



4



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

IELTS Speaking Model Answer



Click below to watch the model answer about this question:

Describe
an environmental issue you
care about

Describe an environmental issue you care about

- 1) Before watching, guess which environmental issue he will talk about.

Answers at bottom of PDF

- 2) Watch again and note any useful collocations

Full Script on next page

Full Script

NOTE: Phrases in blue are connectors / signposts for better fluency

Describe an environmental issue you care about

When it comes to describing an environmental issue, I care about I'd like to talk about **renewable energy**.

So, many countries in the world now are moving towards **net zero emissions** and it seems that a key way of doing this is **substituting** fossil fuels **for** renewable energy sources.

It seems clear that fossil fuels are bad for the environment **causing a lot of pollution** and that's why there's a lot of research now on creating other sources of energy.

I think two aspects that **have direct relevance for me** are **solar energy** and **wind energy**.

First of all, wind energy - well, there are many **wind farms** in the UK and the government is investing in this area. I know there are **downsides** (=disadvantages) like the **wind turbines** are an **eyesore**, but I think that something will get used to and we have **to invest in** new technologies like this.

Secondly, solar energy is also becoming more popular in the UK more and more people are putting **solar panels** on their roof to get energy that can be stored in batteries and used when there is no sunshine. The government are **offering subsidies** (=financial support) to incentivise people to do this and it seems a lot of people are **jumping on the bandwagon** which is a good thing.

I honestly don't think they're any simple solutions to the climate change problem, **but this isn't an environmental issue I care about**.

ANSWERS

Listening Activity

Answers

1) How many energy sources do they mention?

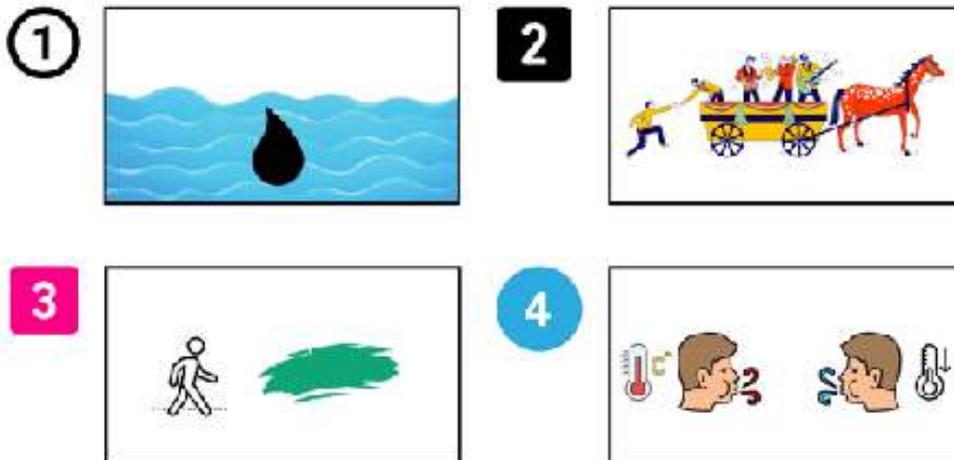
FIVE

- Solar panels
- Burning coal
- Gas
- Wind farms / turbines
- Fossil fuels

2) Fill the boxes with the missing ONE word you hear.

1. only way forward = (only path forward)
2. it pays off = (it compensates)
3. defeat the whole point = (destroys the initial idea)
4. mess up wildlife = (destroy)
5. wrecking the planet = (destroying)
6. magic fix = (solution)

IELTS Speaking Idioms: Environment



1. A drop in the ocean = a very small or insignificant amount

*Switching off one light bulb feels like **a drop in the ocean** when it comes to stopping climate change.*

2. To jump on the bandwagon = to join an activity that has become popular

*20 years ago, no-one was worried about recycling, now everyone is **jumping on the bandwagon**.*

3. To go green = to adopt environmentally friendly practices

*Many companies are trying to **go green** by reducing their carbon emissions*

4. To blow hot and cold = to frequently change opinion or feeling about something

*Some governments **blow hot and cold** when it comes to taking action on climate policies*

Similar idiom

To be in two minds

IELTS Speaking Model Answer

1) Before watching guess which environmental issue he will talk about.

Answer

Renewable energies, including solar and wind energy.