



## ***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-4ihwwyimdrbcbpd?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.

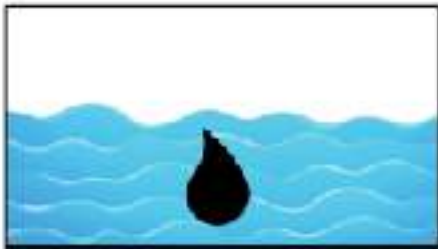
**Sarah:** Trust me, I wasn't counting on it.



# IELTS Speaking Idioms: Environment

Can you guess these idioms?

1



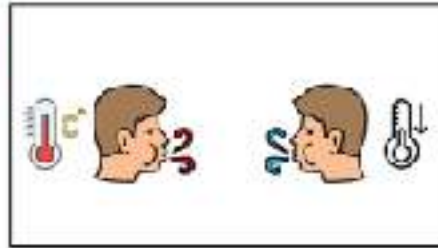
2



3



4



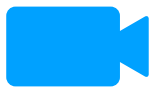
1. \_\_\_\_\_

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?

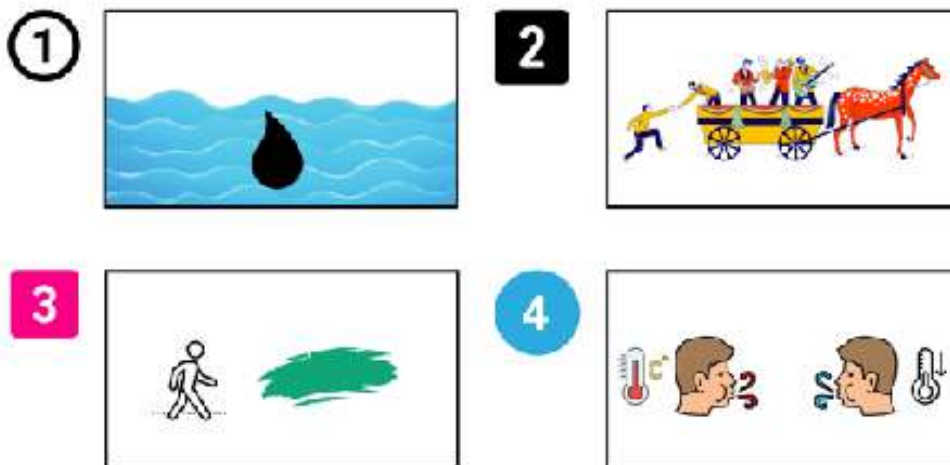
**FIVE**

- 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.