

# Environmental issues

Tutor Resources for the AMEP

Environment

Intermediate

## **Tutor Resources for the AMEP**

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Theme:

Environment

Topic:

Environmental issues

Task	Language focus	Learning activities	Resources
<p>1. Can participate in a discussion on environmental issues</p> <p>Can understand some environmental issues</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b>                      environment, pollution, recycle, refuse, reduce, reuse, litter, tourism, continent, environmentalists, investigation, geological, souvenir, debris, boom, navigate, iceberg, collide, contaminate, liable, regulation, impact, global, minimise, greenhouse effect, gases, carbon dioxide, fossil fuels</p> <p><b>Structure</b>                      What should you ___ (do, use etc)?</p>	<p>Discuss questions about pollution</p> <p>Answer questions about problems with plastic bags</p> <p>Answer questions about problems with tourism in Antarctica</p> <p>Answer questions about the greenhouse effect</p>	<p>Worksheet 1: Talking about pollution</p> <p>Worksheet 2: Plastic bags</p> <p>Worksheet 3: Tourism in Antarctica</p> <p>Dictionary</p> <p>Worksheet 4: The greenhouse effect</p>

**Theme:** Environment

**Topic:** Environmental issues

**Task 1:** Can participate in a discussion on environmental issues  
Can understand some environmental issues

**Vocabulary:** environment, pollution, recycle, refuse, reduce, reuse, litter, tourism, continent, environmentalists, investigation, geological, souvenir, debris, boom, navigate, iceberg, collide, contaminate, liable, regulation, impact, global, minimise, greenhouse effect, gases, carbon dioxide, fossil fuels

**Language structure:** What should you \_\_\_ (do, use etc)?

### Activity instructions

#### *Discuss questions about pollution*

📄 Worksheet 1: Talking about pollution

Read the questions together and discuss.

Encourage learner to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words in their dictionary.

#### *Answer questions about problems with plastic bags*

📄 Worksheet 2: Plastic bags

A. Look at the diagram together and ask learner to talk about each picture/cycle.

Ask questions: Why are plastic bags a problem for the environment?

What can we use instead of plastic bags for shopping?

What do you use when you go shopping?

What did you use when you went shopping in your country?

B. Learner reads the text and answers the questions.

Encourage learner to read the text aloud. (Check pronunciation, intonation and punctuation.)

#### **Answers**

1 – Use fewer bags.

2 – Recycle, refuse, reduce and reuse.

3 – Paper, calico or string bags.

4 – Avoid putting them into bags.

5 – To freeze food, pack lunches, line bins, store clothes and other items.

6 – Using old bags to make new ones.

7 – Non-recyclable LDPE.

8 – Recycling bins at supermarkets that offer recycling facilities.

#### *Answer questions about problems with tourism in Antarctica*

📄 Worksheet 3: Tourism in Antarctica

📄 Dictionary

A. Learner reads the words in the box and looks up the meanings in their dictionary.

B. Learner reads the text without stopping (to get the gist of the story).

Ask: What is this text about?

Learner reads the text aloud. Discuss if necessary.

Read the questions together and discuss.

Learner writes the answers.

### Answers

- 1 – The impact of tourists/tourism on the environment of Antarctica.
- 2 – Antarctica is the fifth largest continent (of seven) and is situated over the South Pole.
- 3 – Because there has been an increase in tourism and we are worried about the long-term damage to the environment.
- 4 – Doubles every 3-5 years. (In 1985, a few thousand and in 2007/2008 more than 40,000.)
- 5 – Yes. Damage to moss, disturbed penguins, rubbish and waste from ships, the effects of human noise and waste and disease on the wildlife.
- 6 – They want to visit the most undisturbed place on earth (no people, cities, towns) and see the beautiful landscape (ice bergs), animals, birds and plant life.
- 7 – Yes. An oil spill which affected thousands of penguin chicks caused by a scientific station which was no longer in use and debris such as vehicle wrecks and heavy metal oil found on the sea floor.
- 8 – Introduced new regulations for tour operators.

### Answer questions about the greenhouse effect

#### Worksheet 4: The greenhouse effect

Ask learner what they know about this issue.

Discuss the vocabulary.

- A. Learner reads the statements before they listen. (This enables learner to focus their listening to locate the specific information.)  
Read the script twice.

### Script

What is the greenhouse effect?

The earth is covered by a blanket of many different gases about 20 kilometres thick. These gases trap some of the sun's energy and keep us warm, but some gases trap more heat than others and they are called greenhouse gases. One of the main ones is carbon dioxide. The warming of the earth's surface by greenhouse gases is called the greenhouse effect.

The greenhouse effect is a natural process and without the greenhouse gases the average temperature of the Earth would be minus 19 degrees which is far too cold for us to live. However due to the increase of carbon dioxide by 30% over the last century the atmosphere has changed dramatically.

People of the world have played a part in increasing the greenhouse effect. We make greenhouse gases when we burn fossil fuels such as coal, oil, petrol and natural gas; for example, when we use petrol in our cars for transport, when we use gas and electricity in factories, offices and at home, when we burn fires and when we use chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) – these are gases in refrigerators and air conditioners. The burning and cutting down of forests is thought to increase the green house effect also.

There is a disagreement among scientists about the seriousness of global warming, but they all agree that the global temperature is rising. Some scientists believe this may harm people, plants, and animals because the climate might change. Summers might get hotter, some dry countries might get drier, wet countries might get wetter and the sea level might rise. Many farmers might not be able to grow the same crops. No one knows exactly how the climate will change.

Learner ticks 'true' or 'false' to the statements.

### Answers

- 1 – False (20 kilometres), 2 – True, 3 – True, 4 – False (carbon dioxide), 5 – False (the earth would be freezing, minus 19 degrees), 6 – False (increase of 30%), 7 – True, 8 – True, 9 – True, 10 – True

B. Learner reads the text and corrects their work.

(If learner was unable to locate the specific information by listening, ask them to read the text to find the answers.)

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## Worksheet 1: Talking about pollution

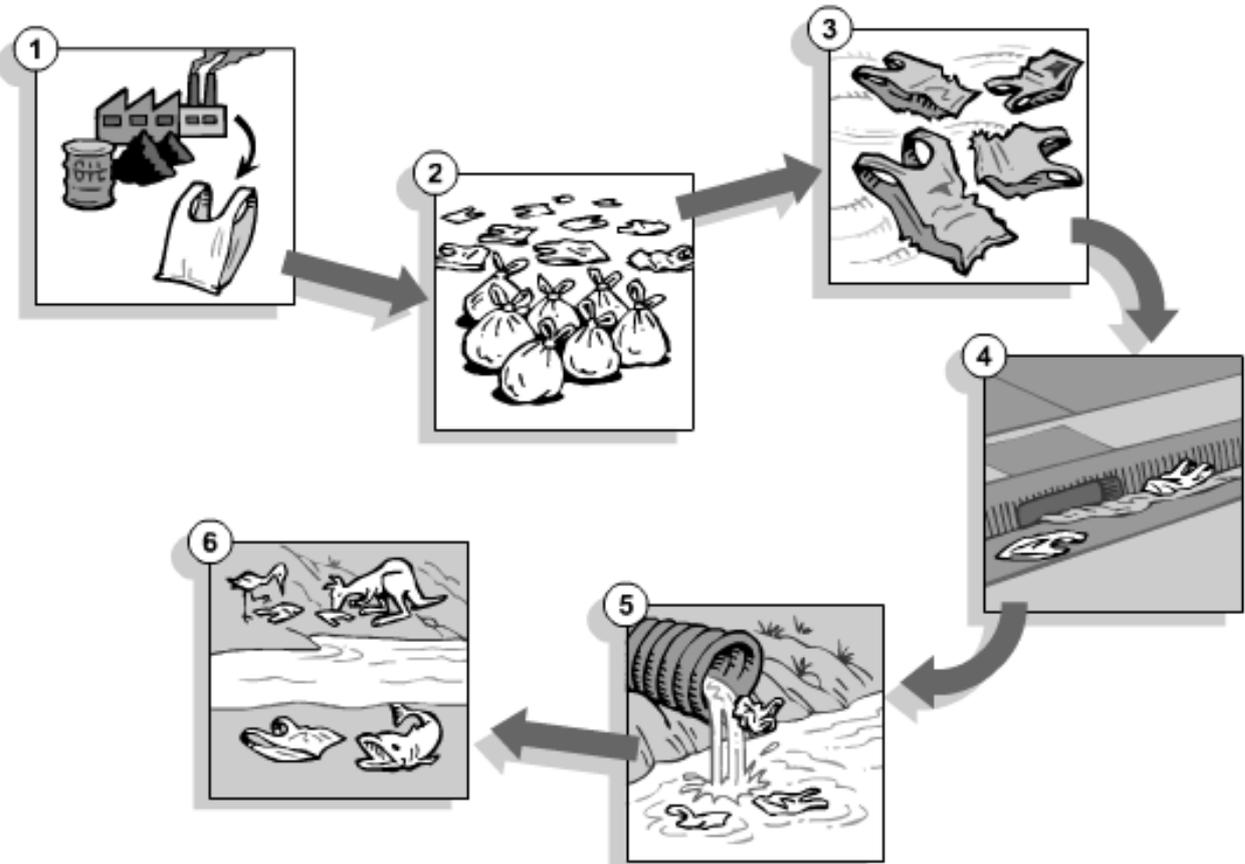
*Discuss these questions.*

1. What does the word environment mean?
2. What does the word pollution mean?
3. What are some types of pollution?
4. What are some of the major pollution problems in your country?
5. What are some of the ways that could help reduce pollution in your country?
6. What are some of the pollution problems facing Australia?
7. What can you do to help prevent pollution?
8. Do you think recycling is an important community service?
9. What are some things that can be recycled?
10. Do you recycle?
11. Do you recycle glass, paper and tin in your country?
12. Are there litter laws where you live? What are they?
13. Why is littering regarded as an environmental problem?
14. What can large cities do to improve the air quality?
15. How can we protect the environment and at the same time improve people's standard of living?
16. Do you think global warming is real? Do you think this is an effect of pollution?
17. Are you worried about global warming?
18. If you live on an island or on the coast of a country there is an increased danger from global warming? Why?
19. What is happening to the forests in the world?
20. What can we do to protect the forests?
21. In what ways can we save water?
22. What do you do at home to save water?
23. What are some ways we can minimise the use of plastic bags?



## Worksheet 2: Plastic bags

A. Look at the diagram and discuss the cycle.  
Why are plastic bags a problem for the environment?



**B. Read the text and answer the questions.**

**An environmental problem**

Count the number of plastic bags you regularly use on a weekly basis and see how many of these you can refuse, reduce, reuse or recycle during the next month. Here are some suggestions on how you can do this.

**Recycle**

Find a local supermarket that offers recycling facilities for plastic bags. Take back your plastic bags for recycling the next time you go shopping. Be careful to check which plastic bags are accepted at the recycle bins. However, do not put plastic bags in kerb-side recycling collection as they will end up in land fill.

Some plastic bags can be recycled but some cannot.

- Recyclable HDPE (high density polyethylene film) is used by most supermarkets as checkout bags. These bags can be recycled.
- Non-recyclable LDPE (low density polyethylene film) is used by some retail shops. They are easily identified as they are a thick, heavier style plastic and usually non-transparent.

**Refuse**

Refuse plastic bags and use paper bags, calico bags or string bags instead.

**Reduce**

To reduce your plastic bag usage you can do one or all of the following:

- If you are buying only one or two items consider carrying them.
- If you must use plastic bags ensure that each bag has eight items in it.
- Avoid putting items with carry handles (nappies, dog food) into bags.
- Avoid double bagging.

**Reuse**

Reuse your plastic bags to freeze food, pack lunches, line bins and store clothes and other items.

1. What is the text telling you to do?

- Use strong plastic bag.
- Use fewer plastic bags.
- Use more plastic bags.

2. What are the four main things you should do?

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3. What should you use to carry your shopping instead of plastic bags?

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4. What should you do when you buy things that have carry handles?

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5. Name two ways you can use the same bag a second time?

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6. What does recycling mean?

- Using other kinds of bags instead of plastic bags.
- Using the same bag twice.
- Using old bags to make new bags.

7. What type of plastic cannot be recycled?

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8. Where should you take plastic bags for recycling?

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## Worksheet 3: Tourism in Antarctica



**A. Look up the meanings of these words in your dictionary.**

tourism	continent	environmentalists	investigation	impact
geological	souvenir	debris	boom	navigate
iceberg	collide	contamination	liable	regulation

**B. Read the text and answer the questions.**

Antarctica is the fifth largest of the seven continents and is situated over the South Pole. The area of Antarctica is 14.2 million square kilometres in summer which is approximately twice the size of Australia. In winter, Antarctica doubles in size due to the sea ice that forms around the coast. The nearest continents are South America and Australia. Environmentalists from these and other countries are concerned about the environment of Antarctica because of the increase in tourists visiting this area.

Tourism has become the largest human activity in Antarctica and every three to five years, the number of visitors to this magnificent part of the world doubles. In 1985, just a few thousand people made the trip to the bottom of the world, but in the season of 2007/2008 more than 40,000 visited the area. Some environmentalists want the number of tourists to the Antarctic to be limited to avoid serious long-term damage to the environment. In the past, tourists have caused damage to slow growing moss, disturbed penguins and taken historic items and geological souvenirs. Rubbish and waste from ships has also been a problem. An environmental investigation showed that a large area of the sea floor was found to be covered in debris. Litter, which included discarded vehicle wrecks, oil, heavy metal and beer cans, stretched for 7 km along the bottom of the ocean. The environmentalists are also worried about the effects of noise, human waste and diseases that could be transmitted by humans to wildlife.

Even before the tourism boom, 50 years of scientific activity in Antarctica had left its mark. An investigation into an oil spill in 2001, which affected thousands of penguin chicks, was found to have been caused by an American scientific station which had been unused since 1973.

Another problem is the ships that transport the visitors. Some tourist ships are not properly equipped to safely navigate the dangerous waters of the Antarctic where large icebergs can break off from the ice sheets. If a tourist ship collided with an iceberg it is likely that the ship would break apart and sink causing possible loss of life and environmental contamination.

Australia and the other Antarctica Treaty countries agreed that ships should be liable for any damage they cause to the area. They introduced new regulations which would require the tour operators to take responsibility for cleaning up after visits to the Antarctic by their tour groups.

Nowadays tourist groups are much better regulated and the impact on the environment has been reduced in some areas. Tourist operators in Antarctica have organised an association to promote safety and environmental responsibility amongst the cruise operators.

1. What is the text about?

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2. What and where is Antarctica?

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3. Why are people concerned about the environment of Antarctica?

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4. How much has tourism to Antarctica increased over the years?

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5. Has there been any impact to the environment by the tourists? If so, what?

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6. Why do you think tourists want to go to Antarctica?

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7. Scientists have been in the Antarctic for years. Have they done any damage to the environment? If so, what?

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8. What did Australia do to improve the effect of tourism on the Antarctic environment?

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9. Do you think tourists should be allowed to visit Antarctica? Why? Why not?

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10. Would you like to visit Antarctica? Why? Why not?

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## Worksheet 4: The greenhouse effect

The term **greenhouse effect** describes the actual process of temperature rise.

**Global warming** and **climate change** describe the result of that process.

A. Listen to the text and tick **True** or **False** to the statements.

	True	False
1. The blanket of gases is about 200 kilometres thick.		
2. These gases trap some of the sun's energy and keep us warm.		
3. Some of these gases trap more heat than others and they are called global gases.		
4. One of the main greenhouse gases is oxygen.		
5. The greenhouse effect is natural process and if we did not have it, the temperatures on the earth would be cool.		
6. The concentration of the greenhouse gases have changed because of the increase of carbon dioxide over the last century to 40%.		
7. We make greenhouse gases when we use petrol, gas oil and electricity.		
8. Global warming is the result of the greenhouse effect.		
9. Some scientists believe global warming may cause the climate to change.		
10. Climate change may harm people, plants and animals.		

**B. Read the text and correct your work.**

**What is the greenhouse effect?**

The earth is covered by a blanket of many different gases about 20 kilometres thick around the earth. These gases trap some of the sun's energy and keep us warm, but some gases trap more heat than others and they are called greenhouse gases. One of the main ones is carbon dioxide. The warming of the earth's surface by greenhouse gases is called the greenhouse effect.

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