

Writing about climate change – Green Shoots

Liam Cleary



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Zunehmend spiegelt die dramatische Dringlichkeit der Klimakrise in der Literatur und Medienberichterstattung wider. Diese Unterrichtseinheit behandelt die Bedeutung des Klimawandels, der globalen Erwärmung und des nachhaltigen Lebens als ein zentrales gesellschaftliches Thema im 21. Jahrhundert. Einflussreiche Autoren und Autorinnen wie Rachel Carson, Greta Reece, David Attenborough und Gillian Clarke haben in ihren Texten Bedeutendes zum Thema Klimawandel beigetragen. *Climate change* ist ein relevantes und höchst motivierendes Thema für Schülerinnen und Schüler, die sich um das Wohl des Planeten und ihre Zukunft sorgen.

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Competences and skills:

This unit on climate change is designed to assist senior students develop skills in fields such as **listening and reading comprehension**, **analysis of texts** as well as **video analysis**. Newspaper articles, poems, press extracts, a speech, podcasts and videos have been carefully selected for these purposes. **Research and discussion** tasks also form part of the worksheets as to give students the opportunity to go beyond the class work after lessons have been done.

Overview:

List of abbreviations:

A Analysis	C Comment
D Discussion/debate	G Group work
L Language and style	LC Listening comprehension
P Working with photos	PR Presentation
R Research	RC Reading comprehension
T Working with a text	V Working with a video
W Writing	

Topic	Material	Methods/Skills
1: Environmental issues	M1	A, D, G, P, PR, R
2: Pesticides and the natural world	M2–M3	A, L, PR, R
3: Strip mining in Appalachia	M4–M5	A, L, R, T, V, W
4: Climate change – David Attenborough at COP26	M6–M7	A, D, G, L, LC, PR, R, V
5: Global warming	M8–M9	A, D, L, PR, RC, T
6: Consequences of climate change	M10–M11	A, P, R, T, W
Exam: Listening comprehension and text analysis	M12–M13	A, C, L, LC, RC, T, W

Topic 1: Environmental issues – An introduction

Worksheet – Climate change in pictures: Ways of activism and protest

Awareness activities

1. Work in groups.
 - a) Compile a list of the various problems you feel come under the general heading of environmental issues in daily life.
 - b) What approaches are possible for anyone interested in tackling climate change? How can improvement be brought about? Make a list of as many possibilities which exist if we are to change people's minds and behaviour.
2. Present your answers to the class.

Working with the photos

3. Give a brief description of each photo.
4. Explain as best you can the title and message of the photos.
5. In picture C, what approach to tackling climate problems is this group taking? Of the three approaches you see in each picture, which one would you favour and want to be part of?
6. What differences do you see between picture B and the other two photos?
7. In picture B, describe the kind of person the owner of the electric car might be.

Further activity

8. Do one of the following tasks:
 - a) Compile a timeline of technical and scientific milestones in the discovery of and fight against climate change. Present your findings to your classmates.
 or
 - b) Research the most famous songs about climate change. Choose a list of the ten you like best and play some for your class. Explain your choices.

Worksheet – Pesticides – Extract from *Silent Spring*

M3

Pre-reading activity

1. Research the life and times of Rachel Carson. Find out as much as you can about her background and education. Why was *Silent Spring* so influential? What other work, if any, did she produce? Present your findings to your classmates in a talk entitled, *Our debt to Rachel Carson*. The following links will help you begin your research:

<https://raabe.click/CarsonI>



<https://raabe.click/CarsonII>



<https://raabe.click/CarsonIII>



[last accesses: 29/08/2023]

Language

2. Provide synonyms for the underlined words.
 - a) molded by the environment.
 - b) ... has not only increased to one of disturbing magnitude but it has changed in character.
 - c) they are the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories...
3. The sentence, "The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers and sea ..." contains two literary devices the author uses to reinforce her point. Identify them.
4. Analyse the author's tone in this piece.

Working with the text

5. Outline the terrible developments of the past 25 years as Carson portrays them.
6. Why does Carson refer to Darwin in her piece?
7. Analyse the importance of time in the extract. Why is Carson concerned with time?

Further discussion

8. When Carson published her book *Silent Spring*, it met with opposition from many industrial powers and lobbyists. In that sense, it is seen as a book which spoke "truth to power". Discuss her work in that context and find other examples of individuals or things that "spoke truth to power". Why is that important in our modern era?

Worksheet – Simon Armitage: *Last Snowman*

M11

Pre-reading activities

1. Research the snowman as a symbol in literature and song. Present your findings as an introduction to this poem. The following website is a good place to begin: <https://raabe.click/Snowman> [last access: 29/08/2023]
2. Listen to the poet reading his poem: <https://raabe.click/LastSnowman> [last access: 29/08/2023]



Working with the text

3. Why does the poet place the snowman on “a plinth of ice”?
4. Analyse the portrayal of the snowman, both his situation and physical features.
5. Explain the effect of having the snowman encounter a ship and onlookers. Why does the poet do that?
6. In your own words, summarise what the last 4 lines mean to you. What message do you take from them? Comment on them in the light of the title.



Working with the photo

7. Describe the photo you see here.
8. What similarities and differences are there between this snowman and Armitage's? In particular, refer to the perspective we view both snowmen from.



Further activities

9. Simon Armitage has been Poet Laureate since 2019. Find out what that means, what the work entails and what he has done since becoming Poet Laureate.
10. Write your own poem based on the photo.



Photo: Liam Cleary

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