

Climate Champions

Activities for children aged 5–7 years

WWT has a well-established and well-loved education programme that we run across the UK at our ten wetland sites. We've designed these short activities based on one of our school activities. We've made it to connect you and your family to the natural world and help you to work with your children to feel great about nature and understand some of the things that WWT love and care about.

Why wetlands?

WWT works across the UK to save, conserve and build wetlands for wildlife and people. Wetlands are one of the most important habitats on earth – storing huge amounts of CO₂, providing a natural way of stopping flooding and serving as a home for huge numbers of different creatures.

This activity will help you and your children to discover the amazing role that wetlands can play in helping to prevent climate change. It is meant as an introduction to a complicated topic and will hopefully help your children to become more interested in the issues around climate change and the things we can do to help.

These activities link to the National Curricula for science and geography in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales..

Stuff you need:

- Causes of climate change visual (see final pages of this document)
- Effects of climate change visual (see final pages of this document)
- 3 bedsheets or blankets
- Newspaper
- Heavy books

Note: Where you see a **Q** this indicates a question to ask your child

Indoor activities

(3 x 15 minutes)

Section 1: What is climate change?

(15 minutes)

Climate change can be a difficult thing to explain to children (and adults!). This activity will demonstrate a process known as the greenhouse effect.

- Show your child the pictures on the 'causes of climate change visual'.

Q What do you think is coming out into the air in each case?

- Explain that some of the gases they can see coming from the car, power station, chimney and cow are called 'greenhouse gases'.

- Explain that these gases go up into the sky and collect around the earth in what is called the atmosphere.

Key word: **ATMOSPHERE**

A layer of gases surrounding a planet.

- Ask your child to imagine that they are the earth and wrap one of the sheets or blankets around them. Explain that this is the atmosphere and contains the greenhouse gases that come out of the cars, power stations etc. (as well as other gases).
- Ask them to imagine that they are going back in time 300 years.

Q What do you think it was like on the earth 300 years ago?

- Explain that 300 years ago, the blanket of greenhouse gases around the earth wasn't too thick and it wasn't too thin so the temperature on the earth was just right.
- We then started to build lots of houses, power stations and cars which started to give out extra greenhouse gases.

Q What do you think happened to the blanket of gases around the earth?

- Explain that the blanket got thicker and add another sheet or blanket around them.

Q Are you feeling warmer? (hopefully they'll say yes!)

- Explain that this is what has been happening to the earth. We have been producing more and more greenhouse gases and the blanket of gases around the earth has been getting thicker. This has made the earth get warmer as heat gets trapped inside the atmosphere, warming up the earth.
- Explain that we could have used less energy so we would have needed less power stations. We could have walked and cycled more so we didn't need to travel so much by car. If we had done these things the blanket would have got thinner again.

Q Do you think this is what we did?

- No - we actually used even more energy and travelled even more in cars and the blanket has got even thicker - Add the final sheet or blanket.
- The blankets can then be removed.
- Explain that the earth getting warmer in this way is called the 'greenhouse effect'.

Section 2: What effects is climate change having?

(15 minutes)

In this activity you and your child will explore some of the impacts that climate change is having on humans and other animals around the world.

- Look at the 'effects of climate change visual' with your child. This shows just a few of the effects climate change is having around the world.

Q What do you think each picture shows?

- Draw lines to match the correct description to each picture. As you do so, talk to your child about what each picture shows using the **information on the next page to help you:**



Dried up lake

- As the world heats up, many lakes and ponds around the world are drying up.
- This is a problem for humans as lots of people around these lakes used to rely on fishing to make money. They also had lots of tourists visiting to be near these beautiful lakes.
- It is a problem for other animals because they are losing their habitats (the places where they live).

Imagine you are an animal that lived on the lake as it started to dry up.

Q How would you feel? What would you do?



Forest fire

- As the world heats up, we are getting more forest fires and they are spreading much further and much more quickly.
- This is a problem for humans because houses are destroyed.
- This is a problem for other animals because they are losing their habitat (the place where they live).

Imagine you are a forest animal (you can choose).

Q How would you feel as the fire approaches? What would you do?



Polar bear

- As the world heats up, the ice caps are melting.
- This is a problem for humans because as the ice melts, the sea gets higher and this is flooding the homes of people who live near the sea.
- It is a problem for polar bears because when they hunt, they walk on ice covering the ocean and find a hole in the ice. They wait for animals such as seals to come up for air and then catch and eat them.

If there is no ice covering the ocean, they can't hunt in this way and they have to go inland to hunt. There is less food here.

Imagine you are a polar bear living in an area where you can no longer get onto the sea ice to hunt.

Q How do you feel? What will you do?

Section 3: What can we do help prevent climate change?

(15 minutes)

- Remind your child what was causing climate change; the greenhouse gasses going into the atmosphere from the power station, car and houses.
- Ask them to think about the car. If the gases coming from the back of the car are a problem, perhaps we could use our cars less.

Q How else do you think we might get around?

- We could walk or cycle (or even use a scooter).
- Get them to think about common journeys you make.

Q Which journeys would be short enough to go by foot, bike or scooter?

- Look at the picture of the power station. Explain that this is where the electricity is made that makes our lights, TVs, games consoles etc work.
- If we used less electricity, less smoke and gas would come out.

Q What could we do as a family to use less electricity?

If they find this difficult you could provide some examples:

- Turn lights off when it's sunny outside
- Turn lights off when there's no-one in the room
- Turn the TV off if no-one is watching it
- Watch less TV / play less console games and spend more time out in nature!
- Get them to think of one thing they would like your family to do to help. They can then produce a poster to encourage everyone to remember to do it.
- Display it somewhere where the whole family will see it regularly.

Take it outdoors:

(15 minutes)

- Go to an outdoor space that has plants.
- Ask your child to find a leaf that they really like. See if they can find a fallen leaf from the plant. If not, and if the plant has lots of leaves, get them to carefully remove a leaf from the plant, being careful not to damage the rest of the plant.
- Explain that leaves are amazing because they take in some of the greenhouse gases that you talked about earlier (refer back to the blankets) and give out oxygen. Oxygen is what animals, including us need to breathe, so plants are fantastic because they take in the bad stuff that harms us and instead give out the stuff that we need. They are truly amazing!
- Ask them to try to store in their memory exactly what their leaf looks like.
- Now challenge them to pick a handful of other leaves in the same way, mix them all up and see if they can find 'their' leaf.
- It is likely that by now this leaf will mean something special to them. They might like to take it indoors and press it so that they can keep it:
 - Place the leaves wrapped in newspaper inside a heavy book. Place more books, a weight, or rock on top of the book to add more weight.
 - Keep the book in a dry location. Check the pressing after about one week. Make sure the leaves are drying and not rotting. You will probably need to leave the leaves under the book for another one to two weeks before they are completely dry and ready to use.



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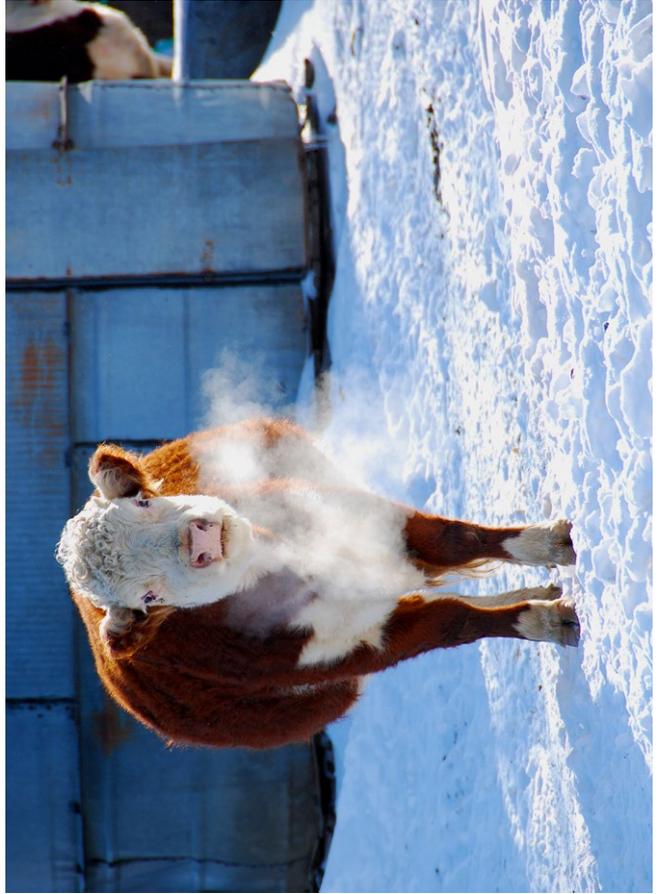


**Have fun and do share your work to our social media accounts –
we'd absolutely love to see it!**

Causes of climate change



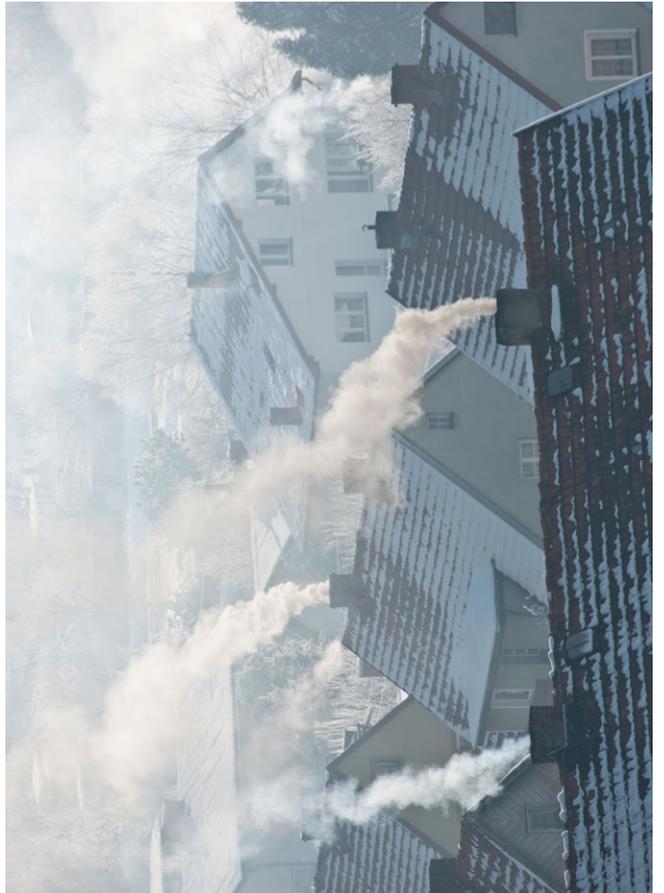
Cut



Cut



Cut



Effects of climate change

Fold



Cut

Polar bears

Polar bears will find it difficult to hunt as the ice melts.

Cut



Cut

Drought

Some places will dry up as they become very hot.

Cut



Fold

Forest fire

There will be more fires and these fires will spread more quickly.