



Climate change jargon busting

- 1** If your group is new to the concept of climate change, you can start by asking them what they know about it. Explain that climate change is the long-term shift in average weather patterns across the world. Since the mid-1800s, humans have contributed to the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air. This causes global temperatures to rise, resulting in long-term changes to the climate. You can find more information on the **[Met Office website](#)**
- 2** Write down the phrase climate change on the board or screen, and tell the group they are going to look at words connected to climate change
- 3** Split the group into teams of three or four, and ask each to write down as many words as possible connected to climate change in a time limit (e.g. 3 minutes). They don't have to be words they know the meaning of, although if they do, then they can share that with others later, but they should write down any that they think are connected to climate change



25 minutes



Groupwork



Jargon-busting cards

- 4 Then, ask the teams to highlight or circle words they think they understand the meaning of and could explain. Ask each team to share a couple of those words and explain what they mean, then ask them to share a couple of words they don't know the meaning of. This serves as an opportunity to share knowledge about the meaning of these words and highlight that some words are hard to understand
- 5 Explain that words by a profession or group that are difficult to understand are often called **jargon**. Explain that jargon-busting means giving simple, plain English explanations of jargon
- 6 Hand out the **jargon-busting** climate change cards (on page 3 to 7) and see if young people can highlight or circle any more words in their list. Words included on the cards are: greenhouse gas, climate, global warming, net zero, 1.5 degrees, greenhouse effect, CO₂ emissions, COP, fossil fuels, sea level rise, extreme weather, carbon footprint, carbon neutral, carbon offsetting, air pollution, biodiversity, deforestation, mitigation, adaptation
- 7 Ask each group to choose a word they want to **jargon-bust** and ask them to create a picture or poster to help another group understand the word better. If you have time, ask groups to present their jargon word to the rest of the groups

Optional extension

To extend this activity if you're in a school, ask the group to undertake a survey across the school featuring selected climate change words, to find out which words other classes are familiar with. To do this, they could list all the words and ask other young people in the school to circle the words they don't know or don't understand. If you're not in a school, you could get young people to do the same with their family or friends.

Ask your group to pick a word that other young people in the school, or in their family or group of friends, didn't understand and create a poster or display to explain what this word means. This could be displayed in the hall or corridor, or in their home, as the 'word of the week'.

Jargon-busting cards

Greenhouse effect

The greenhouse effect is the warming of planet Earth. It is caused by gases in the atmosphere capturing energy from the sun. These gases are called **greenhouse gases**. Without the greenhouse effect, Earth would be too cold for life to exist. But human activities such as burning coal, deforestation (chopping down lots of trees), driving cars or flying planes are increasing the greenhouse effect which causes the Earth to warm up more than it should.

Greenhouse gases

Greenhouse gases are gases in the air that capture energy from the Sun and warm the Earth's surface and air above it. The main ones are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapor. Without these gases, Earth would be too cold for life and for humans to exist. But human activities such as burning coal, **deforestation** (chopping down lots of trees), driving cars or flying planes are increasing the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere which is causing the Earth to warm up more than it should.

Climate change

Climate change refers to a global change in the planet's weather and average temperatures over a long period of time. Scientists have observed that the surface of the Earth is warming, and many of the warmest years on record have happened in the past 20 years. This warming has led to other changes in our weather patterns – such as more severe weather events around the world.

Climate

Climate is the average measurements of temperature, wind, snow, humidity and rain in the course of a long period of time in a particular location. Climate is like the weather, but over many years. To help you remember, someone once said “Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get”.

Jargon-busting cards

CO₂ emissions

CO₂ stands for carbon dioxide, which is a **greenhouse gas**. Carbon dioxide is necessary for life on Earth. However, human activities such as burning coal, deforestation (chopping down lots of trees), driving cars or flying planes are increasing the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, which causes the Earth to warm up more than it should. CO₂ emissions usually refers to the CO₂ emitted because of human activities.

Net zero

Net zero refers to a state in which the **greenhouse gases** going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere. To achieve this, we need to lower the emissions we are sending into the atmosphere, from activities such as industry, transport, intensive agriculture, as well as removing greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere. Think about a bath with the taps turned on, to ensure the amount of water stays the same in the bath, you could either turn the tap off, or drain the water down the plug hole - or a combination of the two.

Carbon footprint

The term carbon footprint refers to how much carbon dioxide and methane is released into the air because of human activities. Companies, places, schools and individuals can have carbon footprints, made up from how much electricity they use, goods they produce or what they dispose of.

The Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is an agreement between more than 190 countries, planning to reduce greenhouse gases and limit global warming. It also looked at ways countries could change to deal with problems caused by **climate change**, and asked countries to spend money to make sure this would happen. It was signed in Paris in 2015.

Jargon-busting cards

1.5 degrees (1.5°C)

Scientists agree that the rise in average global temperature, compared to the average global temperature recorded before we started emitting lots of greenhouse gases (often called pre-industrial temperature), must be kept below 1.5°C by the end of the century to avoid the worst impacts. If we don't manage to keep the temperature rise below 1.5°C, it means that sea levels could rise significantly, extreme weather events would be more frequent, and biodiversity could decline.

Fossil fuels

All the machines we use on a daily basis (such as cars, computers or TVs) require energy to make them work. Most of that energy comes from burning fossil fuels, which include oil, coal, and gas.

The issue with fossil fuels is that the planet's supply is limited, so it means that once we've used up all the resources, they will be no more resources. In addition, using fossil fuels harms the environment, because when we burn them, they release harmful gases which increase **global warming**.

Mitigation

Mitigation refers to human actions that seek to reduce **greenhouse gas** emissions and limit global warming. Mitigation measures may be carried out at different levels: international, national and local.

You may also make changes on a personal level in your consumption habits, for example by using public or alternative transport to get around, such as bicycles.

Jargon-busting cards

Extreme weather

Extreme weather is when a weather is significantly different from the usual weather. Types of extreme weathers include flooding, drought, storms, cold spells and heat waves. **Climate change** is expected to increase the intensity, frequency, and impacts of extreme weather events.

COP

COP, which stands for Conference of the Parties, it is a conference run by the United Nations, an international organisation aiming at maintaining peace and security. Every year, leaders from many countries meet in a different place to discuss what needs to be put in place to tackle **climate change**.

Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting is the action of compensating for greenhouse gas **emissions** arising from human activity, by giving money to organisations which help the environment by reducing carbon emissions or concentrations in the atmosphere – for instance by planting trees.

Air pollution

Air pollution is contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment. It can come from heating, transport, industry or forest fires. Outdoor and indoor air pollution can cause respiratory issues and other diseases and can affect animals and plants.

Sea level rise

Sea level rise is an increase in the level of the world's oceans and seas due to the effects of **global warming**. When it gets warmer, water expands so it takes up more space, which causes sea level to rise. Sea level is also rising because glaciers and ice caps are melting and adding more water to the oceans.

Global warming

Global warming is the term used to describe the rising of the average temperature on Earth. The current **climate change** comes from global warming caused by human activity, such as burning coal, using oil, driving cars, or producing goods.

Jargon-busting cards

Biodiversity

Biodiversity covers the variety of living species on Earth, such as plants, animals and bacteria. Many species are being threatened with extinction due to **climate change** and human activities, putting biodiversity at risk.

Adaptation

Adaptation is the process of adjusting our lifestyle to the changes brought by **global warming** and **climate change**. For example, some coastal towns are building sea walls, which are walls to protect the coast, to protect themselves against **sea level rise**.

Deforestation

Deforestation means chopping down lots of trees in forest across the world to make space for agriculture, new constructions or mining activities and use the trees for fuel and constructions. Deforestation can negatively impact people, animals and plants because it destroys the environment they live in.

Climate activism

Climate activism is when people come together to put pressure on leaders to take action to tackle **climate change**. The Swedish activist Greta Thunberg is one of the most famous young activists, known for challenging world leaders to take immediate action for climate change.