

Climate Change

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. How do humans contribute to global warming?
2. Why do some governments want to ignore climate change?
3. In your opinion, what will be different about our lifestyles in 50 years due to climate change?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. greenhouse gas | a) not usual, very odd |
| _____ 2. carbon footprint | b) a type of gas that contributes to the trapping of heat in the earth's atmosphere |
| _____ 3. freakish | c) to attack a problem in order to try to solve it |
| _____ 4. tackle | d) a person who doesn't believe something is true |
| _____ 5. cover-up | e) something that prevents others from seeing the truth |
| _____ 6. cast doubt | f) not responsible for |
| _____ 7. sceptic | g) needing to be taken care of before a deadline |
| _____ 8. time-sensitive | h) to convince other people to question something they thought was true |
| _____ 9. undeniable | i) the amount of greenhouse gases contributed by a single person or group |
| _____ 10. off the hook | j) unable to be denied, must be true |



Reading

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ignoring Mother Nature's warnings

1. The majority of scientists around the world agree that humans are largely to blame for the warming of our planet. Over the past 50 years, temperatures on Earth have increased at a higher rate than ever recorded. In order to prevent excess **greenhouse gases** from trapping heat in our atmosphere, we need to change our lifestyles. By reducing our **carbon footprint** and switching to clean forms of energy, there is a chance we will be able to extend our stay on our planet.
2. Despite **freakish** weather like heat waves, droughts, and hurricanes, **tackling** climate change has not been a priority for some world leaders. As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump said he was not a big believer in man-made climate change. Some of his supporters, including a handful of scientists, were even accused of taking part in a climate **cover-up**. Those who benefit financially from oil, gas, and coal industries often deny the need for clean energy alternatives. By **casting doubt** on science, a few **sceptics** have caused a large number of people to question whether man-made climate change even exists. Ignoring a **time-sensitive** topic like the environment creates a vicious cycle. If the public doesn't rate the environment as a major concern, world leaders won't either.
3. Environmentalists always said that the first place humans would see **undeniable** evidence of global warming would be in the Arctic. In 2012, the summer sea ice in the Arctic was at a record low. Ice experts have warned that sea ice in the Arctic will likely be nonexistent within a few years. Instead of being concerned by these dangerous signs of global warming, some business thinkers are already considering potential opportunities. After all, open waters will lead to new shipping channels. We'll need stronger sunscreen products, too.
4. Climate change affects the whole planet, yet the world's leaders can't agree on what to do about it. Many leaders from have-not countries think they should be **off the hook**. They don't believe their people contributed to the problem, and they want wealthy nations to fix it. Developed nations aren't always as wealthy as they look. They're in debt, at war, and addicted to consumption. On May 24, 2019, hundreds of thousands of students walked out of schools around the world in a global climate strike protesting inaction by their governments. Will today's youth spark a climate revolution?

'If you really think the environment is less important than the economy, try holding your breath while you count your money.'

—Guy McPherson,
American climate scientist

Beware of an Irregular Verb

The verb 'to cast' is irregular.
The past tense of 'cast' is 'cast',
NOT 'casted'.

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. According to the reading, what lifestyle changes do humans need to make?
2. What examples of freakish weather are mentioned? Can you think of any others?
3. Why would some people want to ignore or even deny man-made climate change?
4. Paraphrase the vicious cycle mentioned in the reading.
5. Why does the reading mention sunscreen products?

Vocabulary Review

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the vocabulary list on page 1. You may need to change the word forms.

1. The company reduced its _____ by replacing business trips with online meetings.
2. New research _____ on the theory of mass extinction.
3. Please send me a list of all _____ concerns by the end of the day.
4. It's _____ that Hurricane Sandy came late in the season.
5. Due to the freakish snowstorm, the school bus driver was _____ for the field trip.

Grammar Review

A. Describing Unexpected Situations

There are a few different English words and expressions for describing unexpected situations. Some are followed by a noun. Others are followed by subject, verb, object (SVO). Read the dialogues with a partner. Take turns being A and B. Can you find a pattern in the comma placement?

despite | in spite of + NOUN

- A: Despite the scientific proof, one candidate denies climate change even exists.
- B: Really? That's surprising in this day and age.
- A: I know. He denies man-made climate change completely in spite of the overwhelming evidence.

despite the fact that | in spite of the fact that + SVO

- A: Despite the fact that forest fires are destroying California, climate deniers say wildfires are all natural.
- B: Not only that. In spite of the fact that this is the longest period without rain on record, they say droughts like this are natural too.

even though | though | although + SVO

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A: Even though superstorms are becoming an annual thing in our area, my dad still thinks climate change is a hoax. | A: Though I now have an electric car, my husband still uses a truck that runs on diesel. | A: The city talks so much about the importance of recycling although they aren't interested in a composting programme. |
| B: Are you serious? | B: He must really love that truck. | B: That's ridiculous! |

Grammar Review cont.

B. Practice

Use the word in parentheses to rewrite the sentences below. Work with a partner to form the sentences orally, and then write the sentences on the lines below. Experiment with placement. Can you think of other ways to describe these unexpected results?

Ex. Though there was damage from Hurricane Sandy, most New Yorkers voted in the election. (*despite*)

Despite the flooding and power outages from Hurricane Sandy, most New Yorkers voted in the election.

Most New Yorkers voted in the election ***despite*** the flooding and power outages from Hurricane Sandy.

1. There is scientific evidence of man-made climate change, but there are still sceptical people. (*although*)

2. Regardless of the time-sensitive nature of the president's flight, it was delayed until Monday. (*even though*)

3. Even though people understand the dangers of climate change, they still buy gas guzzlers. (*despite*)

4. Polar bears aren't listed as endangered although the ice is melting in the Arctic. (*in spite of the fact that*)

Discussion

1. Should government leaders be more worried about the economy or the environment?
2. What can individuals do to reduce their own carbon footprint?
3. Do you think humans have the ability to reverse the environmental damage we have already done to our planet?
4. In 2019, editors of *The Guardian* began using the phrase 'climate crisis' in place of 'climate change'. Do you think everyone should start using this more urgent term, including teachers, media outlets, and scientists? Why or why not?

Critical Thinking

Discuss and debate one of these issues as a class.

1. Donald Trump has openly denied climate change. As president, he withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement and vowed to end the Environmental Protection Agency in the US. Why is the US response to climate change so important for the rest of the world? Do you think the US can maintain its status as a world leader if its administration refuses to make climate change a priority?
2. In 2019, the UN warned that the world is at risk of experiencing a 'climate apartheid' by 2030, where only the world's richest people will be able to protect themselves from extreme weather events. How does climate change currently affect poor vs. wealthy people and nations, and what does the future look like?

The Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is a joint, long-term goal signed by 195 countries to combat climate change and limit global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ignoring Mother Nature's warnings

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2. Despite _____ weather like heat waves, droughts, and hurricanes, tackling climate change has not been a priority for some world leaders. As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump said he was not a big believer in man-made climate change. Some of his supporters, including a handful of scientists, were even accused of taking part in a climate cover-up. Those who benefit financially from oil, gas, and coal industries often deny the need for clean energy alternatives. By _____ on science, a few sceptics have caused a large number of people to question whether man-made climate change even exists. Ignoring a time-sensitive topic like the environment creates a vicious cycle. If the public doesn't rate the environment as a major concern, world leaders won't either.
3. Environmentalists always said that the first place humans would see _____ evidence of global warming would be in the Arctic. In 2012, the summer sea ice in the Arctic was at a record low. Ice experts have warned that sea ice in the Arctic will likely be nonexistent within a few years. Instead of being concerned by these dangerous signs of global warming, some business thinkers are already considering potential opportunities. After all, open waters will lead to new shipping channels. We'll need stronger _____ products, too.
4. Climate change affects the whole planet, yet the world's leaders can't agree on what to do about it. Many leaders from have-not countries think they should be _____. They don't believe their people contributed to the problem, and they want wealthy nations to fix it. _____ nations aren't always as wealthy as they look. They're in debt, at war, and addicted to consumption. On May 24, 2019, hundreds of thousands of students walked out of schools around the world in a global climate strike protesting inaction by their governments. Will today's youth spark a climate revolution?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read a short article about climate change. They learn and discuss why governments around the world are denying or delaying the issue of climate change. The lesson includes vocabulary review exercises and discussion questions.

LEVEL: Int – High Int

TIME: 1–2 hours

TAGS: environment, climate change, global warming, Earth, Earth Day, discussion, irregular verb, despite

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. e | 7. d | 9. j |
| 2. i | 4. c | 6. h | 8. g | 10. f |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 7. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. According to the reading, humans need to reduce their carbon footprint and find clean energy alternatives.
2. Examples of freakish weather mentioned include hurricanes, droughts, and heat waves. They may also think of forest fires, tornados, flash floods, cyclones, tsunamis, and earthquakes.
3. Some people want to ignore or even deny man-made climate change because they have investments in oil, coal, or gas.
4. According to the reading, when leaders don't make something like the environment a top priority, the public won't rate it as an important issue. Leaders don't tackle issues that the public doesn't consider important. This is a vicious cycle when you have a time-sensitive issue like climate change.
5. The reading mentions sunscreen products because some business-oriented people are already thinking about how they can cash in on global warming.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. carbon footprint | 4. undeniable |
| 2. casts doubt | 5. off the hook |
| 3. time-sensitive | |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Grammar Review

A. DESCRIBING UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS

Review the grammar with your students before they begin. Remind your students that 'despite' goes in front of nouns or gerunds. When used in an introductory phrase, a comma is needed. You may also want to remind students that 'despite' can go in the middle of the sentence (no comma is needed in this case). Explain that 'in spite of' is interchangeable with 'despite', but it is less common. 'Despite the fact that' and 'in spite of the fact that' are wordy. Remind your students of the common error many students make (despite + of). Some students also make the mistake of using 'despite the fact' (without 'that'). The patterns below may help your students keep it all straight (SVO = a Subject-Verb-Object clause). See our editor's blog post, [How to Explain Despite Vs. Although](https://ellii.com/blog/how-to-explain-despite-vs-although), for more tips and examples: <https://ellii.com/blog/how-to-explain-despite-vs-although>

despite / in spite of + noun / noun phrase:

Despite + noun, SVO. / SVO despite + noun.

despite / in spite of + gerund:

Despite + gerund, SVO. / SVO despite + gerund.

despite / in spite of + the fact that + SVO:

Despite the fact that + SVO, SVO. / SVO despite the fact that + SVO.

although / even though / though + SVO:

Even though + SVO, SVO. / SVO even though + SVO.

B. PRACTICE

1. Although there is scientific evidence of man-made climate change, there are still sceptical people.
2. Even though the nature of the president's flight was time-sensitive, it was delayed until Monday.
3. Despite understanding the dangers of climate change, people still buy gas guzzlers.
4. Polar bears aren't listed as endangered in spite the fact that ice is melting in the Arctic.

Answers may vary.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Critical Thinking

Encourage your students to dig deeper! After they have chatted for a while, you can put a few groups together and tell them to pretend they are the UN. Assign each student a leadership role (e.g. president of US). Make sure there are leaders from some have-not countries too. What can be done to combat climate change?

Listening

1. greenhouse gases, carbon footprint
2. freakish, casting doubt
3. undeniable, sunscreen
4. off the hook, Developed

SPELLING NOTE

The North American spelling is *Skeptical*, while the British spelling is *Sceptic*.