SUSTAINABILITY

"Progress is measured by the speed at which we destroy the conditions that sustain life."

George Monbiot, British journalist and environmental activist

1. Sustainability Discussion

1. What are some of the things that businesses are doing that harm the environment?
2. Which industries are most responsible for causing problems for the environment?
3. Which companies have a good reputation for protecting the environment?
4. What can businesses do to help combat climate change and other environmental problems?
5. Who can help the environment the most: individuals, businesses or governments?
6. What is more important for a business: economic or environmental concerns? What should be more important?
7. Does your company have an environmental policy? What does your company do that is beneficial for the environment? Do you think your company damages the environment in any way?
8. If your company was not taking its responsibility to the environment seriously, what could you do?

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2. Sustainability Vocabulary

- **sustainable, sustainability** (adjective, noun) – *something that can be maintained into the future; describes practices that do not harm the environment or cause social problems.*
- **environmentally friendly** (adjective) – *describes something that does not harm the environment.*
- **green** (adjective) – *describes something which benefits the environment.*
- **climate change** (noun) – *the phenomenon of changes to the climate as a result of global warming caused by the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere.*
- **carbon footprint** (noun) – *the amount of carbon dioxide a country, business or individual is responsible for releasing into the atmosphere.*
- **greenwashing** (noun) – *when a business pays more attention to promoting itself as environmentally friendly for marketing purposes rather than on actually reducing its impact on the environment.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)

1. Considering that the airline industry is responsible for more than 12% of the world's carbon emissions, it was no surprise that Zoom Air was accused of _____ when it announced it would no longer be using plastic straws for drinks served on its flights.
2. The government announced a new policy to protect nature reserves. The project will be funded by a _____ tax on businesses.
3. The airline industry aims to reduce its _____ by 2030 by using a cleaner fuel source.
4. Burning fossil fuels and cutting down trees for paper is simply not _____.
5. If nothing is done to combat the effects of _____, the sea level will rise flooding coastal cities around the world.
6. I live in an _____ building; there are solar panels on the roof that provide all our energy and all our waste is recycled.

Sustainability vocabulary comprehension questions

1. How can businesses become more sustainable?
2. Are you an environmentally friendly person? Why or why not?
3. Would you say you work for a green company?
4. What do you know about the science of climate change? What will the consequences of climate change be in the future?
5. How can companies reduce their carbon footprint?
6. Can you think of any companies that may have been involved in greenwashing?

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3. Video: Sustainability

You are going to watch a TED Talk by Steve Howard called “Let's go all-in on selling sustainability.”

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/business-english-conversation-lesson-plan-sustainability/

Watch the video and after, discuss the following questions:

1. What can your company do to be more sustainable?
2. Is it possible for a company to be sustainable and still make a profit?
3. Is it possible to make useful, affordable *and* sustainable products?
4. What are the benefits of being a sustainable business?
5. Do you think consumers care about buying environmentally friendly products?
6. How could customers be convinced to buy more environmentally friendly products?

4. Sustainability Conversation Questions

1. Would you ever take into account a company's environmental policy when applying for a job?
2. How does packaging affect the environment? What can companies do to reduce this impact?
3. Should governments introduce stricter environmental regulations for businesses?
4. How do environmental laws and regulations affect businesses?
5. Do you agree with a carbon tax on businesses? Why or why not?
6. Are you sceptical that some businesses who call themselves 'sustainable' are just saying so for marketing purposes? Why or why not?
7. Which industries will thrive in a sustainable world? Which industries will disappear?
8. Do you think businesses will be more or less environmentally friendly in the future? Why?

5. Sustainability Writing Task

Write a report to your board of directors explaining how your company could be more sustainable. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, include the following topics:

- What contributes to your company's carbon footprint.
- How your company's carbon footprint could be reduced
- What more your company could do to help the environment.

6. Sustainability Answers

2. Vocabulary

1. greenwashing
2. green
3. carbon footprint
4. sustainable
5. climate change
6. environmentally friendly

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