

# Our Beautiful World:

And What We Can Do



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Adaption: Free Kids Books

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# Our Beautiful World

And What We Can Do

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We live in a beautiful world.  
A world filled with wonders.  
A world of soaring mountains.  
A world of deep oceans.  
A world teeming with life and joy.  
  
It is a world we call home.



Here, we reign supreme.

We design new technological  
miracles, we shoot for the stars,  
we build amazing things.

We study the world, the universe.

We try to make our lives easier, and easier  
and easier, with new gadgets that aim to  
make everything better.



Easier, yes. But is it better?

Our home is paying a terrible price.



**We're changing the Earth, killing birds and animals with whom we share this planet, endangering our fellow humans.**

**The world is becoming a desert. Oceans are rising, glaciers are melting, crops are failing. The heat is rising.**

**There is a monster that haunts Earth. It is called...**



**...climate change.**

**Humans are its creator. This is the story of how we made it. It is a story of how we betrayed our home, Earth.**



About 12,000 years ago, the Earth entered a new geological epoch called the Holocene.

The gigantic sheets of ice that covered much of the world retreated towards the poles, the world entered a new era of plenty. New forests grew, and life flourished. The world's climate became warmer and then stabilised. Ever since then, for about 11,000 years, the Earth's climate has been stable and calm.

Paradise!



Humans have been around for about 2,000,000 years. But before the Holocene, we never had it this good. In the past 11,000 years, we have thrived. We discovered agriculture, we settled down in villages and towns, we created art. The pyramids of Giza, the cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, the Mayan Empire, and the Roman Empire - all happened during the Holocene.



This was all possible because of widespread agriculture and trade. We grew crops, we made things, we exchanged them with each other. We grew prosperous.

Our ancestors started clearing forests to grow more crops and, slowly, their footprint expanded. Even then, much of Europe, North America and South Asia were covered in thick forests.



It all happened very slowly, over thousands of years. The effect of human beings on the environment was still very small. The Earth still had enough resources to replenish what was depleted.

But as the centuries went by, we started using up the Earth's resources faster and faster.



By around 500 years ago, Europe's ancient forests were mostly gone, and even in other parts of the world, forests were in retreat. Humans have always used the Earth's resources, be it trees, minerals like iron, or animals for domestication and food. We have always wanted the planet to give us more.

Then, about 250 years ago,  
something happened.



The Industrial Age, the age of machines,  
began.

Until then, we had mostly used handheld  
tools for work. As a result, there was only  
so much damage we could do. But with  
machines, we could do anything.

For the first time, we started using  
machines, like the power loom and the  
steam engine, to mass produce goods for  
trade.



We burned fossil fuels like coal and oil to power machines to do our work for us. Every aspect of our lives today comes from the Industrial Revolution. Cars, planes, mobile phones, space flight, computers, it all began 250 years ago.

But while this lit the fire of human progress, it also unleashed its dark shadow: **climate change.**



The Earth is very old. Over four billion years old. Life on Earth began more than three billion years ago. How do we know? Because that is when the oldest fossils are from.



What are fossils? The planet has been home to a dizzying variety of plants and animals. All trees and creatures, including humans, are primarily made of carbon. As they die, and as continents shift, their remains go back into the earth, where they lie. Over thousands of years they return to forms of carbon: coal, gas, oil. This is how the Earth's fossil deposits are created.

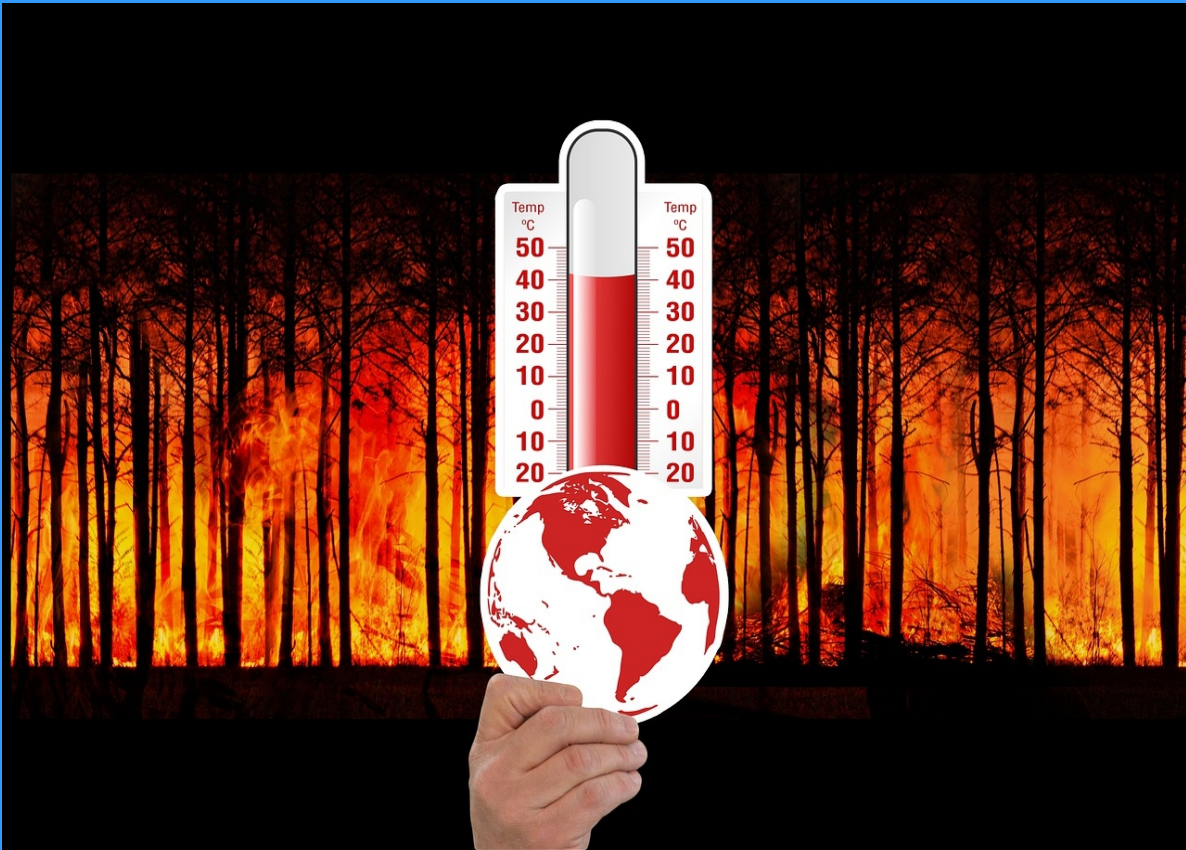


When we started digging up the fossil fuels:  
coal and oil, to burn them and power our  
machines

That has been the basis of our modern  
prosperity. For nearly everything we do, we  
burn coal and oil. We dig into the bowels of  
the earth, we mine the coal, we extract the  
petroleum, we burn it. We live our lives.



**But** we have dug so much and burnt so  
much, that we have  
upset the balance of the  
Holocene.



The more coal and oil we burn, the more carbon dioxide we release. This gets stored in the atmosphere.

The carbon dioxide traps the sun's heat. And the world grows hotter.

The world is becoming an oven, and the heat is changing the climate.

The Earth is slowly becoming unlivable.



It is now **1.2 degrees** celsius hotter than  
two hundred years ago.

If we continue like this, by 2050, the world  
will be **2.4 degrees** celsius hotter.



If that happens then the sea level will rise.

Glaciers will start vanishing, rivers and coastal towns will flood. There will be more frequent and intense heatwaves. There will be more extreme weather such as stronger storms, droughts, and heavy rainfall.

Animal habitats will disappear along with the animals.

It is a **scary future**  
for the whole world.



**Yet, there is hope.**

**We don't need to keep burning coal and oil.  
In fact, the whole world can stop burning  
fossil fuels by 2050.**

**No fossil fuels.**

**No extra carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.**

**No more heat.**



Humans are smart, and we have already built technologies which can draw electrical energy from the sun, wind, and water.

Producing sustainable fuels from renewable sources such as biomass is now viable.



If **every** country around the world  
says NO to fossil fuels, we can **defeat**  
the  
**climate change monster.**



We live in a beautiful world.

We can preserve this beautiful Earth, filled  
with wonders.

A world of soaring mountains, of deep  
oceans. A world teeming with life and joy.

It is a world we call home.

Let's keep it this way.

## ABOUT SAVING THE PLANET

Come up with ideas for each of the prompts below, how you can follow through with the advice, and why it makes a difference:

Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!

Always put your trash in a bin.

Save water and electricity.

Reduce your carbon footprint.

Use renewable energy.

Buy products that can be recycled.

Plant an indigenous tree

Support sustainable practices.

Don't waste natural resources.

Save the planet! We only have one.

Talk about some of the ways which these “green” practices can be achieved in your own lives (eg: using public transport, buying recyclable products, installing solar).

Go with your parents/carers to the grocery shop and make a list of all the items that are sustainable or recyclable or that support “green” practices. Create green awareness posters to put up at your school and local notice boards.

Create a fundraiser for supporting GoGreen, for example solar or wind at your school or community.



**Go Green!**

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