

IELTS Speaking Part 2

Describe an environmental issue that you are concerned about.

You should say:

- what the issue is
- how it affects the environment
- what can be done to address the issue

and say if something has been done about this issue.

Model answer

One environmental issue that I am very concerned about is plastic pollution. It is a growing problem in our world today, affecting the environment in a number of ways. The problem is caused by the fact that we use too much plastic and that much of the plastic we use is not disposed of properly.

Plastic pollution has a number of negative effects. First, it is harmful to wildlife. Many animals mistake plastic garbage for food, which can lead to digestive problems, suffocation or even death. Second, such pollution creates unsightly and hazardous conditions for people in affected areas, which in turn can lead to depression or diseases. Finally, it is harming the world's oceans, with plastic debris killing marine life and disrupting ecosystems.

I can think of two ways to mitigate the issue. One is to reduce the usage of plastic, like choosing reusable bags, bottles, and jars at the same time avoiding disposable products like plastic straws and cutlery. Another one is to improve our waste management systems to ensure that plastic is sorted and recycled whenever possible.

Both of the methods suggested have been in effect for several decades now. Such things take time, and if we stick to the plan of reducing plastic footprint, the issue can definitely be made much less severe.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Polluting the environment

How severe should punishment be for environmental pollution?

To start with, the degree of responsibility should be equal for both individuals and businesses. In my country, people who litter, spill oil or do any other damage to nature usually get away with it or just get a slap on the wrist. It is bigger businesses that get hefty fines normally. I believe that punitive measures should be equally strict for all parties. First-time offenders should pay a considerable sum to mitigate the damage done. Repeat offences are a more serious crime, and prison sentences might just be the thing for such cases. This would send a clear message that nature has to be taken seriously.

What new approaches to protecting the environment can we expect in the future?

It is safe to assume that innovations are going to be possible thanks to the recent technological advances. It is likely that we will see the introduction of personal carbon footprint quotas. This means that each person will be given a certain limit on negative environmental impact they are allowed to cause. This could include using transportation, buying and consuming things with non-biodegradable packaging, incorrect disposal of dangerous materials such as used motor oil. If one exceeds the quota they get penalised. Conversely, it could be possible to offset the impact by volunteering in activities that undo the damage.

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A less radical and possibly more effective way to make sure the environment stays safe is education. Make people more aware of the extent of damage they deal to nature over the course of their lives. People are not **malevolent** by nature, so if they understand the amount of harm they cause, they are more likely to be **mindful** about it. Teachers can tell primary school kids about the importance of **frugality**, the dangers of plastic and other non-biodegradable materials, as well as other vital aspects of environmentalism.

Protecting animals and nature

How can individuals help protect the environment?

One great way is to understand that every bit of effort counts, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. Spreading this idea is the next logical step. Let your friends, family and colleagues know that even a minor step towards a cleaner future makes a difference. Thinking long-term is what really matters, so if one develops a habit and sticks to it, they contribute to the well-being of their land, the planet they live on.

Being more responsible with your littering habits is one example. Sorting it makes it easier to recycle, and cultivating this idea in your community helps take it to a larger scale. Eventually the environmental notion **catches on**, and you see the number of people involved **go parabolic**. But the first step is always the most difficult one, so people need a **nudge in the right direction**.

Why is it important to protect species that are dying out?

The natural world is the biggest system known to man. But its real beauty is that it is a self-balancing system, one that gravitates towards equilibrium. For instance, if population of one biological kind gets out of proportion, they starve because there isn't enough food for them. If a generation of, say, wolves happens to be weak, then they fail to reproduce because they get overpowered by the stronger, more imposing **litter**. However, this system is not without a fault.

Biodiversity is important because it ensures that a system like that is healthy and responsive. Eliminate one species from the equation, and a whole **food chain** collapses. We can say this about plants, insects and animals alike due to the delicate self-reliance on one another. If a population of wolves goes down because of human activity, this will allow their potential prey to **breed** without much risk, and their increased numbers in turn are likely to consume much more food. This is one example of a food chain disruption.

What can be done to better protect animal rights?

One option is for governments to implement **stringent** laws to protect the rights of animals. These laws should lay down clear **guidelines** for animal welfare, care and rights. If we encouraged reporting animal rights violations, it would enable legal bodies to enforce these laws more effectively. Promoting awareness should be an effective way as well. Governments, animal welfare organizations and educational institutions should take up initiatives to educate people about the rights of animals. People have to understand that an animal cannot report their own abuse for obvious reasons, so monitoring bodies have to be **vigilant** and **relentless**.

Nature and the environment vocabulary

Dispose of (phr v) - to take care of something that you no longer need in an appropriate way. *In order to dispose of used AA batteries you are encouraged to take them to a designated disposal point.*

Suffocation (n) - a state of not being able to breathe or not getting enough oxygen.

Debris (n) - fragments or pieces of something that has been damaged or destroyed.

Footprint (n) - (in the environmental sense) the amount of damage we cause to the environment. *To reduce your*

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carbon footprint, consider giving up on most plastic goods.

Litter (v) - to put garbage somewhere it is not supposed to be, to dispose of it carelessly. *Whenever we go out Sarah litters whenever she gets a chance.*

Frugality (n) - the quality of using some resources sparingly, without unnecessary waste.

Litter (n) - animal offspring. Note that this is a noun, whereas the previous entry was a verb.

Food chain - a system where one living thing, such as a plant, an insect or an animal acts as food for the other.

Breed (v) - (about animals) to copulate in order to have offspring.

General vocabulary

Mistake smth for smth else (phr v) - to confuse one thing or person with the other. *People often mistake my brother for Brad Pitt, even though he doesn't look even remotely similar to him.*

Unsightly (adj) - difficult to look at because of how ugly or unattractive it is.

Mitigate (v) - to make something bad better. *To mitigate the pain, he took some ibuprofen.*

Cutlery (n) - a collective noun that means knives, forks and spoons. *This set of silver cutlery has been used in our family for generations.*

Get a slap on the wrist - to get slight punishment for something very serious.

Hefty fine - a large amount of money you have to pay for breaking some law. *Traffic offense fines have been getting increasingly ridiculous lately.*

Punitive (adj) - relating to punishment. *Punitive measures are not strict enough and should be revised.*

Offset (v) - very similar to mitigate - to reduce the negative effects of something.

Malevolent (adj) - having evil nature or intention.

Mindful (adj) - paying attention to or caring about something. *Be mindful of her emotions, she is hurt quite easily.*

Catch on (phr v) - if something catches on, it gains recognition and popularity. *I am sorry your business didn't catch on, it was looking very promising.*

Go parabolic - to gain huge popularity or increase rapidly in a very short period of time.

Nudge in the right direction - (used figuratively here) to persuade somebody to do something, but without being too insisting.

Stringent (adj) - (relating to laws or rules) very strict, with severe punishment.

Guidelines (n) - a collection of rules, tips and instructions on something. *The general guideline in this company is to show initiative and not to be afraid of making small mistakes.*

Vigilant (adj) - being very attentive and careful because you expect something bad or wrong to happen.

Relentless (adj) - never stopping or getting less intense.