

Name:**Reading**

1 Read the text. For questions 1–5, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

SAVING PLANET EARTH

Is it too late to save the planet? Fiona Gibbons thinks we can do it – if we stop to think about it.

Most people recognise that the Earth is facing some major problems. But whether or not the damage is caused by us, it is up to us to find solutions because those of us who live in industrial societies are certainly not *helping* the situation.

Many scientists agree that global warming is caused by us releasing carbon emissions into the atmosphere. We need to look at where this carbon comes from, and the answer is fossil fuels. We have been taking oil, coal and gas out of the earth for many years now, and it's time to ask a simple question: How long can we keep taking it before it runs out? Even if there are enough fossil fuels for the next hundred years, we will have to find new sources of energy after that. We can't ignore the problem and leave it for the next generation to solve instead of developing the alternatives.

We have the technology to use energy from the sun to heat our houses. If we all put solar panels on the roofs of our houses, we will not need to use heating oil. We will need much less electricity too. We have to remember that electricity, as clean and convenient as it is, is mostly produced by burning fossil fuels. So, although we might not see the pollution this causes, it is still harming the atmosphere in a major way. Solar panels make use of energy which costs nothing – energy which is given off by the sun every day. And the latest technology captures *daylight*, not sunlight, so that even on a cloudy day, or in countries with very little sunshine, we still get free energy.

Wind energy too can be harnessed to make electricity. In many countries, there are already companies selling wind turbines to householders. They're expensive, but they also generate a lot of electricity without causing smog. In an average case, a wind turbine on your roof will save enough money on your electricity bill to pay for itself in ten years. If you live in a windy spot, or if you buy one of the bigger turbines, you will generate more electricity than you need. You can then sell this energy back to the electricity company – you will not only save money on your bills and help protect the environment, but you will make a profit too!

What if you can't afford a solar panel? What if you don't own your own house? Individual efforts are great, but governments need to react to the situation as well. The wind turbines I mentioned above can be gathered together in one place. This is called a wind farm. Together, all these turbines can produce enough electricity for a small town. The energy produced by waves can also be used to make electricity in a similar way. But these 'green' power stations can only be built if governments decide to spend money on them. Unfortunately, one of the main reasons they don't is that members of the public complain that they are ugly. So this brings the problem back to the individual. What would you rather

see out of your window: a wind or wave farm generating free electricity under a clear blue sky; or a typical power station with thick, black smoke pouring into the atmosphere?

The majority of us take electricity for granted. Most of our homes are powered by it and we rarely give a thought to where it comes from. It's difficult to see that, every time we leave a light on, a power station somewhere is burning fossil fuels and polluting the air that we breathe. We all need to think seriously about this. And if enough people get together, governments will be forced to change their policies. The future of the planet depends on it.

1 The writer says that the energy we get from fossil fuels

- A is better than the alternatives.
- B is a new source of energy.
- C will need to be replaced.
- D helps solve a problem.

2 What does the writer say about modern solar panels?

- A They work even at night.
- B They work when the sun is not shining.
- C They are less harmful than older panels.
- D They still cause some pollution.

3 What does the writer say about putting a wind turbine on your roof?

- A You can sell it when you have finished with it.
- B It won't work if it's very windy where you live.
- C A small one won't save you any money.
- D It's economical in the long term.

4 Wind farms are unpopular because

- A people don't like to look at them.
- B they only supply urban areas.
- C they still pollute the atmosphere.
- D governments spend too much money on them.

5 The writer thinks that electricity is something which

- A we should learn to live without.
- B we should produce in a cleaner way.
- C most people think about a lot.
- D will not exist in the future.