

Read the following text then answer the questions by choosing the best answers.

Protection of environment is a major issue in the UK. Global warming, ozone layer problem, air and water pollution, industrial wastes are in the centre of different state and public actions.

Britain and other countries that signed the 1997 Kyoto protocol saw global warming as the greatest danger facing the world community. However, since then political leaders have not been able to agree on action. The UN target is to limit the global average temperature increase by moving to zero carbon emissions by 2050. (the temperature has already increased by 0.85°C) British environmental and political authorities are also criticized for their lack of strong policies and responses to climate change and extreme weather.

Among British people there was scepticism about global warming, and climate scientists were distrusted to tell the truth about climate change. In a BBC/Populus poll in 2010, 25 per cent of respondents did not think global warming was taking place and 75 per cent said it was reality, but only 26 per cent believed that climate warming was largely human-made. The impact of climate change (human-made or not) on the UK has been evident over the past 15 years. According to the Met Office, the ten warmest years in the UK since 1861 have all been after 2002 and most of the wettest years have been in the period 2000. The year 2014 was the warmest in the past 350 years with an average temperature of 9.9°C. Summer droughts, severe winter and summer floods in recent years have become frequent. Such change in weather is serious and people should change their habits and move to a low-carbon economy.

The UK is vulnerable to rising seas on its east and south coasts and wildlife and country side are being affected.

The activities that contribute to global warming are vehicle and aircraft pollution, traffic jams, lack of a sufficient public transport system, energy production and greenhouse gas emissions. Britain suffers serious air pollution from the discharge of carbon emissions into the air. It affects both urban and rural areas, is a threat to people's health. Although pollution was reduced by Clean Air Acts in the 1950s and 1960s, it still regularly reaches dangerously high levels.

Two specific transport areas, vehicle and aircraft usage, have been identified as large contributors to carbon emissions in Britain. More and more people use private vehicles and cheap air travel as public transport is not good enough and petrol prices are not very high. Cars account 40 per cent and aeroplanes account 21 per cent of the UK transport total gas emission. Figures suggest that Britons are overly dependent on the car. 46 per cent of respondents reported driving a car nearly every day. The government has made attempts to limit its unnecessary use, reduce speed limits, introduce payment for road usage, increase taxes or charges on car usage and parking and give funding to local schemes which improve public transport. These efforts were not efficient enough as road congestion increases.

Aeroplanes and their additional businesses such as airport and runway expansion are also part of the transport and environmental problem in Britain. Most British say that people should be able to travel by plane as much as they like, and they seem willing to accept big rises in air fares to compensate the environmental damage caused by flying, even if this makes air travel much more expensive.

Land usage is also a controversial issue. Agricultural, woodland and greenfield land is used increasingly for building and construction. People are worried about the future of the countryside and want to stop building work and road/airport schemes. Environmentalists campaign against the destruction of woodlands for e.g. road building, advocate more fast-growing tree planting to combat carbon emissions and try to preserve the quality of the woodlands. The woodlands in recent years have been badly affected by disease from fungi, parasites and pests, and storm damage.

British people love their countryside and spend time with 'nature'. They love gardening and many of them have allotments where they grow flowers and vegetables. The countryside represents stability for them and at weekends they love going for walks on the long-distance footpaths of Britain.

What is the primary focus of environmental concern in the UK?

- a) Deforestation
- b) Biodiversity loss
- c) Global warming, ozone layer problem, air and water pollution, industrial wastes
- d) Soil erosion

According to the text, when was the Kyoto Protocol signed?

- a) 1995
- b) 1997
- c) 2000
- d) 2005

What is the UN target for limiting global average temperature increase by 2050?

- a) 1.5°C
- b) 2.0°C
- c) Zero carbon emissions
- d) 3.0°C

What percentage of respondents in a 2010 BBC/Populus poll did not believe global warming was taking place?

- a) 10%
- b) 25%
- c) 50%
- d) 75%

What percentage of UK transport total gas emissions are accounted for by cars?

- a) 20%
- b) 30%
- c) 40%
- d) 50%

Which act aimed to reduce air pollution in the 1950s and 1960s?

- a) Clean Energy Act
- b) Clean Water Act
- c) Clean Air Acts
- d) Clean Environment Act

What was the average temperature in the UK in 2014, making it the warmest year in the past 350 years?

- a) 9.0°C
- b) 9.5°C
- c) 9.7°C
- d) 9.9°C

What additional businesses contribute to the environmental problem caused by airplanes?

- a) Seaports
- b) Power plants
- c) Airport and runway expansion
- d) Automobile manufacturers

What is a primary advocacy of environmentalists regarding woodlands?

- a) Increased deforestation
- b) Preservation of existing woodlands
- c) More road building through woodlands
- d) Intensive farming in woodlands

What represents stability and leisure for many British people?

- a) Urban lifestyle
- b) Technology
- c) Countryside
- d) Sports

What is the target year for moving to zero carbon emissions according to the UN?

- a) 2030
- b) 2040
- c) 2050
- d) 2060

What percentage of UK transport total gas emissions are accounted for by airplanes?

- a) 10%
- b) 15%
- c) 21%
- d) 30%

What impact of climate change has been evident over the past 15 years in the UK?

- a) Decrease in average rainfall
- b) Increase in snowfall
- c) Increase in summer droughts and severe winter/summer floods
- d) Decrease in average temperature

What is one attempt made by the UK government to reduce car usage?

- a) Decreasing taxes on car ownership
- b) Reducing public transport fares
- c) Increasing taxes or charges on car usage
- d) Providing subsidies for car purchases

What percentage of respondents reported driving a car nearly every day?

- a) 30%
- b) 40%
- c) 50%
- d) 60%

What percentage of Britons believe people should be able to travel by plane as much as they like?

- a) 50%
- b) 60%
- c) 70%
- d) Most British

What is one concern regarding land usage in the UK mentioned in the text?

- a) Excessive agricultural practices
- b) Decreasing urbanization
- c) Increased deforestation
- d) Agricultural, woodland, and greenfield land being used for building and construction

What activity do many British people engage in to connect with nature, according to the text?

- a) Shopping
- b) Watching TV
- c) Gardening
- d) Playing video games

What is the primary focus of environmental concern in the UK?

- a) Deforestation
- b) Biodiversity loss
- c) Global warming, ozone layer problem, air and water pollution, industrial wastes
- d) Soil erosion

According to the text, what is one impact of climate change on the UK's coastlines?

- a) Decreased sea levels
- b) Increased desertification
- c) Rising seas on the east and south coasts
- d) Decreased storm activity

Which sector accounts for 40% of the UK's carbon emissions?

- a) Industrial
- b) Residential
- c) Transport
- d) Agricultural

What is one criticism directed towards British environmental and political authorities?

- a) Lack of concern for urban development
- b) Lack of policies and responses to climate change and extreme weather
- c) Excessive regulation of industry
- d) Overemphasis on renewable energy

What percentage of respondents in the BBC/Populus poll believed that global warming was largely human-made?

- a) 15%
- b) 26%
- c) 40%
- d) 55%

Which year was identified as the warmest in the UK in the past 350 years?

- a) 2000
- b) 2005
- c) 2010
- d) 2014

What represents stability and leisure for many British people?

- a) Urban lifestyle
- b) Technology
- c) Countryside
- d) Sports

Polls show that British people are prepared to make sacrifices to clean up the environment and conserve wildlife, believe that environmental protection should rate higher than economic growth, feel that environmental problems should be tackled. It is also argued that government and industry alone cannot solve problems and that a widespread culture of environmentalism must be developed in Britain. Some people take specific measures, such as using energy-saving light bulbs, cutting down on the use of plastic bags, recycling household rubbish and composting. Britain also takes part in the 'Let's clean up Europe' campaign, which is an organized clean up action to raise awareness of the problem of littering and its cause.

The most important secondary source generated from these is electricity. However, their exploitation causes pollution and environmental damage. In the 1980s the coal industry was privatised and lots of pits were closed. But nowadays some of them have been reopened in the Midlands. The latest source of potential energy in the UK has been gas and oil shale reserves, discovered within underground formations. Oil and gas is recovered through a "fracking" process. Protesters campaign against such mining health, safety and environmental grounds. People's attitudes in Britain to nuclear power have become more positive in recent years, but there is still concern over the storage of nuclear waste and nuclear accidents.

The development of existing resources and the search for alternative forms of energy are crucial for Britain and its economy. The roles of coal and nuclear power need more debate and research is required into renewable energy such as biomass, solar, wind, wave and tidal power. Electricity generation by wind power is already operative on land and at sea. The use of tidal and wave power is being implemented on some coasts and estuaries and solar energy is already provided.

Critics argue that industry should be encouraged to use more environmentally friendly technology to cut harmful emissions. However, the provision of cheap and environmentally suitable energy for both domestic and industrial use is a big problem for Britain.

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. British people prioritize economic growth over environmental protection.
2. The 'Let's clean up Europe' campaign aims to raise awareness about the problem of littering in Britain.
3. Coal mining in the Midlands has completely ceased since the 1980s.
4. Gas and oil shale reserves have been discovered within underground formations in the UK.
5. Fracking is a process used to recover renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power.
6. People's attitudes towards nuclear power in Britain have become more negative in recent years.
7. There is concern over the storage of nuclear waste and the potential for nuclear accidents in Britain.
8. The development of existing resources and the search for alternative forms of energy are considered crucial for Britain's economy.
9. Wind power generation is already operational on land but not at sea in Britain.
10. Solar energy is not yet utilized as a source of renewable energy in Britain.
11. Critics argue against encouraging industries to adopt more environmentally friendly technology to reduce harmful emissions.
12. Cheap and environmentally suitable energy provision is not a significant problem for Britain.
13. The coal industry in the Midlands has seen a resurgence with the reopening of some pits.
14. There is no ongoing debate or research into renewable energy sources such as biomass, solar, wind, wave, and tidal power in Britain.