

OVERCONSUMPTION

1. Read the text. Fill in the gaps (1-11) forming the words from the words in brackets. For gaps (A-N), think of the word that best fits each gap. Use only **ONE** word in each gap.

What is natural resource consumption?

Almost everything we do involves materials that A) _____ been extracted, processed, transformed, bought and sold, taxed and subsidised, and often shifted across vast distances.

Our economy is built around these raw materials – natural resources – like trees, gas, oil, metal ores, water and **fertile** land. Look at your smartphone. It 1) _____ (LIKE) contains cobalt from Africa, copper from Chile and aluminium from Australia. Over the years, our appetite for raw materials has grown – from 1970 B) _____ 2010 our natural resource consumption more than **tripled**.

What is overconsumption?

Consuming more than we need creates a demand that the planet can't cope C) _____. Natural resources are being **gobbled up** faster than the Earth can **replenish** them. It's also struggling to cope with the resulting waste and 2) _____ (EMIT). We take too much stuff from nature, make it into stuff we use – from chemicals to plastics, fertilisers, smart phones, meat – and then dispose D) _____ it carelessly into the atmosphere, the oceans and the land.

Big gap between rich and poor

The world's richest countries consume on average 10 times as many materials E) _____ the poorest. It's 3) _____ (GROSS) unequal. Many of the world's population hardly see a peep of these resources.

North America and Europe have F) _____ far the biggest material footprints on the planet. The UK is hugely dependent G) _____ other countries' minerals, raw materials, water and land.

If everyone lived like the average US **citizen**, we'd need around 4 Earths to **sustain** ourselves – according H) _____ data produced by the Global Footprint Network.

What are the effects of overconsumption?

The overconsumption of energy, water and raw materials worsens climate change and increases air pollution. It exhausts the planet's life support systems like the ones that provide us with fresh water, and leaves us short I) _____ materials critical to our health and quality of life – says a UN report.

Fresh water reserves, fish stocks and forests are **shrinking**, many species are under threat of 4) _____ (EXTINCT) and fertile land is being destroyed.

And all for what? Are we any happier? 5) _____ (APPARENT) not. Unmanaged consumerism appears to contribute J) _____ a range of physical and psychological problems, like **obesity** and depression.

"We **urgently** need to address this problem before we have irreversibly depleted the resources that power our economies and lift people out of **poverty**." Alicia Bárcena Ibarra, International Resource Panel.

Solutions to overconsumption

It's obvious we need to stop **ravaging** the planet. Unfortunately, our 'I am what I buy' culture is an **obstacle**. It leads K) _____ farcical 6) _____ (ADVERTISEMENT) slogans like "Be yourself" – as L) _____ wearing mass-produced fragrance can give you a true sense of who you really are.

There are more 7) _____ (MEAN) ways of defining identity, like belonging M) _____ something you love – a sports club, community 8) _____ (CHORAL), animal **shelter** etc. We need public authorities to create more of these social opportunities to give people a sense of purpose beyond being a 9) _____ (CONSUME).

Marketing can help. It's a powerful tool for changing 10) _____ (BEHAVE). Once used to encourage smoking, it's now doing completely the opposite. If it can change our relationship with tobacco, it can change how we consume too. This means promoting activities and stuff that are good for people and the planet.

And we need stronger laws. Companies should N) _____ made to report on every single aspect of their **supply** chains – from excavation right through to the shop window – including water and land use. We need circular economies that 11) _____ (PRIORITY) reusing, recycling and repairing.

2. Match the words in blue to their definitions below. There are 3 words which you do NOT need to use.

- *n.* the state of being extremely poor -
- *n.* a situation that makes it difficult for you to do or achieve something -
- *n.* the fact of being extremely fat, in a way that is dangerous for health -
- *n.* something that gives protection -
- *adj.* able to produce good crops or plants -
- *adv.* in a way that needs to be dealt with or happen immediately -
- *v.* use or waste a lot of something very quickly -
- *v.* become smaller in amount or size -
- *v.* to make something full again, or to bring it back to its previous level by replacing what has been used -
- *v.* damage something badly -
- *v.* to provide enough of what somebody/something needs in order to live or exist -