

CLIMATE CHANGE, CAN WE STOP ?

There are still some people who say that climate change is not real ! Others say that it is real, but we cannot do anything to stop it, so we need not try. A few people even say that climate change is not caused by human beings. But most people now understand that our world is getting hotter, and we have to do something about it. We only have one Earth, and we can't get another one.

Twenty years ago, people could perhaps imagine that climate change was not a real problem, because some scientists still had doubts. Today almost all the world's scientists agree: the world is getting hotter, and it is the fault of human beings. Our planet is going towards a climate catastrophe, but we can stop its worst effects. Indeed we must do everything possible to stop them.

In November 2021, world leaders (or most of them) met in Glasgow, in Scotland, for the COP26 summit. They took quite a few decisions, to try and stop the Earth getting too warm. Many countries promised to become "carbon neutral" before 2050. Some have promised to become carbon-neutral even faster. World leaders agree that we have to stop using coal and oil to generate heat and electricity; we should use green energy sources instead, known as "renewables."

Before the year 2100, all the energy that we use may perhaps come from renewable sources; the sun, the sea, the wind and rivers can produce more than enough energy for everyone on our planet, but we still have a long way to go.



NEXT

The green energy revolution has already begun, but the challenges are still enormous. "Going green" will cost an enormous amount of money, and use some kinds of technology that do not yet exist. Also there are some people who believe that it will be too expensive.

Although most people care about our planet and know that we have to act now to avoid a climate catastrophe, there are other people who have different priorities. There are people who just don't care, and there are people who care more about themselves than about the world around them. There are people and big companies that just want to make money, and are not interested in anything that gets in their way. Most importantly, there are politicians who are frightened of doing anything that other people will not like; they make promises, but they do not keep them.

At COP26, people agreed that we will have to stop using coal as soon as possible, because it is the dirtiest of fuels. Yet for some countries this will be very difficult. Most of their electricity is generated by burning coal, so if they stop using coal, people will not have enough electricity. In developed countries, everyone uses electricity, and industry uses lots of electricity. No countries can stop using coal unless they have another source of electricity to use instead.

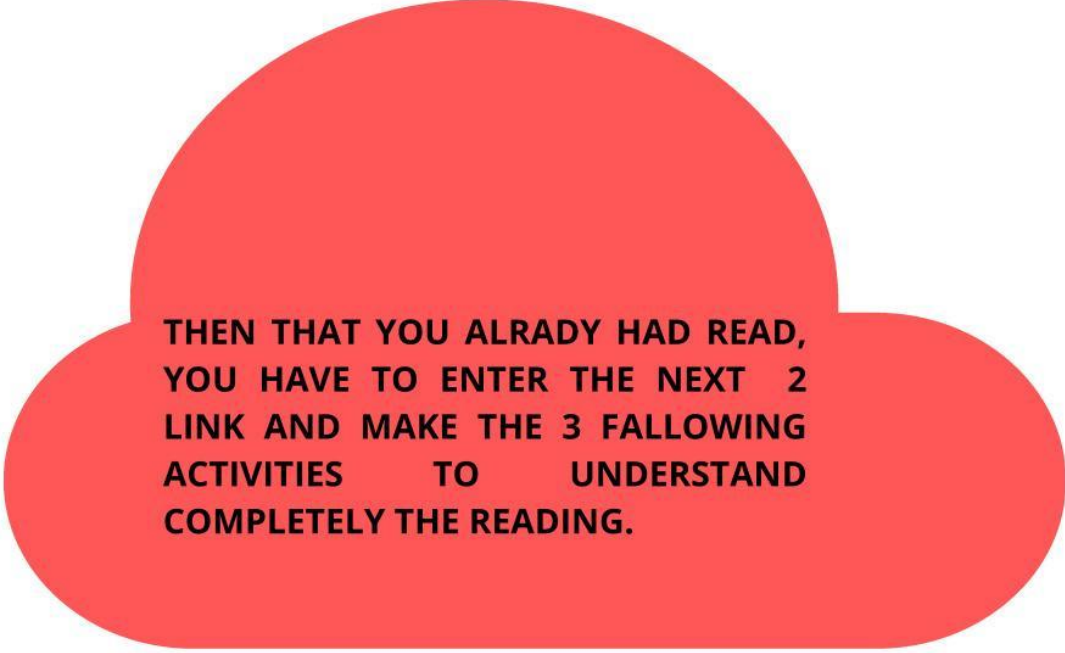


The cleanest electricity comes from the wind and the sun, but it takes time to build enough solar power plants and wind turbines for a whole country. Then there is another big problem; we cannot depend on solar power and the wind, because the sun does not shine at night, and the wind does not blow all the time. These kinds of green power are not reliable, so we need other ideas too.

Climate change is mostly caused by CO₂ and other gases in the air. Many countries are now producing less CO₂ and less air pollution than they used to. Cars are cleaner, heating is cleaner, more things are being recycled. The problem lies in poorer countries which cannot afford the new technology, and do not have the systems in place; it also lies in countries like China or Poland or Greece, where coal is still a vital source of energy, of jobs or of exports.

Some people believe that we cannot afford to fight climate change because it will cost too much. The truth is that we cannot afford not to fight against climate change, because the cost of a climate catastrophe will be even higher.





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COMPLETELY THE READING.**

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