

New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Climate Talks

NEW
INTERNATIONALIST
EASIER ENGLISH
Pre-Intermediate
READY LESSON



Today's lesson:

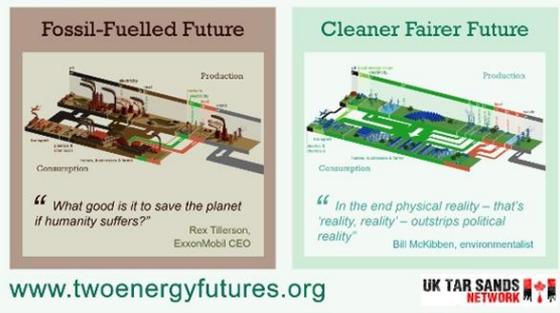
Speaking Vocabulary

Listening

Reading

Grammar

Dictation



Choose a President to be:

1/ President of a small island nation

2/ President of a very big, rich, powerful, developed country

3/ President of a very poor African country

4/ President of a small, developed European country

5/ President of a southern European country that is in the middle of the refugee crisis

6/ President of a small Asian country that is developing very quickly



Group discussion: **What must the world do to stop climate change?**

- a) Each learner in the group is the representative of a different country at important world climate talks.
- b) Preparation: write down 3 points you want to discuss.
- c) Have the meeting and try to agree on : **what must the world do to stop climate change?**

Match:

- 1) fossil fuels
 - 2) carbon emissions
 - 3) pollution
 - 4) atmosphere
 - 5) a negotiator
 - 6) a target
 - 7) carbon trading
 - 8) a permit
 - 9) reforestation
 - 10) indigenous
- a) someone who tries to agree things by discussion
 - b) native to one country/area
 - c) oil, coal and gas – dirty energy
 - d) a piece of paper that allows you to do something
 - e) planting a lot more trees after the trees were cut
 - f) the air around the Earth
 - g) poison in the air / water / earth, usually from industry
 - h) countries or companies buying and selling permission to produce CO₂
 - i) gases eg. CO₂ and methane
 - j) 

Watch this short video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucUmaCISWQw>



Climate change:

- 1/ What are the problems?
- 2/ And what are the solutions?

The 5 main ideas – what do you think they are?

1. Cutting the carbon

2. Where will the money come from?

3. Carbon trading

4. Forest protection

5. Who has responsibility?

The image contains two side-by-side diagrams comparing two future scenarios. The left diagram, titled 'Fossil-Fuelled Future', shows a production line with a long, narrow, and steeply rising carbon footprint curve. The right diagram, titled 'Cleaner Fairer Future', shows a production line with a shorter, flatter, and lower carbon footprint curve. Both diagrams include labels for 'Production' and 'Consumption'.

Fossil-Fuelled Future

Production

Consumption

“What good is it to save the planet if humanity suffers?”

Rex Tillerson, ExxonMobil CEO

Cleaner Fairer Future

Production

Consumption

“In the end physical reality – that’s ‘reality, reality’ – outstrips political reality”

Bill McKibben, environmentalist

www.twoenergyfutures.org

UK TAR SANDS NETWORK

Read and think about:

a) What is the problem?



b) What is the solution?

1. Cutting the carbon

Governments need to stop the planet getting more than two degrees Celsius hotter than the temperatures before industrial times. But they have never agreed to enough cuts in greenhouse gas emissions to achieve this; and nearly everyone now agrees that even two degrees would be dangerous. Many countries in the Global South and islands want a target of 1.5 degrees instead.

The Paris talks should be about how to leave at least 80 per cent of fossil fuels in the ground. But they are not planning on talking about this. The talks rely on the INDCs (intended nationally determined contributions): these are the promises that governments make to cut carbon emissions after 2020. This INDC process just asks governments to promise what they 'think they can achieve', not what is fair.

There is nothing to make rich countries cut emissions before 2020. The only important global carbon targets in the documents say we must get to zero emissions by 2050 or 2100. But there is no plan to get to this.

A good result:

Only Morocco and Ethiopia (of the countries that have sent their INDCs) have promised cuts that would get the world to the target of two degrees. So senior EU negotiators are already saying the Paris talks cannot even make an agreement to keep to a temperature rise below three degrees. So some governments now want a way to increase the targets of some countries at climate talks in the future. And this is the best we can hope for – leaving the responsibility to the future.

2. Where will the money come from?

To stop using fossil fuels, many Majority World countries need money and technology. They also need help to adapt to climate change and its problems. We know the climate is already changing. And poorer countries need money to protect themselves and pay for the damage. It's the richer countries that must pay because they are totally responsible for causing the problem.

Richer countries have agreed to get \$100 billion of 'climate finance' per year by 2020. But no-one has researched how much money we need. And Northern countries have not even got together 10 per cent of this money (and it will not be enough). This 'climate finance' is too general – it will include loans, private finance, money where you have to do something in return, and taking money away from charity.

A good result:

A good result would get promises of more money and would force rich countries to give money and not expect anything in return. Also governments would need to promise to spend money to support and re-train workers from the dirty energy industries, and help them to find other jobs.

3. Carbon trading

This is the idea where a country or business can buy carbon permits instead of cutting emissions. The US started this idea at the UN climate negotiations in the 1990s. Since then, it has taken a lot of money, time and effort; but it has not had much effect on emissions.

The most important carbon market is the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS). This has failed. It started in 2005, but has not cut emissions. It has given a lot of money to countries and businesses that pollute, and taken political time and attention away from better solutions. The carbon market also gives money to bad or dangerous schemes eg. failed tree plantations, 'efficient' coal power stations or geoengineering.

A good result:

We need to cut carbon markets so we can really cut emissions. Some Southern countries are fighting against carbon markets. If they get enough support, they could be successful in stopping them growing.

4. Forest protection

‘Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation’ (REDD – now REDD+) fights for better conservation, forest management and reforestation at the talks.

This sounds good, but they focus on cutting emissions from deforestation, not stopping deforestation. So they support plans like replacing a rainforest with a larger plantation of one product. If REDD is linked to carbon trading, polluters could continue to produce a lot of greenhouse gas, but ‘offset’ their climate damage by giving money to forestry projects. Indigenous groups and others are against this. They are afraid that REDD+ will help rich people buy lots of forest land to get carbon credits. This could destroy the homes and lives of the people who live there.

A good result:

Some governments are fighting to include forestry in more of the world’s carbon markets. It is very important that this does not happen. All the discussion about forests is now about carbon trading – there is no time to discuss better solutions eg. respecting the land rights of the people who live in forests – particularly Indigenous peoples.

5. Who has responsibility?

CBDR & RC ('Common But Differentiated Responsibility & Respective Capabilities') is very important at the climate talks. It's the idea that the countries with most responsibility for climate change in the past, with most resources, should do most to help the problem, and should support the poorer countries with less responsibility. The Global South won this important idea in earlier climate meetings, but now, the Northern countries want to end it. They want the developing world to have more cuts and costs.

A good result:

Hopefully, the South will get the support they need from inside and outside the talks and keep this very important idea.

Dictation:

In groups of 3 (each with a different reading), choose the most important sentence or two and dictate this to the others in your group.



The grammar we need: **match**

1/ We could talk
about it

a) it's very
necessary

2/ We should talk
about it

b) it's a
good idea

3/ We must talk
about it

c) it's one
possible
idea

Speaking: climate talks 2

You are now going to repeat your climate talks, as Presidents of many countries.

This time, use:

a) the words we have learnt



b) the grammar: could / should / must

c) the ideas we have read, listened and talked about.

Writing:

Do you use Twitter? Write some tweets (maximum 140 characters) to tell people about climate change and about the climate talks.



Homework:

Read more about climate change and the climate talks in Easier English:

http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Issue_487

