New Internationalist

Polluters making money from Covid-19

New Internationalist Easier English wiki Ready Lesson

Upper Intermediate

This lesson:

- **Reading**
- **Vocabulary**
- **Grammar**
- **Writing**

Reading:

You are going to read 5 short articles.

First, skim through each – 30 seconds – to find out what the companies are making money from

a) More projects

- In June 2020 the Slovenian government gave a list of over 180 investments to help the economy after Covid-19, including gas, roads, and a new nuclear power plant. It also stopped protections for the environment and nature by giving construction and development permits more quickly. They changed the rights of campaigners to challenge these development projects. This means that most of the country's environmental and conservation NGOs cannot challenge them in the courts until the end of 2021. Then many projects will already be in progress.

b) **More mining**

- NGOs around the world found that mining companies have done everything necessary to continue working during Covid-19. This included lobbying governments to stop action to limit their negative impact on the environment and asking to be an 'essential' service. This risks local communities and company workers, especially in rural and indigenous areas. In these areas people are already more likely to catch Covid-19. And governments have tried to stop protests and sometimes used the military and the police. Yamana Gold is a Canadian company. Reports say it has used the shutdown to help its mining projects in Chubut, Argentina. There has been a ban on mining there since 2003. In May, people made a socially distanced protest and many received threats from the police.

c) **Plastic is back**

- Plastic is back thanks to Covid-19. Industry has called on governments to delay or relax laws on single-use plastic. In June, over 125 health experts from 19 countries said that reusables were still safe to use. Plastic production uses a lot of fossil fuels. And petrochemical plants are often in communities with low incomes and minorities. They are the same communities that in countries like the US and Britain Covid-19 impacts the most.

d) **Air travel**

- Countries tried to stop Covid-19 by restricting travel and the air travel industry suffered. Before Covid-19 nothing could stop the air travel industry. Greenhouse-gas emissions from air travel were growing faster than predicted. One study said that by 2050, aeroplane emissions would use a quarter of the world's 'carbon budget'. Covid-19 forced us to stop flying. But governments did not support the workers with greener jobs, and they began to help the air travel industry.

e) **More gas**

- In Victoria in Australia, there has been support for gas during Covid-19 shutdowns. In June and July the Victorian parliament gave two permits for offshore gas exploration. Environmental campaigners said it was very disappointing' for sea life and fisheries. 'There can be no doubt that seismic testing will impact on sea life, including whales,' said Friends of the Earth. Fishers in Victoria reported an 80-per-cent drop in catching fish after seismic testing.

match:

1/ a permit
2/ to lobby
3/ to impact
4/ single use plastic
5/ to restrict
6/ offshore
7/ seismic testing
8/ exploration

A) a cup, plate or spoon that you only use once then throw away

B) to affect

C) in the sea, not near the land

D) mapping and discovering where gas and oil are

E) finding out more about an area

F) to put pressure on government to influence decisions

g) an official document that allows you to do something

h) to stop something going past certain limits

Now read again and put the sections in order according to how much they could harm the planet:

Development projects

Mining

Plastic

Air travel

Gas

Writing:

Write a paragraph of 5 sentences, one about each section of the reading, and about the order of importance you have decided on.

You need to use:

- comparatives
- superlatives and
- linkers

so check these areas of grammar to make sure you use them correctly.