

**New  
Internationalist**

# Extinction Rebellion



New Internationalist Intermediate Ready Lesson

What's  
happening?  
Where? Why?



# This lesson:

Discussion

Vocabulary

Reading

Physical response

Grammar

Role play

## Questions to discuss in small groups:

- 1/ What do 'Extinction Rebellion' do?
- 2/ Why does the group have that name?
- 3/ What sort of people are in Extinction Rebellion?
- 4/ Why do think they joined the group?
- 5/ What do you think they have done?
- 6/ What do you think they could do in future?

## Match:

1. **tactics**
  2. **climate emergency**
  3. **social justice**
  4. **vulnerable**
  5. **activist**
  6. **disruption**
  7. **natural resources**
  8. **indigenous**
  9. **fossil fuel**
- a) someone who does something (eg. protests) to change a situation
  - b) people who originally lived in an area before colonisers came
  - c) oil, gas and coal
  - d) actions or plans to achieve something
  - e) being fair and equal between individuals and society
  - f) the situation where we need urgent action to stop climate change
  - g) problems that interrupt or stop an event
  - h) needing extra care because of age, gender, disability etc
  - i) water, air, land, forest, metals etc

Question:

Do both Chay and Marc agree that Extinction Rebellion are doing the right things?

Skim the next slide to find out (1 minute only)

**Chay Harwood** says **YES**, XR's tactics are right. He joined Extinction Rebellion in November 2018 in the final year of his criminology degree at university. He is most worried about the climate emergency and social injustice. He is also worried about climate change and the most vulnerable people in the world.

**Marc Hudson** says **NO**, their tactics are wrong. Marc was an aid worker, a physiotherapist, an environmental activist, and is now a researcher. He edits Manchester Climate Monthly and helped to start Climate Emergency Manchester in the UK.

**CHAY:** Not everyone agrees with our tactics. Disruption is our main tactic and it is not something we do lightly. It is perhaps surprising to hear that I find protesting very uncomfortable and it makes me anxious. I hate giving unnecessary stress to people who are trying to go about their daily lives. I also understand that the people we affect may have difficult lives.

But we are now at a very important part of this protest. The Amazon rainforest will perhaps be so damaged in ten years from now, or even less, that it will not be possible to repair it. People are dying right now in the Global South. The Global South is losing its natural resources, and this affects people who need them to live. Governments are killing peaceful activists and indigenous people to protect fossil-fuel businesses. We at XR disrupt business-as-usual for a few hours, but this is nothing compared with the destruction of our earth and Majority World peoples.

**MARC:** Protest without disruption is not protest. So, blocking bridges, gluing yourself to things, all that is normal. But perhaps we will come back to the idea of the tube train action! (This resulted in violence between commuters and XR protesters who climbed on top of a London underground train.) We have the freedoms we enjoy now because of protest, disruption, and organizing by past generations of protesters. I am not against the strong feelings, intelligence, concern, or courage of XR activists – but I am not sure about how well the tactics will work in the long term.

You say that the situation is now terrible and that the state and businesses are murdering protesters. But the idea of climate emergency has been with us, now and then, since the early 1970s. And this brings me to my questions:

What about the people who can't afford to protest for long periods – financially, practically, emotionally? Don't you worry that because only a few can be free for arrest, this will make 'recruitment' more difficult?

What is XR doing to make it possible for people to protest for years, not months, and to make it easier for others to be involved in a small way for weeks and months? What do you think an 'average' BME [Black Minority Ethnic] person thinks about people sending the flowers to Brixton police station? (Brixton is a part of London with a history of police racism.) Wasn't that a mistake? And don't you worry that XR's idea of 'no blame' means the fossil-fuel companies can continue to destroy the planet?

[https://ewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Has Extinction Rebellion got the right tactics%3F](https://ewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Has_Extinction_Rebellion_got_the_right_tactics%3F)



## True or false?:

1. Both Chay and Marc are very worried about climate change.
2. Both Chay and Marc are members of Extinction Rebellion.
3. Extinction Rebellion members like disruption.
4. XR is more important than the destruction of the Amazon forests.
5. People have been worried about climate emergency for about 50 years.

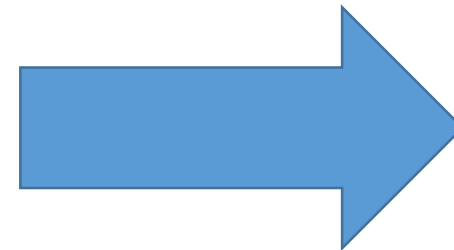
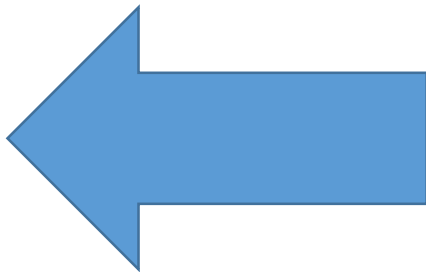
*(find the answers in the previous slide – this time read for detail – 5 minutes)*



Go through this list, moving to the left or right for each:

shout / block shopping streets / block road to airport / throw paint / climb up statues or buildings / block bridges / close hospitals / throw paint / disrupt meetings / go into people's houses / close schools / stop trains running

Things protesters **can / should** do:      Things protesters **shouldn't** do:



In pairs, make sentences – decide which modal verb you want to use:

Protesters	can't	respect everyone
	can	break anything
	should	climb up buildings
	shouldn't	close roads for more than an hour
	ought to	disrupt health services
	must	be silent
	mustn't	shout
	have to	be violent
	don't have to	leave rubbish

# Role play

**A) You are a police officer.**

**Talk to the Extinction Rebellion protesters to tell them what they can and can't / shouldn't do.**

**B) You are a member of Extinction Rebellion.**

**You believe very strongly that governments must act to stop climate change.**

**Have a chat with the police officer before your protest.**