

# Earth Day 2017

## What Is Earth Day?

Earth Day is celebrated each year on April 22nd. It was first celebrated in 1970 after a huge oil spill in California caused massive damage to the **environment**. This event prompted US senator Gaylord Nelson to push for the protection of the environment. Since then, people all over the world have pledged their support for the environment by becoming involved in Earth Day.



## Earth Day 2017

This year, people in over 193 countries will take part in activities to help raise awareness of **climate change** and to protect the environment. The Internet will be used to connect with people worldwide but communities will organise opportunities for people to come together locally to celebrate, raise awareness and take action.

## Climate Change

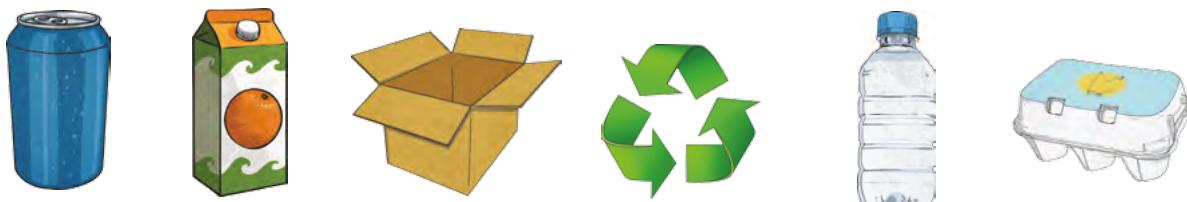
The reason for Earth Day is to slow down climate change and clean the environment. 'Climate' means the weather conditions in an area over a long period of time. Our climate is changing and scientists think this may be because of human activity such as cutting down trees without replacing them and using **fossil fuels** such as coal, oil and gas. These activities cause a gas called carbon dioxide to build up in the Earth's atmosphere. Some people refer to carbon dioxide as a '**greenhouse gas**' because it traps heat and causes the Earth to warm up, just like in a greenhouse.

'Climate change' causes the Earth to warm up faster, changing the weather and the environment.

## Carbon Footprint

Earth Day tries to reach out to people and let them know how they can help by reducing their **carbon footprint**. Your carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide you release into the air. Everyone needs to use energy but how the energy is created can make a difference. When fossil fuels burn, they release carbon dioxide. By using energy from **renewable** sources, such as wind, solar and water, there would be no **pollution** or carbon dioxide.

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### Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

By recycling your waste, you can reduce the amount of energy you use. Recycling glass and plastic uses less energy than making it new. Recycling paper means fewer trees need to be cut down to make new material.



### Trees for Life!

Trees are amazing! They help reduce the effects of climate change because they absorb carbon dioxide. Trees are an important part of the environment because they provide **habitats** for different species, encouraging **biodiversity** and helping prevent species loss. Earth Day

encourages people to plant more trees in their communities in order to improve the environment but also to create jobs. This creates a strong sense of community where people share the same values and organise opportunities to come together.

### How can you support Earth Day?

**Plant a tree** - can you help plant 7.8 billion trees?

**Write a letter to your MP** - explain why the environment is so important.

**Recycle** - reduce what you throw away, reuse as much as you can.

**Walk, cycle, scoot** - enjoy the fresh air and stay fit while helping the environment and reducing your carbon footprint.



## Useful words

- environment:** the surroundings or conditions a person, plant or animal lives in.
- climate change:** a change in the weather, thought to be caused by the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- fossil fuel:** a natural fuel such as coal, oil or gas that was formed millions of years ago from the remains of living things.
- pollution:** something that is either present or introduced to the environment that is harmful or poisonous.
- renewable:** a natural resource that can be made again over time, such as wind, sun and water; causes no pollution.
- habitat:** the home of an animal or plant.
- biodiversity:** variety of animals and plants living in an area.



### Did You Know?

The planet loses 15 billion trees each year. That's an area the size of 48 football fields each minute!

Earth Day has a target of planting 7.8 billion trees by 2020; one for each person on the planet. This symbolises everyone helping to make the world a better place.

# Questions

1. When is Earth Day celebrated?
  2. What incident prompted Earth Day?
  3. Which word means 'a group of people living together, sharing the same values'?
  4. Give two reasons for climate change.
  5. Wind, sun and water are examples of renewable energy. Why are these better than fossil fuels?

6. In the fact box at the end, the author compares tree loss to the size of a football field. Why do you think that is?
  7. Carbon dioxide is described as a greenhouse gas. What does that mean?
  8. Do you think the author supports Earth Day? Give a reason for your answer.
  9. Look at the subheading 'Trees for life!' Can you think of a different subheading? Explain your choice.
  10. What is the main purpose of this article?