Benefits of lockdown on the environment

Despite the very many difficulties the pandemic has created in 2020, there is at least one benefit; the amount of pollution globally has gone down. Pollutants such as greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. carbon dioxide) have warmed the earth and continue to do so. The last five years have been the hottest on record and 2020 is expected to be the hottest year to date. A warmer globe has been catastrophic for the planet: record wildfires, fiercer hurricanes, large droughts and displacement of millions. Moreover, climate change actually increases the likelihood of infectious diseases like Coronavirus occurring. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention believes that as we destroy habitats like the Amazon Rainforest, and the earth warms changing the breeding and habitats of animals, the human race comes into closer contact with wildlife and the diseases they carry. For example, for every 10% of the Amazon forest that was cut down there was a surge of malaria cases (a disease carried by mosquitos in some counties – not the UK) by 3%.
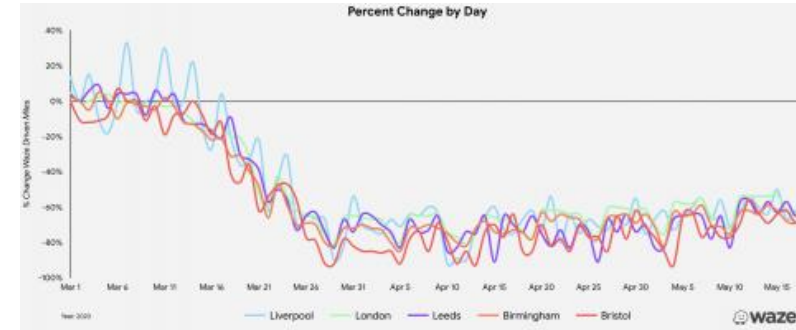
In April, Pope Francis called for the world to take a global responses; *"people at all levels of society [coming] together to create a popular movement".* On an individual level, we can reduce our impact on the environment in many ways such as: recycling; not using disposable plastic; walking instead of using a car; avoiding overuse of planes; being more considerate consumers only buying what we need.

Since the Coronavirus pandemic began we have experienced what life is like without that daily trip to Poundland to buy a plastic bottle of water and chocolate wrapped in plastic. Society has mostly moved to working from home, massively reducing the number of cars on the road. Air travel has come to a halt and our sky is free from the trails they leave behind. The air is cleaner, animals and insects are flourishing and litter is rare if non-existent. As lockdown has begun to lift and the government is allowing more socialising these benefits are slowly disappearing.

A graph depicting the changes in driving levels across UK major cities since lockdown began

Task 1: Youtube search "Earth day 2020 before and after" and select the above video then answer these questions…

1. In what ways has the environment changed for the better during the pandemic? List three ways

2. How do these changes benefit society? List three ways

3. What has happened (or specifically not happened) in society for these environmental changes to occur? E.g. less people driving means less car pollution

4. When lockdown ends and people go back to work and school, how can we continue to make a difference to the environment?

Before lockdown

During lockdown

New York

May 17, 2019

London

March 19, 2015 — April 20, 2020

Delhi, India

On the back of old cardboard, create a map of your environmental footprint.

Plastic bottle cactus pot…

Stone painted games

Toilet/kitchen roll makeup brush holder…

Plastic bottle bird feeder

Task 2 aim: to create something useful or enjoyable out of recycled materials.
What you create should be useful or enjoyable and remind you of the positive environmental impact of lockdown. You may use the ideas on this page to help you.
Remember to share a photo of what you do with us at CW2020@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk

Tin can planters…

Collage art work…

Bug hotel…

Homemade paper…

Repurposed old clothing…

BEFORE — AFTER

Does your family forget to recycle? Make a recycle area…

PLASTIC — PAPER

Upcycled clothing…