



Year 6 Geography: British Geographical Issues Reading Booklet

Lesson Series:

1. Air Pollution
2. Climate Change
3. Waste
4. Litter
5. Local context - Wisbech Incinerator plans
6. Assessment

Name: _____

Class: _____

Lesson 1

Air Pollution



Air pollution is contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical, physical or biological agent that changes the natural characteristics of the air and atmosphere.

Household combustion (burning fuel) devices, motor vehicles, industrial facilities and forest fires are common sources of air pollution. Pollutants of major public health concern include particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. Outdoor and indoor air pollution cause respiratory and other diseases and can impact how long people live.



WHO (world health organisation) data show that almost all of the global population (99%) breathe air that exceeds [WHO guideline limits](#) and contains high levels of [pollutants](#), with low- and middle-income countries suffering from the highest exposures.

Air quality is closely linked to the earth's climate and ecosystems globally. Many of the drivers of air pollution (i.e. combustion of fossil fuels) are also sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Policies to reduce air pollution, therefore, offer a win-win strategy for both climate and health, lowering the burden of disease attributable to air pollution, as well as contributing to the near- and long-term mitigation of climate change.

Lesson 2

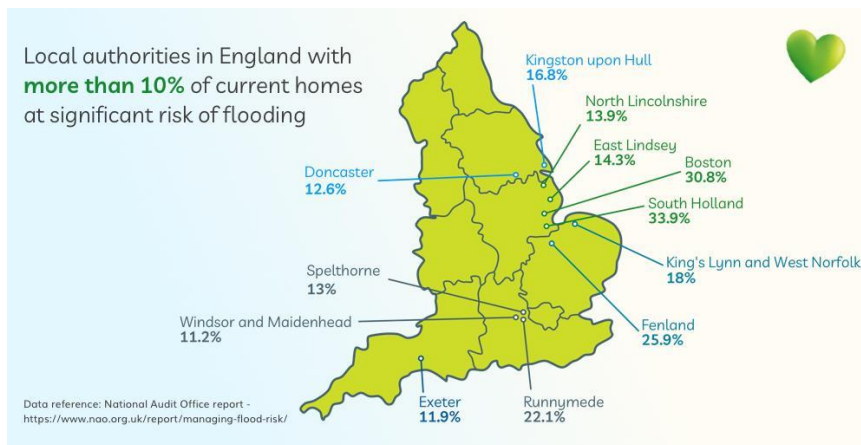
Climate change in the UK



Flooding is the most frequent natural disaster in the UK - especially during the autumn and winter months. Scientists believe that climate change is leading to more heavy rain and also to sea-level rise (mostly due to warmer temperatures causing the ice caps to melt), which causes storm surges to be stronger and more likely to breach coastal defences. In the UK we experience river flooding and coastal flooding. Much of King's Lynn is built on floodplains along the River Ouse making it a high

risk flooding area. Many cities in the UK are located on waterfronts and large areas of land in

the UK, particularly in England, are low-lying. This makes locations vulnerable to flooding. Population growth is a reason more people are affected by flooding as more land becomes inhabited.



Coupled with climate change, many people in the UK are at risk of having homes and businesses flooded leading to a loss of income and costs from repairs and clean-ups. In February and March 2020, England was hit by three storms, Storm Dennis, Storm Ciara and Storm Jorge. Locations in England including Shrewsbury in Shropshire, East Cowick in Yorkshire and Bewdley in Worcestershire were flooded, and experts estimate damage totalled £360m. Some 15 rivers in the Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire have recorded their highest levels on record. Flooding can leave homes and businesses underwater, then when the flood waters recede buildings must be dried out and repaired before people can live and work in them again.

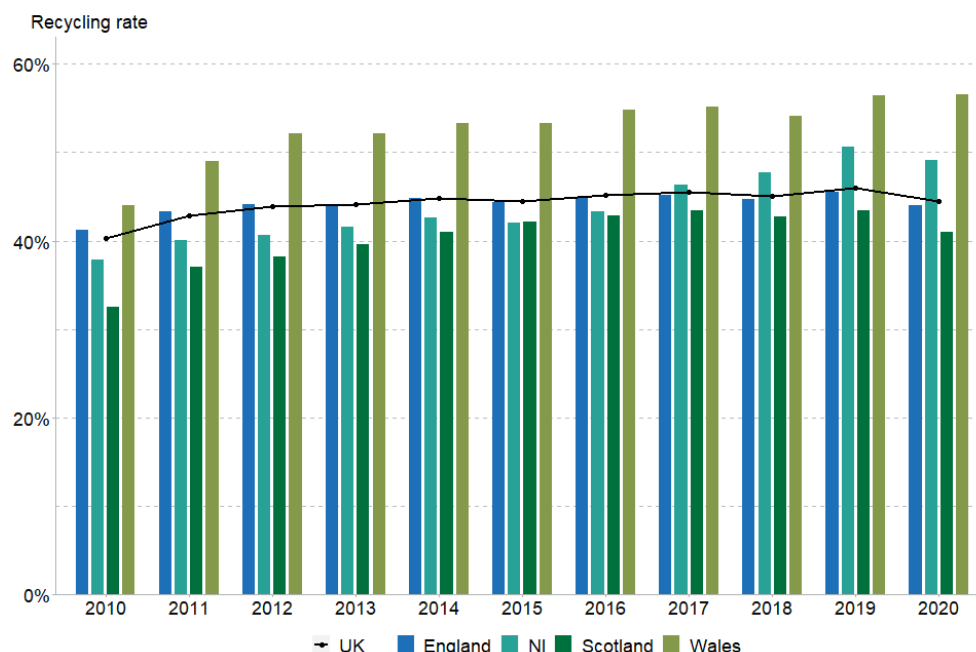


Lesson 3

Waste in the UK

The UK produced 222.9 million tonnes of waste in 2017 including households, businesses and industry. 22.4 million tonnes of waste was produced by English households in 2017. This is 85% of the UK total. In the UK, we recycle less than half of our household waste. (43% in England, 46.3% in NI, 43.5 % in Scotland and 57.6% in Wales.).

Recycling rate from Waste from Households, UK and country split, 2010–2020



24%, 52.3 million tonnes, of waste is disposed of in landfill each year. Waste is transported to landfill sites for burial in the ground. Problems associated with landfill include pollution from the liquids and gases released by the rubbish and also limited space to continue the practice. Keep Britain Tidy are an organisation who challenge the government to implement policies to help reduce waste. They successfully helped to campaign for the reduction in use of single-use plastic bags.

Lesson 4

Litter in the UK

Read this



Litter is rubbish that is discarded in an open, public space. Over two million pieces of litter are dropped in the UK every day. Local councils are responsible for cleaning up litter, and this is done at a cost of over £1 billion per year. This money comes from tax that people in the UK pay - meaning we all pay for the rubbish to be picked up.

Common litter items include food packaging, sweet wrappers, drinks cans and cigarette butts. Some items of litter can take years to degrade, especially items made of plastic and in the meantime it can cause harm to wildlife and attract vermin like rats, pigeons and foxes. In London, foxes can cause more litter to end up on the streets because they break open rubbish bags, while scavenging for food.

Litter can make our local areas look untidy and uncared for. Dropping litter is against the law. If caught dropping litter, individuals can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or could be prosecuted and taken to court.



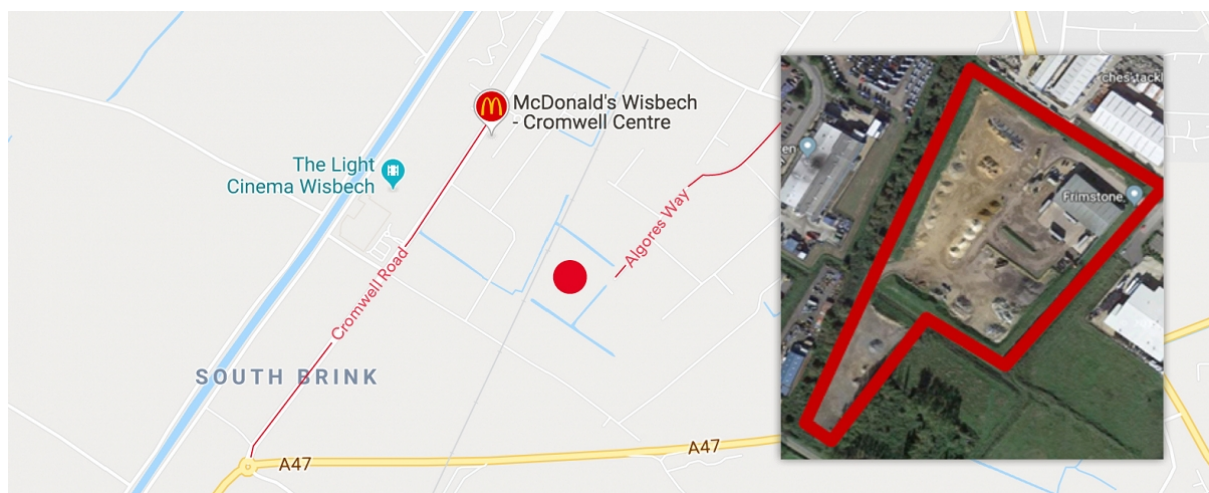
Lesson 5

Local case study - Wisbech proposed Incinerator

Read this

UK-based company MVV Environment Ltd plans to develop a new energy from waste combined heat and power facility generating electricity and steam on land at Algores Way, Wisbech.

If successful, a new company, to be called 'MVV Environment Medworth,' will be looking to employ local people to help build, operate and maintain the facility. The proposed energy from waste combined heat and power facility will divert over half a million tonnes of non-recyclable waste from landfill every year, generating over 50 megawatts of electricity and offering the opportunity to supply steam to local factories. The total investment will be over £300 million, and it is anticipated that construction will take around three years, during this time employing up to 700 people.



However, though this would prevent a lot of locally produced waste going into landfill, create jobs and produce more electricity for the local area, there are many reasons why people are protesting this. Burning waste will emit a large amount of pollution into the air, which could impact our health, local businesses and the local environment. Some food factories in Wisbech have said they may have to close as it would impact the safety and quality of the food they produce. Burning waste is not solving our countrywide problem of producing too much.