

Protecting Our Planet: A Shared Responsibility in a Changing World

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Article (B2 Level – ~1400 words)

In the 21st century, environmental protection has become one of the most urgent and complex challenges facing humanity. Climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, and the overuse of natural resources are no longer distant threats—they are real and visible problems that affect our daily lives. From extreme weather events to rising sea levels, the consequences of human activity on the environment are increasingly evident. Therefore, the question is no longer whether we should act, but how quickly and effectively we can do so.

One of the most critical environmental issues today is climate change. It is primarily caused by the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, which result from burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. These emissions trap heat in the atmosphere and lead to global warming. As a result, we are witnessing more frequent heatwaves, droughts, floods, and storms. These changes not only threaten ecosystems but also have serious social and economic consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Another major concern is pollution. Air pollution, for instance, is responsible for millions of premature deaths each year. It is caused by industrial activities, transportation, and the use of non-renewable energy sources. Water pollution is equally alarming, as oceans and rivers are increasingly contaminated by plastic waste, chemicals, and oil spills. Marine life suffers greatly from this pollution, and the consequences eventually return to humans through the food chain.

In addition to pollution, the loss of biodiversity is a pressing issue. Many animal and plant species are disappearing at an alarming rate due to habitat destruction, climate change, and human interference. Forests are being cut down for agriculture, urban expansion, and industrial purposes, leading to deforestation. This not only destroys natural habitats but also reduces the planet's ability to absorb carbon dioxide, thus accelerating climate change.

Despite these challenges, there is still hope. Governments, organizations, and individuals around the world are becoming more aware of the importance of environmental protection. International agreements such as the Paris Agreement aim to reduce global emissions and limit temperature increases. Many countries are

investing in renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. These alternatives are cleaner and more sustainable than fossil fuels.

However, government action alone is not enough. Individuals also play a crucial role in protecting the environment. Simple everyday actions can make a significant difference. For example, reducing energy consumption, using public transport, recycling waste, and avoiding single-use plastics are effective ways to lower one's environmental impact. Moreover, raising awareness and educating others about environmental issues can lead to long-term positive changes.

Education is indeed one of the most powerful tools in environmental protection. Schools and universities should integrate sustainability topics into their curricula to prepare future generations for the challenges ahead. Young people, in particular, have shown strong engagement in environmental activism. Movements led by youth have successfully brought global attention to climate issues and pressured governments to take action.

Businesses also have a responsibility to adopt more sustainable practices. Companies should reduce waste, use eco-friendly materials, and invest in green technologies. Consumers can influence corporate behavior by choosing products that are environmentally friendly and ethically produced. In this way, the market can become a driving force for positive change.

Another important aspect of environmental protection is the concept of sustainable development. This means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It requires a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social well-being. Achieving this balance is not easy, but it is essential for long-term sustainability.

Nevertheless, there are still many obstacles to overcome. Political interests, economic pressures, and a lack of global cooperation often slow down progress. Some countries are more affected by environmental problems than others, yet they may have fewer resources to address them. This raises important questions about fairness and responsibility on a global scale.

In conclusion, environmental protection is a shared responsibility that requires action at all levels of society. Governments must implement effective policies, businesses must operate sustainably, and individuals must adopt environmentally friendly behaviors. Only through collective effort can we protect our planet and ensure a better future for generations to come. The time to act is now, and every small step counts.

ORAL EXAM PREPARATION – QUESTIONS (B2)

For Opinion Speech (Meinungsrede)

1. Why is environmental protection important today?
2. What are the main causes of climate change?
3. Do you think individuals can make a difference? Why/Why not?
4. Should governments introduce stricter environmental laws?
5. What role do companies play in protecting the environment?
6. Is recycling enough to solve environmental problems?
7. How can young people contribute to environmental protection?
8. What are the biggest environmental problems in your country?
9. Should plastic be banned completely?
10. What can schools do to promote sustainability?

For Summary (Zusammenfassung)

Tasks:

- Summarise the main environmental problems mentioned in the text.
- Explain the role of individuals and governments.
- Describe possible solutions.

USEFUL VOCABULARY (B2 LEVEL)

Environment

- climate change
- global warming
- pollution
- biodiversity

- deforestation
 - renewable energy
 - sustainability
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Problems

- greenhouse gases
 - carbon emissions
 - environmental damage
 - natural disasters
 - overconsumption
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Solutions

- reduce waste
 - recycle
 - use renewable energy
 - protect natural resources
 - raise awareness
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Opinion Expressions


- In my opinion...
 - I strongly believe...
 - One important aspect is...
 - It is clear that...
 - However...
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EXTRA: STRUCTURE FOR ORAL EXAM

 **Opinion Speech Structure:**

1. Introduction
 2. Main arguments
 3. Examples
 4. Conclusion
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 **FINAL TIP**

 *Speak clearly, structure your ideas, and use linking words!*