

## World Environment Day

### Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

### Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

| Vocabulary              | Definition  |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. .... island nations  | a. to organise an event   |
| 2. .... global warming  | b. a phrase that is used to promote something                     |
| 3. .... illegal trading | c. people who live in the same town or neighbourhood              |
| 4. .... local community | d. countries that are made up of one or more islands              |
| 5. .... to focus on     | e. buying and selling animals that are in danger or protected     |
| 6. .... to host         | f. the fact that temperatures are getting hotter around the world |
| 7. .... a cause         | g. to pay attention to  |
| 8. .... a slogan        | h. something that you believe in and are ready to fight for       |

## World Environment Day

People celebrate World Environment Day (WED) in many different ways all over the world: planting trees, cleaning up local beaches, organising meetings, joining online protests. Each year the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) chooses a particular issue to focus on. One year it might be forests, another year it might be wildlife. And each year there is a new host; a city which is the centre point for all the celebrations.

### How it first started

The United Nations (UN) named 5 June as international World Environment Day at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. The idea was to draw attention to the many problems that are facing our environment. They wanted to include as many people, organisations and governments, both local and national, as possible. They wanted to show that positive change is possible when people work together to fight for a common cause.

### The first World Environment Day

The first WED was celebrated in 1974 in the city of Spokane in the USA. The slogan for that first year was 'Only One Earth' and it was celebrated with the world's first world fair to be dedicated to the environment. The exhibition lasted for six months.

## The hosts

Since 1974 the WED has been hosted by 34 different cities in 25 different countries around the world, from Cuba to Korea, from Belgium to Brazil. Some countries have hosted the main celebrations two or more times, including Bangladesh, Canada and China. But that doesn't mean that all the celebrations take place in the host country. Every year people from all over the world take part in a huge number of different events to draw attention to the main issue.

## The issues

Each year the celebrations focus on a particular problem. Over the last ten years key issues have included wildlife, forests and plastic waste, among other things. Each issue has a slogan. Past slogans include 'Think. Eat. Save.', which asked people to think about the issue of food waste, and 'Raise your voice, not the sea level', to focus on the effect that global warming is having on small island nations around the world. As well as slogans, hashtags have become important for the campaigns too. In a recent campaign the hashtag #WildforLife became a strong symbol for the fight against all kinds of illegal trading in plants and animals.

## What you can do

If you want to take part in the celebrations, or support this year's special cause, here are some things that you can do. You can visit the [official website](#) to find out what this year's slogan is. You can search for the slogan online to find organisations and events in your area or online. You can share information about the cause and the events on social media or form a local action group of your own and organise an event in your community. Whatever you do, you won't be alone. Millions of people all around the world will be joining the celebrations and fighting for a better future for our planet.

## Tasks

### Task 1

Match the information (a–e) with the section titles (1–5).

#### Section titles

1. .... The issues
2. .... What you can do
3. .... How it first started
4. .... The hosts
5. .... The first WED

#### Information

- a. When the decision was made about the date for this special day
- b. What was so special about the exhibition that was held in the USA
- c. The names of cities and countries that have helped organise the day
- d. The problems and good causes that people have tried to draw attention to
- e. Examples of the kind of thing people do to fight for the environment

### Task 2

Put the phrases in the correct group.

|                |                               |                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Wild for Life  | rising sea levels             | Think. Eat. Save.                   |
| planting trees | visiting the official website | joining protests                    |
| plastic waste  | wasting food                  | Raise your voice, not the sea level |

| Actions | Issues | Slogans |
|---------|--------|---------|
|         |        |         |

### Discussion

What do you think are the main problems that are facing the environment at the moment? What can we do to help?

## Answers

### Preparation task

1. d
2. f
3. e
4. c
5. g
6. a
7. h
8. b

### Task 1

1. d
2. e
3. a
4. c
5. b

### Task 2

| Actions   | Issues   | Slogans   |
|---|--|---|
| joining protests<br>planting trees<br>visiting the official website | plastic waste<br>rising sea levels<br>wasting food | Raise your voice, not the sea level<br>Think. Eat. Save.<br>Wild for Life |