

# How We Talk About The Environment

12th December 2019

## The Guardian has updated its style guide to introduce terms that more accurately describe the environmental crises facing the world

Instead of “climate change” the new preferred terms in the news are “climate emergency”, “climate crisis” or “climate breakdown”, and the term “global heating” is favoured over “global warming”, although the original terms are not **banned**.

“We want to ensure that we are being scientifically precise, while also communicating clearly with readers on this very important issue,” said the editor-in-chief, Katharine Viner. “The phrase ‘climate change’, for example, sounds rather passive and gentle when what scientists are talking about is a catastrophe for humanity.” “Increasingly, climate scientists and organisations are changing their terminology, and using stronger language to describe the situation we’re in,” she said.

The United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, talked of the “climate crisis” last September, adding: “We face a direct existential **threat**.” The climate scientist Prof. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, a former adviser to Angela Merkel, the EU and the pope, also uses the words “climate crisis”.

In December of last year, Prof. Richard Betts, who leads the Met Office’s climate research, said “global heating” was a more accurate term than “global warming” to describe the changes taking place to the world’s climate. In the political world, UK MPs recently **endorsed** the Labour party’s declaration of a “climate emergency”.

The scale of the climate and wildlife crises has been **laid bare** by two **landmark** reports from the world’s scientists. Last October, they said carbon emissions must **halve** by 2030 to avoid even greater risks of **drought, floods**, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. Last May, global scientists said human society was in **jeopardy** from the accelerating **annihilation** of wildlife and destruction of the ecosystems that support all life on Earth.

Other terms that have been updated include the use of “wildlife” rather than “biodiversity”, “fish populations” instead of “fish stocks” and “climate science denier” rather than “climate sceptic”.

In May, Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who has inspired school strikes for climate around the globe, said: “It’s 2019. Can we all now call it what it is: climate breakdown, climate crisis,

climate emergency, ecological breakdown, ecological crisis and ecological emergency?”

The update to the Guardian’s style guide follows the addition of the global carbon dioxide level to the Guardian’s daily weather pages.

“Levels of CO2 in the atmosphere have risen so dramatically. Including a measure of that in our daily weather report is symbolic of what human activity is doing to our climate,” said Viner in April. “People need reminding that the climate crisis is no longer a future problem – we need to tackle it now, and every day matters.”

 Adapted from [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) by ECP coach Alison Keable

### Before you read the article, find this vocabulary in the text:

**banned:** prohibited  
**threat:** a cause of danger  
**endorse:** to publicly approve  
**laid bare:** exposed, made clear  
**landmark (adj.):** of reference  
**to halve:** to be divided by two  
**drought:** a lack of water  
**flood:** an overflow of water  
**jeopardy:** risk, danger  
**annihilation:** total destruction



www.englishcoachingprojects.net  
info@englishcoachingprojects.net



## Let’s chat about that!

Write your opinions in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

**Do you read The Guardian or any other British newspaper?**

**Do you think it’s important to use these new terms?**

**What other subjects require the use of precise words?**

**How important is the climate situation to you?**

**Have you seen Greta Thunberg’s TED talk? What did you think?**

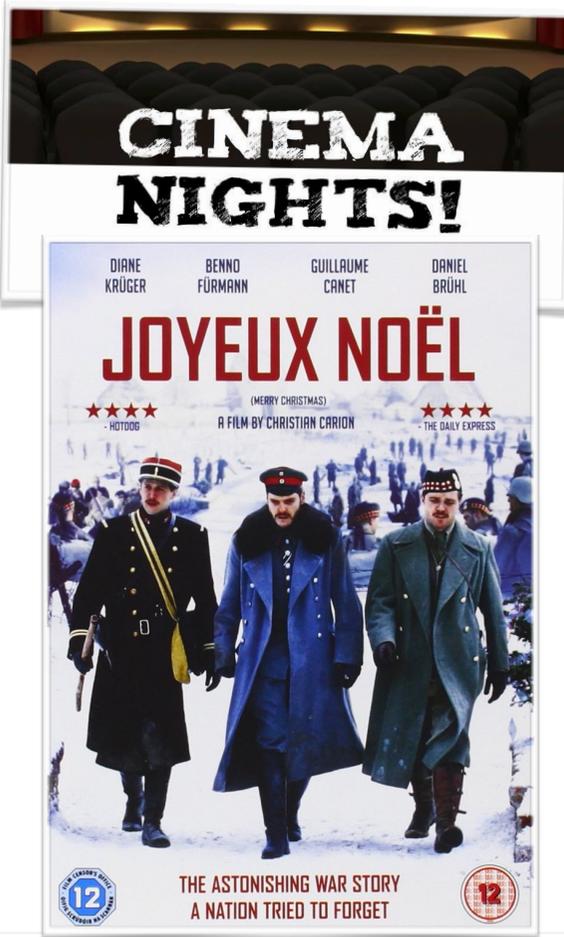
# Social Events In English

Real-Life English in Vitoria-Gasteiz



# Practical English Stuff

Real Language to Express Yourself Better



Don't miss the Christmas edition of **Cinema Nights!**

**Date:** Friday, 20th December

**Time:** 19:30 to 21:30

**Place:** ECP Hub, C/San Ignacio de Loyola 15

Describe how the following words make you feel

global warming

animal annihilation

climate breakdown

climate emergency

climate crisis

animal extinction

climate change

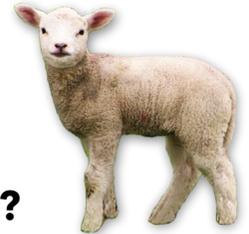


## EMERGENCY

Click [here](#)

to watch **Greta Thunberg's** inspiring TED talk on the need to **"act right now"**.

Guess the 7 missing words in the text below!



**Time to kick the meat habit?**

We all know \_\_\_\_\_ the environmental problems caused by driving, taking holidays far away or not putting rubbish \_\_\_\_\_ the correct coloured bins. These issues have been covered \_\_\_\_\_ the media for years.

However, one vital element that is all too often missing from environmental agendas is meat production.

The article \_\_\_\_\_ page 1 mentions CO2 emissions, but this is just one of multiple gases that contribute \_\_\_\_\_ climate change, and two of these gases are directly linked to eating meat: methane and nitrous oxide.

Furthermore, it is far more efficient \_\_\_\_\_ grow crops for food than to feed them to animals and then consume those animals.

United Nations scientists produced a very important report called Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options, \_\_\_\_\_ concludes that the meat industry is "one of the most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global", including "problems of land degradation, climate change and air pollution, water shortage and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity".