

Unit 1

Living Green



Learning Objectives

1. To acquire useful expressions used in oral tasks on living green;
2. To practice expressions for the related topics on living green;
3. To present your idea effectively on living green;
4. To get more information about living green.

Warm-up Questions

- ① What does “living green” mean?
- ② What are your tips for living green?
- ③ What's the significance of living green?



Section A Getting Ready to Speak

Part One

Read the following topic-related passages and answer the questions accordingly.



What Does “Living Green” Mean?

Living green means having a lifestyle that is environmentally conscious. It means being Earth-friendly or environmentally friendly, rather than doing things that are harmful to our world. In general, living green can be accomplished through doing what is known as “the 3 Rs”: reducing, reusing, and recycling.

Reducing waste helps lower the amount of garbage in landfills. Garbage that is piled up causes pollution; it's difficult to dispose of it cleanly and some of it ends up in the oceans. Some groups focusing on green living have protested the amount of packaging that manufacturers use in making products, such as having an item in a box with plastic wrap over it. Many companies today have new packaging designs that are more environmentally friendly, resulting in less waste.

One of the most important ways of living green is to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles. Emissions from cars are a big threat to sustainable living. Environmental sustainability refers to the maintenance of resources for healthy living to continue. It's a known fact that if we continue to pollute the Earth, it will no longer be a sustainable environment for future generations. Besides driving less, buying food locally rather than having it transported from long distances is another way of participating in green living by helping to reduce carbon emissions.



Reusing items helps keep them from piling up in the landfill. Donating still usable, but unwanted clothing and household goods to people or organizations allows the items to have a second life rather than having to be processed as garbage. Reusing stained or ripped clothing as cleaning rags is another way of living green. In addition to being reused, cloth rags cut down or eliminate the amount of paper towels needed in a household. Unless they're made from recycled materials, paper towels aren't considered environmentally friendly as the pulp they consist of comes from natural resources including trees.

Many companies today are more environmentally conscious than they were in the past decades. Some manufacturers choose greener methods for producing goods, while others use recycled materials. Using recycled paper products made for the kitchen and bathroom that earth-conscious companies produce is a part of living green today.

Most cities have recycling programs in which residents not only place garbage out for pickup but items that can be recycled rather than sent to the landfill. Bins can be used to store glass bottles, newspapers, plastic containers, and many other recyclable goods in the home until pickup day. Living green means never throwing anything into the garbage before considering whether it can be recycled. Container manufacturers today place numbers on items such as margarine tubs and inserts that hold commercial cookies or crackers so that consumers know whether certain product containers are recyclable.

Question 1: Through what ways can living green be accomplished?

Question 2: In what ways can waste be reduced to help us live green?



Exchange of Goods

Of the rash of bartering sites that appeared in 2006, only a few survive. But their patrons believe money-less exchange is the way forward for a green lifestyle.

In 2006, Canadian blogger Kyle MacDonald, who bartered his way from a single red paper clip to a house, through a series of online trades became a much-told tale. Shanghai native Li Huizhu has swapped coupons and show tickets given by the nursery school where she teaches, and cosmetics gifted by friends and colleagues, for more than 500 items of everyday use. This has helped her accumulate all the shampoo and soaps her family has needed over the two years that she has been bartering. "Everything, except for money, is exchangeable on the bartering website. All

you do is to upload a picture of the items you don't want, write a few words about it, leave your contact information, and then, just wait and see what happens," says Li. "The only rule to follow is to be honest with what you deal. Don't brag about or hide anything. And keep in mind the item's utility for the other side," Li adds.

But Sun Yumin, one of the founders of a Shanghai-based bartering website, and Li's friend, believes successful bartering calls for "a special talent"—a combination of a salesman's persuasiveness and a collector's shrewdness. "Bartering is based on trust. There is never a guarantee of satisfaction. And conflicts occur frequently, especially when it comes to electronic gadgets," Sun says. To minimize troubles, the swapping of goods is usually done face-to-face, so that the items can be examined personally before a deal is sealed. These personal meetings also lead to unlikely friendships. "Girls and boys at my son's age come to me for help with telling fakes from originals, and secondhand from new. I feel young and happy hanging out with them," Li says. According to Sun, 70% of the website's members are young white-collar workers, with retired or middle-aged computer-literate people comprising the rest. The most popular items are discount shopping cards, bakery coupons, and show tickets that have a precise value.

Hundreds of bartering websites cropped up in 2007 when the legend of Kyle MacDonald swept through the country. But most were unable to turn in a profit and shut down. Since they provide a free service for those users, some sites make money only through advertisements posted by other online stores, and that is often just enough to offset its basic costs. The only reason for its survival, Sun says, is that it is free. That leaves little scope for any expansion, in spite of its increasing popularity.

Question 1: What's your understanding of bartering sites?

Question 2: What's the purpose of exchanging goods on the bartering website?



18 Tips for Environmental Protection

Each and every one of us is responsible for the greenhouse gases we emit in our daily actions and choices. Therefore, combating climate change is going to take the combined efforts of everyone on the planet.

The average household carbon footprint in China is 2.41 tons of carbon dioxide annually. That's enough to fill half an Olympic swimming pool.



Surprised? Well, here's how you can work to reduce it:

1. Take showers rather than baths and reduce your shower time by two minutes. This will save water and give you an extra two minutes in bed.
2. Don't purchase unnecessary clothes, and be careful about the materials you buy. Wool and cotton fabrics have a really high greenhouse gas impact. Man-made fibers such as polyester are a better choice.
3. There's no point having the heat up high while the wind is blowing in under the door or sneaking in through the window. Reseal all window frames to keep the heat in.
4. Try to buy high-quality, long-lasting products even though they may cost a little more. A laptop is more efficient than a desktop, and a small-screen TV is better than a big flat-screen.
5. Only turn the water heater on when necessary, and adjust temperature controls to avoid overheating. Put a lid on a pan when boiling water.
6. When using the washing machine, be sure there's a full load and turn the temperature down if it's not really grubby.
7. The greediest home device along with the washing machine is the fridge. Make sure it's as efficient as possible by keeping it out of direct sunlight and away from the oven or heater.
8. This is obvious, but essential: switch off all appliances when you're not using them. This includes lights.
9. Conserve energy by using efficient light bulbs. They use about one-third of the energy of normal bulbs and last 10 times as long.
10. Only print things out when necessary, and print double-sided and reduce the margins.
11. Take your own mug and cutlery to work. This saves throwing away disposable cups and containers—but that could be outweighed by washing your cutlery. So, pay attention to how you use water when washing your dishes.
12. Find out what the recycling options are in your area. Then make sure you keep items such as paper and plastic bottles separate so that they can be recycled. There are places where you can recycle electronic appliances and batteries. Make sure you find them.
13. Look for reusable, recyclable, and biodegradable items and remember to carry your reusable shopping bags.
14. Each week, choose one day when you don't eat meat. Meat uses up lots of energy because it takes a long time to produce.



15. Only buy the amount of food you need and if there are leftovers, get creative. For instance, make them into a soup. Ask to take food home from restaurants if there's some left, but remember to take your own container to avoid using a disposable carton.

16. Food production eats up lots of energy. When you buy food, go local rather than imported, and get fresh vegetables instead of frozen.

17. All motorized travel is carbon-intensive. Buses and trains are better than cars, but walking or cycling is better still. It's also better for your health and cheaper.

18. Air travel is an environmental disaster. As well as carbon dioxide, planes emit nitrogen oxide, another nasty gas.

Question 1: What can you do to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted in daily life?

Question 2: What else can you do to protect the environment?

Part Two

Act out the following dialogs with your partner. Change the role when necessary.



Jean: Hey, Helen, what are you up to?

Helen: Hi, Jean, I'm browsing TikTok.

Jean: Oh, which short video are you watching?

Helen: A local one. It's about recycling old clothes. I have a lot of old clothes, and I'm considering reaching out to the person who posted the video.

Jean: Really? I also have a bunch of old clothes and don't know what to do with them. Please share it with me.

Helen: No problem. Recycling can contribute to environmental protection. In addition to old clothes, items like glass, paper, plastics, cardboard, and tin cans can be taken to a recycling center to reduce resource waste.

Jean: I had no idea you were so environmentally conscious!

Helen: Honestly, if we want the Earth to remain a habitable place, we all need to take a greater interest in the environment.



Jean: Yes, our environment used to be beautiful. The air was fresh, the water was clean, the sky was blue, and so on.

Helen: There are many things we can do to protect our environment.

Jean: Yes, we should start with small and everyday things. For example, using fewer disposable chopsticks, opting for eco-friendly transportation, and more.

Helen: Caring for flowers, protecting birds and animals, saving water, and properly managing resources...

Jean: The first step is the TikTok short video. Have you shared it with me?

Helen: Certainly. I sent it to you as soon as you asked.

Jean: OK, thank you.

Helen: You're welcome.

Jean: Now, I'm heading to the library. See you.

Helen: See you.



A: Hi Nancy, did you also come to listen to the Energy and Sustainable Development report?

B: Yes. What are your thoughts on this report?

A: I think I learned a lot. As we all know, with the development of society, various energy sources such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas have been extensively used. However, the availability of these energy sources is limited. The unchecked consumption of energy resources has led to an energy crisis.

B: Yes, you're right. Since the first "energy crisis" in 1973-1974, it has occurred several times. The economies of some developing countries heavily reliant on petroleum have been severely impacted by energy crises.

A: Fossil fuel resources, like coal, unlike sunlight, are not renewable within the scope of human history. Once depleted, they are gone forever. Moreover, the substantial pollution caused by coal is also a significant concern.

B: Therefore, it is evident that finding solutions to the "energy crisis" and pursuing sustainable development are crucial. Many measures have been proposed to conserve existing energy resources and explore new ones.



- A:** Yes, I believe developing new forms of energy is imperative. This includes wind power, solar energy, hydroelectric power, nuclear fusion power, and hydrogen gas.
- B:** Consequently, the field of energy engineering has emerged and developed. Its primary focus is to identify methods to reduce energy consumption while maintaining or even increasing output. Additionally, determining the most effective means of reducing energy usage is also essential.
- A:** This way, we can adopt a low-carbon lifestyle. “Low-carbon” has become a frequently used and trendy term lately. Living a low-carbon life refers to a lifestyle where individuals make an effort to minimize energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- B:** Yes, how can we live a low-carbon life? I believe, firstly, we need to understand that it is not merely a lifestyle choice but also an attitude towards life. Each of us is responsible for the greenhouse gases emitted through our everyday actions. Secondly, developing good habits in our daily lives is crucial.
- A:** Indeed, all forms of motorized travel contribute to carbon emissions. Buses and trains are better than cars, but walking or cycling is the most eco-friendly option.



- Tom:** Hi, Jack!
- Jack:** Hi, Tom!
- Tom:** It's freezing today!
- Jack:** Yeah, but don't you feel like this winter is warmer compared with previous years?
- Tom:** Absolutely! I think the primary reason behind this is the greenhouse effect, which has been causing the Earth to gradually warm up.
- Jack:** That's a valid point! As inhabitants of Earth, it's our collective responsibility to take action and protect our planet. If we don't, our living environment will only deteriorate further.
- Tom:** Living a low-carbon life is crucial. It should be our top priority.
- Jack:** Absolutely, “green living” has become a popular term in recent years. Not just China, all countries are focusing on the concept of “low-carbon”.
- Tom:** That's true. With increasing air pollution, water pollution, and chemical pollution, our living environment is worsening day by day.
- Jack:** That's why we need to safeguard our planet, the only place that provides us with a livable environment. “Low-carbon living” has emerged as a new and innovative lifestyle. Do you



happen to know when the term “low-carbon life” was first mentioned?

Tom: Yes, of course. It was first mentioned at the Copenhagen Summit. It can be understood as a lifestyle that aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and use resources efficiently. Its purpose is to raise awareness and protect our environment. Living a low-carbon life should not just be a slogan; it needs to be put into practice.

Jack: Absolutely. We should develop good habits of low-carbon living in our daily lives, like recycling old batteries, using energy-saving light bulbs, and turning off power sockets when not in use. Moreover, we need to actively encourage those around us to embrace a low-carbon lifestyle.

Tom: Spreading the message of low-carbon living not only helps to reduce emissions and contribute to our cities but also benefits us personally, such as maintaining good health and setting positive examples for future generations.

Jack: It's a long-term commitment, and everyone should be dedicated to it.

Tom: Indeed, we must start now and lead by example.

Jack: That's right. Look! The lights in that classroom seem to be left on.

Tom: Yeah, I see. Let's go and begin our low-carbon life right away.

Jack: Alright, let's go.

Part Three

Read the following useful expressions and finish the matching exercise that follows.



- accumulation of radioactive waste 放射性废料积存
- acid rain and transboundary air pollution 酸雨和越境空气污染
- afforestation project 造林工程
- afforested area / greening space 绿化面积
- air pollution concentration 空气污染浓度
- atmospheric monitoring system 大气监测系统
- carrying capacity of environment 环境负荷
- cell-driven vehicle / battery car 电动汽车



- centralized treatment plant 集中处理厂
- clean energy 清洁能源
- conservation of water and soil 水土保持
- conserve natural habitats 保护自然栖息地
- curb environmental pollution / bring the pollution under control 治理环境污染
- decontamination rate of urban refuse 城市垃圾无害化处理率
- desertification 沙漠化 / 荒漠化
- develop renewable resources 开发可再生资源
- eco-demonstration region / environmental-friendly region 生态示范区
- endangered wildlife 濒危野生动物
- environmental degradation 环境恶化
- environmental-friendly agriculture / eco-agriculture 生态农业
- environmental-friendly product 环保产品
- exhaust purifier 尾气净化器
- fast-growing trees 速生林
- forest coverage 森林覆盖率
- fossil fuels (e.g., coal, oil, and natural gas) 矿物燃料 (如煤、石油、天然气)
- gas-fueled vehicle 天然气汽车
- greenhouse effect 温室效应
- impact on the quality of water and air 对水质和空气质量的影响
- industrial dust discharged 排放的工业粉尘
- industrial solid wastes 工业固体废物
- International Biodiversity Day (29 December) 国际生物多样性日
- landscaping design for environmental purposes 环保景观设计
- lead-free gasoline 无铅汽油
- motor vehicle exhaust 汽车尾气排放
- multipurpose use of three types of wastes 三废综合利用
- National Tree-planting Day 全民义务植树日