

Finding Out: Words in Context

Step 1: In this section, the new vocabulary is introduced. Look at the words in bold below. Can you guess what they mean? Write a short definition in English. (Don't use your dictionary yet. You will be able to check their meanings in the next section: Definitions.)

Note: Even if you know the words presented here, you should work through the exercises. The more familiar you become with the language, the easier it will be to use in conversation. Remember, there is a difference between knowing what a word means and being able to use it readily in conversation.

Many supermarkets use paper bags instead of plastic bags because they are **biodegradable**. You can throw apples away because they are **biodegradable**, but please don't throw cans away.

What do you think 'biodegradable' means? Something that disappears quickly

Sea level and temperature rises are likely to have been caused by **climate change**. The report has encouraged thousands of companies to think about **climate change** issues for the first time.

What do you think 'climate change' means? _____

The water here could be **contaminated**, so you should boil it before drinking it. The river has been **contaminated** with waste from a large-scale farming operation located nearby.

What do you think 'contaminated' means? _____

The continued **deforestation** of the Amazon has resulted in the loss of countless species of plants and animals. Since 1975, this country has had the highest rate of **deforestation** in the world.

What do you think 'deforestation' means? _____

People on our planet must remember that our **fossil fuel** resources cannot last forever. We should use renewable energy sources such as solar power instead of **fossil fuels**.

What do you think 'fossil fuels' means? _____

We buy **organic** food at the farmers' market. It costs a little bit more, but we think it's better for our health. There is a pub in town which serves a new locally-made beer containing only **organic** ingredients.

What do you think 'organic' means? _____



You should wash vegetables well before eating them to remove any **pesticides** that may still be on them.
A lot of crops are grown without **pesticides**; farmers use beneficial insects instead to control harmful pests.

What do you think 'pesticides' means? _____

The government is trying to combat **poaching** in the national parks.
Poaching is responsible for the sharp decrease in the number of elephants.

What do you think 'poaching' means? _____

Unless whales are protected, they will **become extinct**.
It was during the ice age that this kind of tiger **became extinct**.

What do you think 'become extinct' means? _____

The **overfishing** of herring resulted in ill effects on cod because herring are cod's primary prey.
A study completed in 1997 revealed that red snapper was being **overfished** in the Gulf of Mexico.

What do you think 'overfishing' means? _____

The water pollution was caused by the **disposal of industrial waste**.
The proper **disposal of industrial waste** has always been a problem for factories.

What do you think 'disposal of industrial waste' means? _____

Many people are replacing their old **lightbulbs** with **energy efficient** ones.
Energy efficient lightbulbs last much longer than traditional lightbulbs.

What do you think 'energy efficient lightbulbs' means? _____

The air was dirty with the **exhaust fumes** of thousands of cars.
Researchers say that the risk of death from lung cancer increases with exposure to **car exhaust fumes** and smog.

What do you think 'car exhaust fumes' means? _____

Take your lunch in **reusable** containers rather than plastic bags.
My wife bought a **reusable** coffee filter for her coffee machine.

What do you think 'reusable' means? _____

The **sewage** of the city and other impurities were for centuries allowed to pollute the bay.
Only 6000 houses have drains, all the others **discharge sewage** through pipes directly into the canals.

What do you think 'discharge sewage' means? _____

Finding Out: Definitions

Step 1: Match the words with their definitions. (If you can't understand the definitions, you can use a bilingual dictionary.)

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|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 biodegradable | 1 an energy source such as coal or oil, made from decayed material from animals or plants that lived many thousands of years ago |
| 2 climate change | 2 you can use it again |
| 3 contaminated | 3 the release of waste substances, especially waste from people's bodies. |
| 4 deforestation | 4 made dirty, polluted, or poisonous by the addition of a chemical, waste, or infection |
| 5 fossil fuel | 5 to illegally catch or kill an animal, bird, or fish on someone else's land |
| 6 organic | 6 an animal, plant, or language that no longer exists |
| 7 pesticides | 7 food or drink produced using no or only a small number of chemicals |
| 8 poaching | 8 a chemical used for killing insects, especially those that damage crops |
| 9 become extinct | 9 the gases or steam that is produced by a car engine |
| 10 overfishing | 10 can be separated into very small parts by bacteria so that they are not harmful to the environment |
| 11 disposal of industrial waste | 11 fishing that damages a river or an area of sea because too many fish are caught |
| 12 energy efficient lightbulbs | 12 the changes that are thought to be affecting the world's weather so that it is becoming warmer |
| 13 car exhaust fumes | 13 the process of getting rid of the useless materials that factories don't need |
| 14 reusable | 14 the process of removing the trees from an area of land |
| 15 discharge of sewage | 15 lightbulbs that require less energy |