NON FICTION 2A: Passage 1

Will turning vegetarian save the planet?

by Alex Renton

Livestock agriculture - rearing cows, sheep and pigs - produces more greenhouse gas emissions

than every train, truck, car and aeroplane put together. So, change people’s diets to reduce

greenhouse gases and the planet can support more people. In fact, it will quite easily deal with the

9.2 billion at which the population is currently forecast to peak in about 40 years’ time.

If the omnivores1 you convert are the usual guzzlers of cheap mass-produced meat all the better.

Because that production is particularly demanding on fossil fuels – for fertiliser, processing, transport

and so on.

So, it’s better for the planet if you’re a vegetarian, right? Lord Stern, who advises the government on

climate change, said: “Meat is a wasteful use of water and creates a lot of greenhouse gases. It puts

enormous pressure on the world’s resources. A vegetarian diet is better.”

However, it is argued that the average rich world vegetarian may not consume much less of the

planet’s resources than the average meat-eater. A report last week for the Worldwide Fund for

Nature on the impact of food production pointed out that vegetarian meat substitutes or foods made

of imported soya might actually use more land and resources than their beef or dairy equivalents.

Deforestation in the developing world to grow cheap soya for human and animal food is a major

issue in climate change.

But as a committed meat-eater I have to acknowledge that if I want my grandchildren ever to enjoy a

perfect steak I must address my habits now: all this animal munching cannot go on. Meat in the

developed world needs to be seen as more of a luxury.

Food is responsible for 30% of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions and a large proportion of that is

from livestock farming. The average Briton eats 50 grammes of animal protein a day: a chicken

breast or a lamb chop. That’s much more than the average person needs for healthy nutrition. The

main reason that world food production must rise by 50% in the next 50 years is not the increase in

population, but the increase in meat eating as poorer countries develop.

Which is why I am trying to embrace the idea of dropping meat once a week. One day off the red

stuff? Not so great a hardship, really. And if you eat local meat, sustainably produced, rather than

Brazilian rainforest-fed burgers, that will help. Also, I don’t want to see livestock farming disappear -

it shaped the countryside we know.

1omnivore – a person whose diet includes meat

NON FICTION 2A: Passage 2

Our Favourite Ways to Save the Planet

It's sometimes easy to forget that we need to protect the environment. So we've compiled some super simple tips you can start with at home.

In 1970, [Earth Day](https://www.tinies.com/redirectTo.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.earthday.org%2F2015%3Fgclid%3DCI-93eGUssQCFUiWtAodAFkAoQ) was established in the US to celebrate the planet and all it has to offer. Since then it's been a phenomenon that has spread all over the world, and you don't just hear people talking about it on April 22nd.

The phrase "**Reduce**, **Reuse**, **Recycle**" has been used for many years to simplify what we, as individuals, can do to limit our impact on the planet and its resources. You may find it's an expression your children are particularly familiar with as it's plastered all over the internet, as well as finding a place in educational curriculums.

Through our experiences with children, we know that while you can tell a child to turn off the taps when brushing their teeth, they are likely to want to know why. Rather than using the age old response - "*because I said so*" - why not take a moment to investigate why together?

Some shocking statistics: For Earth Day this year, we've been looking at staggering statistics for you to share with your child... we know they've made us think about how important it is to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Packaging

As a nation we are getting better at thinking about what goes into the items we buy - from free-range and organic to paraben-free, we make conscious shopping decisions. But we still have a way to go!

Next time you're at the grocery store, look at these eco-friendly products and you'll notice in most cases that they have a similar amount of packaging to their counterparts, if not more.

*In the UK, we use over 150 million plastic bags each week. Each bag takes about 500 years to decay - that's a lot of plastic milling around! This is just a small amount of the rubbish we produce each year. The Titanic weighed 46,000 tonnes, just 1/8th of the household rubbish we throw away every year.*

Saving our resources

From cutting down on the water we use to handing our clothes on to someone else, we can all reduce the amount of things we buy and use. Decreasing demand means that suppliers can produce less.

*The United Nations has stated that a human needs 50 litres of water a day to drink, prepare meals and for personal hygiene. The average Briton uses approximately 153 litres of water a day - one third of this goes down the loo! Every time we flush the toilet we use as much water as most people in developing countries have to use in a whole day.*

Replacing what we use

In the society we live in there are certain things we need, like houses to live in, gas to heat our homes and food on our tables. But what are we giving back?

*Britain used to be covered in trees but over the years we've been using them faster than we're replacing them, leaving us with less than 12% wooded coverage.*

*Trees provide homes for animals, offer shade, help reduce ground heat, and a single fully grown tree aids in the process of producing approximately 260 pounds of oxygen per year - the average human needs only 130 pounds of oxygen a year to survive.*

**Answer on Passage 1 only**

**A1**

1. What produces the most greenhouse gases?
2. What is the forecast population in 40 years?
3. What is suggested about people who eat meat?

**A2**

The narrator is trying to persuade readers to convert to vegetarianism. How does he try to do this?

You should comment on:

* what he says to influence readers;
* his use of language and tone;
* the way he presents his information.

**A3**

1. What is meant by “the average rich world vegetarian may not consume much less of the planet’s resources than the average meat-eater”?
2. What does this suggest about the writers thoughts “I have to acknowledge”?
3. What is meant by this statement “needs to be seen as more of a luxury”?

**A4**

What do you think and feel about the way meat is produced ?

You should comment on:

* + - what is said;
		- how it is said.

**You should now read and refer to both Passage 1 and Passage 2**

**A5**

According to the two writers we need to reconsider the way we treat the environment. Why should we consider this according to both writers?

**A6**

Both of these texts are about being more considerate towards the environment.

Compare the following:

The writers views on how to help the planet

How they get their information across to the reader