

WHAT IN THE WORLD

ちょっと世界を見てみよう！

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I like to think of What in the World as “handy,” for several reasons. For one, each of its 25 lessons is “short and sweet”—just two pages long. The lesson starts off with a 300-word, information-packed essay for you to read and, I hope, enjoy. The reading (which contains “handy” insightful quotes from respected print and broadcast media) is followed by quick, accessible comprehension and vocabulary exercises designed to help you “engage” more closely with the text.

This book is also a handy global issues guide. It takes brief but thought-provoking looks at climate change, world hunger, aging populations, Internet addiction, animal rights, gender equality, human trafficking, and many other topics. These are all serious problems, yes, but I discuss them in a positive, “upbeat” way, highlighting efforts to find solutions that will make the world a fairer, safer, better place.

What in the World is also a handy “culture studies” reference work. Each lesson focuses in on a different country or region and the lives and customs of the people who live there. Over the next few months, you will read about China’s own “exam hell,” South Korea’s beauty obsessions, Africa’s surprisingly “modern” child-raising practices, New Zealand’s changing farming celebrations, the UAE’s updated sporting traditions, and many, many other (again, I hope) fascinating global cultural phenomena.

At first glance, you may find some of the vocabulary, ideas, and technical terms that come up in What in the World a little challenging. But don’t worry: once you have completed the comprehension exercises (which, as I said, encourage close “interaction” with the reading) and worked your way through the various vocabulary and listening activities (which also take you back to the text), you will “get” everything, no problem. Before long, you will find yourself reading and speaking English with increased understanding and greater confidence. And that, of course, is what you, your teachers, and I all desire.

Lesson 1	It Takes a Village	06	Lesson 14	Hope	32
	カーボンニュートラル—イギリスの小さな村の取り組み			火星への移住計画	
Lesson 2	Another Exam Hell	08	Lesson 15	Africa's University of the Future	34
	中国の受験事情			アフリカの大学生	
Lesson 3	Talk About Unfair!	10	Lesson 16	A Cool Idea	36
	世界で広がる貧富の格差			北極は救えるか？	
Lesson 4	Thou Shalt Not Steal	12	Lesson 17	Detox	38
	美術品を守れ！			ネット中毒からの帰還	
Lesson 5	Zap!	14	Lesson 18	100&Change	40
	客室乗務員への暴行			「天才」への投資で世界を変える	
Lesson 6	Mind Games	16	Lesson 19	Words, Words, and More Words	42
	ゲーム中毒			増え続ける新しい言葉	
Lesson 7	The Time Has Come	18	Lesson 20	Out of a Job	44
	消えゆくサーカス			過去のものになりつつある仕事	
Lesson 8	Bridging a Divide	20	Lesson 21	The Way to Go	46
	世代を越えて共に暮らす			これからの「旅」	
Lesson 9	A Drinking Problem	22	Lesson 22	The Best Fathers in the World?	48
	パキスタンでの飲酒事情			現代の親に求められるのは？	
Lesson 10	Transparency International	24	Lesson 23	A New Breed of Jockey	50
	透明性の高い社会を目指す			少年に代わる新しいラクダの騎手	
Lesson 11	Counting Sheep	26	Lesson 24	Prison Break	52
	羊が主役？のニュージーランド			塀の中と外—ドイツ・イタリアの囚人事情	
Lesson 12	Trains, Planes, and Arrests	28	Lesson 25	Japan Inside Out	54
	差別の撲滅に向けて			世界が語る日本のこれから	
Lesson 13	Skin Deep	30			
	美容に役立つカタツムリ—韓国				

Reading

Read this short essay carefully and then do the exercises that follow.



A well-known Oxford don recently called environmental protection “humanity’s final examination.” If that’s the case, then one English village, Ashton Hayes, doesn’t intend to fail it. Back in 2006, villagers became frustrated with the lack of determined climate-change action by government ministers. So they kicked off their own Carbon Neutral Project. At its first meeting, over half the town’s 1,000 residents, business leaders, and school officials showed up. Everyone vowed to make Ashton Hayes Britain’s first “carbon neutral community.”

Ashton Hayes, which the *Guardian* has called “The Village that’s saving the world,” has made all the right “eco-moves.” It has installed solar panels on homes, schools, and businesses. Residents also take advantage of geothermal heating. They collect and store rainwater. They dress warmly in winter instead of turning up the heat. They conscientiously turn off lights. They hang washing out on clotheslines rather than use dryers. They glaze windows for better insulation, ride-share, recycle, compost, and grow their own food. They keep up with and exchange the latest environmental information. Even the local pub puts on a “Green Quiz Night.”

And it works. Village carbon emissions are down by nearly 30 percent. What makes Ashton Hayes so unusual is its approach. The residents have done it all on their own. “The people feel in charge, rather than following government policies,” says the *New York Times*. “Rather than shouting or complaining, we just do it,” was how one villager put it. The *Guardian* summed up the village’s “grass roots movement” like this: “Obviously, one village of 1,000 people represents just a tiny proportion of the global-warming problem. The hope is that ‘people power’ like Ashton Hayes’s will stimulate governments to take politically bold decisions”—to take the steps humanity needs to pass its “final examination.”

Notes

- 14 geothermal heating 「地熱（を利用した）暖房」
- 17 insulation 「断熱」
- 17 ride-share 「(渋滞緩和、排ガス低減などを目的とした) 自動車の相乗り」
- 18 compost 「堆肥をやる」

Information and Ideas

Fill in the blanks in these sentences. Listen to check your answers.



1. Ashton Hayes’s residents became _____ with _____ leaders.
2. Ashton Hayes aims to become Britain’s first “_____ community.”
3. _____ panels have been put up on many homes and buildings.
4. Villagers now use outdoor _____ to _____ their clothes.
5. The local _____ even sponsors a _____ Quiz Night.
6. The project has cut carbon _____ by _____ percent.
7. “People _____” and “_____ roots movement” have similar meanings.

Words in Context

Answer these questions with words from the essay.

1. What word in line 7 means “positive” or “committed”? _____
2. What word in line 10 means “swore” or “promised”? _____
3. What word in line 16 means “earnestly” or “diligently”? _____
4. What word in line 21 means “method” or “system”? _____
5. What word in line 26 means “part” or “percentage”? _____
6. What word in line 27 means “inspire” or “encourage”? _____

Writing with Idioms

Rewrite each sentence below by substituting one of these idiomatic phrases for the underlined part. Make the necessary changes. Listen to check your answers.



- in charge
- kick off
- show up at
- take advantage of

1. The residents feel responsible because they’re doing it on their own.

2. Geothermal power is another energy source that residents put to use.

3. Even the mayor came to the project’s first meeting.

4. The project got underway ten years ago and has been very successful.

Making Conversation

As you read and listen to the dialogue below, fill in the blanks. Then practice the dialogue with a partner.



- A: When I’m in a _____, or when it’s _____, I still use my _____.
- B: Our sun room has a _____ roof, so on rainy days, I dry our _____ in there.
- A: Actually, we’re thinking of _____ one, too. It would _____ a lot of energy.
- B: _____. Dryers are _____ energy wasters.