

Almost 2,000 children die every day from air pollution, report finds

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

a. What are your biggest concerns about the environment? Make a list of your top five. Then, compare with a classmate. Discuss similarities and differences.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2 Key words

a. Write the correct words from the wordpool to complete the definitions below. Then, find and highlight them in the article so that you can read them in context.

airborne	bloodstream	burden	filthy	inequality
linger	malnutrition	mortality	ozone	particle
prevalence	profound	risk factor	sanitation	tobacco

1. The systems and equipment used to keep places clean are called _____.
2. A(n) _____ is something that increases risk or makes someone more likely to be harmed by something.
3. Dried leaves from the _____ plant are used in cigarettes, cigars and pipes.
4. _____ is a health condition caused by a lack of food or a lack of the right types of foods.
5. _____ rate is the number of deaths within a particular society and in a specific period.
6. The unfair differences in money, status, or opportunity between different groups of people in society are called _____.
7. Something that causes worry or difficulty that you must deal with is a(n) _____.
8. A very small piece of something is a(n) _____.
9. The _____ is the blood flowing through the body.

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10. _____ is something existing or being very common at a particular time or in a specific place.
11. Something _____ is experienced very strongly or felt in an extreme way.
12. When things _____, they take a long time to leave or disappear.
13. Something _____ is in the air or carried by the air or wind.
14. A poisonous form of oxygen is called _____.
15. Something extremely or unpleasantly dirty is _____.

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. Pollution is a _____ that our generation and future generations will have to deal with.
2. After the nurse provides the drug, it moves quickly into the _____ to help the patient.
3. The smell of cigarettes _____ for quite some time.
4. More laws are needed to protect people from discrimination and _____.
5. Some symptoms of _____ are feeling tired, cold and weak most or all of the time.
6. Travelling and meeting so many new people had a _____ impact on their view of the world.
7. The _____ of extreme climate events has increased over the past 20 years.
8. _____ is good up high in the atmosphere but is dangerous at ground level.
9. Poor _____, particularly of water and sewage, can have serious impacts on human health and well-being.
10. After the oil spill, the river was _____.

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Global study reveals dirty air is second only to malnutrition as cause of death among under-fives

Fiona Harvey

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- 1 Nearly 2,000 children under five are dying every day from air pollution, which has overtaken poor sanitation and a lack of clean water to become the second biggest health risk factor for young children around the world.
- 2 In 2021, more than 8 million deaths of children and adults were caused by air pollution, according to a new study from the Health Effects Institute (HEI), as both outdoor and indoor pollution continue to take an increasing toll on health.
- 3 Dirty air is now the second biggest killer globally, overtaking tobacco use, and second only to high blood pressure as a risk factor for death among the general population. Among children under five, air pollution is second only to malnutrition as a risk factor in mortality.
- 4 This year's State of Global Air report, published by the HEI since 2017, and produced this year in partnership with UNICEF, also shows that children in low-income countries are suffering some of the worst impacts, with the death rate linked to air pollution in children under five 100 times higher in most of Africa than it is in high-income countries.
- 5 Pallavi Pant, the lead author of the report and Head of Global Health at HEI, pointed to the vast inequalities the report has uncovered. "Far too much of the burden is borne by young children, older populations, and low- and middle-income countries," she said.
- 6 Tiny particles called PM2.5 – meaning they are smaller than 2.5 micrometres in diameter – are to blame for more than 90 per cent of global air pollution deaths, the report found. PM2.5 particles can enter the bloodstream and have been found to affect organs throughout the body.
- 7 They have been found to be associated not only with lung disease but also heart disease, stroke, diabetes, dementia and miscarriage.
- 8 The report showed how noticeable and damaging the prevalence of PM2.5 pollution has become, finding that the presence of elevated levels of the fine particles was now "the most consistent and accurate predictor of poor health outcomes" around the world.
- 9 Kitty van der Heijden, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, said: "Our inaction is having profound effects on the next generation, with lifelong health and wellbeing impacts. The global urgency is undeniable. It is imperative that governments and businesses consider these estimates and locally available data and use it to inform meaningful, child-focused action to reduce air pollution and protect children's health."
- 10 The impacts of the climate crisis are also worsening air quality, according to the HEI. The report found that "as droughts become more severe and prolonged, and lands grow ever drier, wildfires ravage once-thriving forests and dust storms impact vast plains, filling the air with particles that linger for long periods of time."
- 11 Higher temperatures in summer can also worsen the impacts of airborne pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, which at elevated temperatures can turn more readily into ozone, a gas that irritates the lungs and body when breathed in. The report found that long-term exposure to ozone contributed to nearly half a million deaths in 2021.
- 12 Dealing with air pollution could also have beneficial impacts on the climate. About half a million of the deaths of children in 2021 were linked to dirty air indoors, mainly the result of cooking with dirty fuels, including biomass, charcoal, paraffin and coal. Switching to cleaner fuels, such as solar cookstoves, could vastly reduce PM2.5 emissions, as well as emissions of carbon dioxide.
- 13 About 2.3 billion people around the world lack access to clean cooking fuels. The International Energy Agency estimates that about \$4 billion a year is needed between now and 2030 to solve the problem in sub-Saharan Africa alone. It held a global summit last month that raised \$2.2 billion for projects to help move people across the continent to cleaner methods.

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- 14 Fatih Birol, the Executive Director of the IEA, said the problem needed to be seen as a global priority for governments, with impacts on health, the climate and national economies, as well as gender equality, because women and girls are often given the task of finding firewood. "This is an issue that has been ignored for too long," he said.
- 15 The State of Global Air report used data from the Global Burden of Disease study from 2021, covering more than 200 countries and territories around the world. Previous reports have found that nearly every person breathes unhealthy levels of air pollution each day, and that half a million babies were being killed each year by filthy air.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. If air pollution is the second biggest health risk factor for young children, what is the biggest, according to the article?
2. How many child and adult deaths were caused by air pollution in 2021?
3. What are the top two risk factors in mortality for children under five?
4. How much higher is the impact on children in Africa compared to other places?
5. What are the tiny particles called, and why are they named that?
6. What percentage of global air pollution deaths happen because of these particles?
7. Why are they so dangerous for the body?
8. What other crisis has a negative impact on air quality?
9. How do higher summer temperatures affect air pollution?
10. What would help improve indoor air quality?

4 Key language

a. Underline the present participle (-ing) in the sentences below. Then, write whether it is used as a gerund (G) or a participial adjective (P).

1. Outdoor and indoor pollution continue to take an increasing toll on health. _____
2. Women and girls are often given the task of finding firewood. _____
3. Dealing with air pollution could also have beneficial impacts on the climate. _____
4. It is mainly the result of cooking with dirty fuels. _____
5. Switching to cleaner fuels could vastly reduce PM2.5 emissions. _____

b. Choose two verbs. Write the present participle. Then, write four sentences, two using gerunds and two using participial adjectives.

verb: _____ present participle: _____

1. (gerund) _____
2. (participial adjective) _____

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verb: _____ present participle: _____

3. (gerund) _____

4. (participial adjective) _____

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “Nearly every person breathes unhealthy levels of air pollution each day.”
- “There is inequality in everything, even pollution.”
- “Clean air and water are paramount for survival.”

6 In your own words

a. Do some research about air pollution or another type of pollution. Answer these questions.

- What are the three big impacts of pollution?
- How many people and animals are affected worldwide?
- What are some initiatives to clean up the pollution?
- What changes in human behaviour or activity would improve the situation?
- What is blocking these changes?
- What is your stance on the issue?

b. Report your findings to the class and share the facts you learned and your opinions. Here are some phrases to help you make transitions during your report.

Contrast

However, ...

On the other hand, ...

Nevertheless, ...

Combination

Besides, ...

In addition to, ...

Furthermore, ...

Intensity

In fact, ...

Without a doubt, ...

Surely, ...