

## The Future

4a

# Sustainable development

- Sustainable development is a term used to describe a way of doing something that meets the needs of people today, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Sustainable development has three parts to it – social sustainability, economic sustainability and environmental sustainability.
- Since the Industrial Revolution in the late 19th century, our planet's population has increased, and we have largely drained the Earth of its natural resources, such as timber, coal, oil and natural gas. Many believe that we have also caused considerable damage to the environment through carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, which is leading to climate change.
- We also produce an enormous amount of waste. According to the UK Government, almost 70% of the UK's household 'waste' is thrown away and ends up in landfill sites.
- In the past 20 years, we have begun to realise that, if we want future generations to enjoy a good quality of life in a healthy environment, we must take steps now to alter our lifestyle and use of energy.
- Environmental sustainability involves taking steps towards making sure that we do not harm the environment, whilst making sure we have enough food and energy for a growing population.
- Ensuring an environmentally sustainable future is the responsibility of governments, businesses and organisations, schools, families and individuals. We must all play our part to use energy more efficiently and make use of renewable energy sources, protect natural resources and reduce the amount of waste we create.



Recycling is one way that individuals can contribute to a sustainable future.



Renewable sources of energy, such as wind power, do little harm to the environment.

### Research Links

[www.recyclingconsortium.org.uk](http://www.recyclingconsortium.org.uk)  
[www.reduceuserecycle.co.uk](http://www.reduceuserecycle.co.uk)  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)  
[www.sd-commission.org.uk](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk)  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)