

Exploring and developing the themes in the book
“Planet Earth Needs Our Help”

Notes for parents, grandparents, teachers and other helpful adults (to share with your inner child and other children!)

Marylyn Cropley © 2019



PLANET EARTH NEEDS OUR HELP - A CHILDRENS' BOOK INTRODUCING CLIMATE CHANGE:

“Planet Earth Needs Our Help” began life as my contribution to an art exhibition in October 2015, intended as a legacy for my children and grandchildren. The response from the exhibition inspired me to self-publish this book, which draws on my own curiosity and desire to find out more about our planet, my connections with people who are knowledgeable about climate change, and my experience as an author, artist, well-being practitioner and teacher of infant/juniors. Thank you for your interest and support in this book and for sharing this journey with the twins!

This book...

- Tells a story about the magical journey of twins Annie and Tilly, after they meet an unhappy fairy in their garden. It calls on its readers to use their imagination, whilst sharing this journey with the twins.
- Aims to prompt readers (of all ages and reading ability) to value and celebrate our beautiful planet, providing an easy introduction to the complicated and controversial issue of climate change.
- Seeks to portray the possible impact of our actions on the future health and well-being of the planet and for all who inhabit our planet now and in the future. It ultimately offers a message of hope: that we can still do something to help make a big difference.
- Is in A4 landscape format and printed on sturdy card with easy-to-read, large text, presenting illustrations and text side by side on facing pages. The text and illustrations are deliberately separated to allow maximum flexibility when reading the words and/or talking about the images. It is pur bound, but can also be available (on request) as a spiral bound book that allows it to be folded @ 360 degrees, so that it can be viewed and read by an individual or shared by small groups.
- Provides an easy-to-follow, adaptable resource that combines simple scientific facts with an engaging, colourful and clearly illustrated, story. (The characters in the story are based on characters known to the author at the time and illustrations are simply designed to enable readers to re-create characters and locations, using their own images and preferences.)
- Gives scope to just read and enjoy the story - or to use own words with the illustrations, to tell the story in each unique and exciting way.
- It can be ordered with or without an activity book that links with the pages in the story book.

These notes...

- Suggest how this book can be used as a “springboard” to inspire and motivate further actions, encouraging conversations, questions, actions and research around the contents of each page. It has potential to link to the National Curriculum so schools/education centres can return as often as they want to a specific page to explore the topic on that page in more detail (e.g. gardens, dinosaurs, recycling).
- Are designed to inspire parents, grandparents, teachers, children and families to be curious, and find out more about the issues together; so that they can confidently talk about the words and illustrations in this book from a knowledge base. It demonstrates how learning about climate change and story-telling can be a positive resource for a broader skills based, person centred learning and development.

Please contact me via my website for more information, if interested in using this book and notes as a school resource.

Contact: Marylyn Cropley via www.planeteearth.freeplay.me.uk

Accompanying notes for book; Planet Earth Needs Our Help

NB “Planet Earth Needs Our help” (and accompanying notes) offers information and links to websites to; inform, inspire curiosity and create a sense of adventure as part of the story line. The wording and images are also carefully chosen to present ideas about the possible impacts of climate change in a non-threatening way, and provide a basis for engaging children in conversations and problem-solving, whilst still having fun. It is designed to offer a person-centred, flexible, and adaptable resource for teachers, families and other interested individuals.

We can help children to understand climate change by giving them correct information without causing panic and fear. Most children already read about (and handle well) “dangerous” situations in adventure story books or books with a problem or dilemma. Children can also be very creative with solutions. This resource can also be used to encourage children and adults to use a cognitive, behavioural approach (an evidence based practice for managing anxiety and worries); by encouraging them to notice what they are thinking, feeling and doing at any given moment during the activities and discussions; to ensure they are able to express their thoughts and feelings within a safe, non-judgemental, compassionate environment; to notice if thoughts and anxieties are of the past, present or future and consider realistic responses and decisions to these thoughts and actions; to also identify how helpful or unhelpful specific thoughts, feelings and actions are - to the individual, to others and to our planet as a whole.

Images & Pages from the book.

***Prompts & ideas to help engage with the contents of this book page by page;
Read, look, talk-about; ask questions, take action...together.
Additional activity sheets are also available, and can be downloaded via my website:
www.planeteearth.freeplay.me.uk***



Page 1: Noticing your garden and the weather:

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- Go for a walk. Notice, explore and talk about gardens at home and in public open spaces. How many different species of plants, animals, insects, birds and trees can you find in a garden?
- Use your 5 senses to discover: what grows and lives in gardens...what can be seen, heard, smelt, touched, tasted? Can you recognise the different bird songs?
- Learn more about plants, animals and wildlife that live in gardens. How do they live together in the same habitat? Why are they important for our gardens and our planet? For example, bees help us to grow food by pollinating plants.
- How do gardens change when the weather is particularly hot or cold, why is this? How does the weather effect gardens? How do the 4 seasons change gardens?



Page 2: Fairies: Imagination and magic:

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- Do fairies actually exist? What other character, instead of a fairy, would care about our planet? Perhaps a cat or a bee?
- Learn more about fairies and other mystical characters (elves, goblins, gnomes) and their connections with beliefs about Planet Earth.
- Design, draw and colour in a Planet Earth fairy (or cat or bee!).
- How many characters can you find on this page? How many times do they appear in this book?



Page 3: Global warming: What does this mean?

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- Planet Earth can normally manage itself when it gets too hot or too cold. However scientists say our planet is getting warmer FASTER than usual because of the way we are living today (global warming).
- Planet Earth needs our help to do things differently to slow down global warming. Some countries will be affected more than others by climate change and because we all live on this one planet we need to find ways to work together to help the Earth.
- Discover and learn about, global warming and how this affects different countries. (In the past, present & future)
- How do we measure the temperature outdoors and indoors to know how hot or cold it is?



Page 4: The Goldilocks Zone: The natural balance: earth, sun and gases:

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- Remember the story about Goldilocks and the Three Bears? When Goldilocks looked around the three bears' house, some things were too big, too small, too soft, too hard, too hot, too cold, too everything, until she found something that was "just right"!
- Sunlight is very important to Planet Earth and to all living organisms. Planet Earth actually runs on energy from the sun keeping a natural balance. Normally it is not too hot and not too cold – just right for plants and animals (the Goldilocks Zone).
- How many times does the image of the sun appear in this book?
- Peoples' actions and climate change are having an impact on this balance. Learn more about what scientists are saying about the earth, sun and gases and their importance to climate change.
- Visit science museums and information centres. Explore and learn about the scientific world and how Planet Earth helps us to survive.



Page 5: Dinosaurs: Extinction is forever:

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- We know so much about dinosaurs, but they no longer exist. What kind of climate did dinosaurs live in? Why did dinosaurs disappear from our planet? What would our planet have looked like then?
- Dinosaurs are ancestors to some reptiles living today. What are these reptiles and where do they live? How can we help today's reptiles and other wildlife survive a changing climate now and in the future, so they don't become extinct too?
- Visit places and exhibitions that feature dinosaurs and reptiles both past and present. Visit nature reserves and centres. Learn about habitats, food and weather conditions that enable current reptiles to survive. Enjoy the experience and wonder at the variety of reptiles that exist today. Be surprised at what could be living right on your very own doorstep!
- Draw your favourite, dinosaur or reptile, what does their environment look like? Write a poem, song or short story to go with your picture.
- Create a dinosaur dance and teach others to do it!



Page 6: Mammoths: Where did they live?

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- Mammoths disappeared from our planet many years ago during the Ice Age. They also became extinct because of changes on Planet Earth. Learn about mammoths, their habitats and the way they lived.
- We have descendants of mammoths living on our planet today. Geneticists have created the woolly mammoth's family tree using ancient DNA found in Siberia. The extinct mammoths are more closely related to Asian elephants than to African elephants.
- Have fun exploring the world of mammoths and imagine what it must have been like living on Planet Earth in the ice age with mammoths. What would life be like if mammoths roamed freely on our planet today! Find out how Asian elephants live today and how they survive in our current climate.



Page 7: Pollution & gases: Actions of people and how they impact on our planet:

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- Human actions today are altering the natural balance of chemicals on Planet Earth (pollution). This affects our homes, lands, oceans, the air we breathe and the water we use. We keep our bodies and surroundings clean regularly to help us stay healthy and well, even cats do that! So it makes sense and is important that we also think about what we are doing to help Planet Earth stay clean and healthy.
- Why are scientists and politicians concerned about how we use coal, oil, gas, farms and forests? What are they saying we need to do to help keep our planet clean and healthy for years to come?
- What can we do at home and in our communities to help our planet stay clean and healthy? Create a poster to inspire others with ideas and actions.
- How can scientists, politicians and important people around the world work together to help our planet?



Page 8: Living today on Planet Earth:

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- Planet Earth is a VERY BIG world. We share it with lots of different people, animals and plants, living together in different climates and landscapes, and in the oceans. We are fortunate to have such a beautiful and interesting world to live in.
- There is so much we can learn about our planet and who we share it with. What can be discovered about Planet Earth? Where can we go to find out more about the way we live today on Planet Earth?
- Stop and Think...can we change some of the things we do and the way we live now, to help our planet?
- Create a sketchbook; draw some pictures, use photographs or write about some of the things we do and how we live today.
- How many planets are there in the same universe as Planet Earth? What are their names? Is there another Planet Earth in our Universe? Is this the only planet we can live on? What do we need to be able to survive on a planet?



Page 9: Polar bears: The Arctic & Antarctic

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- As the Earth gets warmer and climate changes, this causes the polar ice caps to melt. This is happening faster now and is putting polar bears and other life forms that live in these areas at risk. Their homes and food sources are diminishing. So, what happens in one part of the world can also have an effect in other parts of the world. Sea levels and lands will change, so people and animals will need to find new homes and new sources of food.
- This can happen naturally, but the way people live today is making this happen faster. Images of polar bears are everywhere and can be a useful reminder that we need to find ways to care for and protect such beautiful life forms when they cannot protect themselves. What does your Polar Bear look like? Create your own image to go with this page.
- Find out more about life in the Arctic and Antarctic regions of Planet Earth, and continue to enjoy the beauty and wonder of our planet.



Page 10: Extreme weather and climate change

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- Is “weather” the same as “climate”? Where can we find the answers to this? Use the internet, books or other places to help find out more.
- Draw a picture, write a poem or a short story about extreme “weather”. What words would you use and what would you put in your picture?
- Write a newspaper article about an extreme weather condition, find pictures to go with it or draw your own. Use some of the words in this book to help you.
- Create characters and a dance to demonstrate extreme weather, find the right music to go with this or make your own music.
- It helps to understand what scientists are saying about extreme weather and climate change. What do they mean when they talk about extreme weather and climate change? Where can you go to find more information by scientists and others interested in Weather and Climate Change?



Page 11: Global Warming: The land and our environment

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- Learn about the different types of climate and landscapes on our planet and the different ways people live in these environments.
- Look at different ways artists and writers have portrayed climate and weather over the years. Use images and short extracts to prompt observation and conversations.
- Scientists say that, as the climate gets warmer, this will change the way our planet can look after itself and the way we live in the future. As the land gets warmer it will expand deserts, change the way we grow our food, affect our water supply, forests and the way people live in countries that are poorer than others.
- When places become warmer too quickly, some people and animals will not be able to travel fast enough to find new places to live and grow food.
- Is there anything we can do to slow down global warming? If not, how can we adapt to it? What do scientists and others suggest we do?
- Write a story about someone who lives in a different country to you. What is their life like, what kind of environment and climate do they live in, is it different to yours or the same, does it change or stay the same, all year round? Draw pictures to go with your story or cut images out from magazines and newspapers. Use these images to help you write your story. It could also be a poem or a song.



Page 12: The Ocean:

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- Two-thirds of our planet is covered with water ...our oceans.
- Explore and discover the wonders of our oceans together.
- How do oceans work and provide a home for plants and animals?
- How can we help our planet by looking after our oceans?
- Visit places of interest to find out more, such as Oceanariums, Natural History Museums, Coastal Heritage Centres etc.
- Plastic Oceans, what does this mean? How are our actions and use of plastics today effecting our oceans and environment?
- What can we do about it to help our planet and look after the oceans and rivers?
- What has been your experience of using plastic and how do you reuse or throw it away?
- Is there anything else that people do today which affects our oceans in helpful or unhelpful ways?
- Imagine you are a fish or a creature living in the ocean, what would you look like and what would your ocean look like? Draw a picture or create a sculpture.



Page 13: Back to the garden: How can I help?

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- Learn how we can look after ourselves, our gardens and generally help our planet (and ourselves) stay well and healthy.
- Find out more about wildlife friendly gardens. Learn more about plants, trees, animals, insects, birds and the weather.
- What actions can we take to help gardens and our planet, to manage global warming in healthy and helpful ways at home and in our local communities?
- Use libraries, the internet, museums and local organisations in your research.
- What does the word ECO and the word Environment mean to you?
- Design your own garden and show how it can be ECO friendly and helpful to Planet Earth and to people who use this garden.



Page 14: Planet Earth needs friends

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- Does Planet Earth have friends? If so, who are they and what do they do to help? How are they doing this?
- What else needs to be done and how? For example, how can we use less coal, oil and gas?
- What are the natural resources our planet has that can help? For example, how can we use the sun, wind and waves?
- What would a healthy lifestyle, helping our planet and helping life on earth, look like?
- Draw a picture of what our planet could look like if we used more natural resources like the sun, wind and waves and less coal, oil and gas.
- How can we be friends of Planet Earth? Draw some pictures to show how this is happening, what might people be thinking, feeling, doing?



Page 15: What else can I do to help? Taking action in my home and in my community:

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- Think about how people live today. What do people do for the planet every day? What do each of us do, including our friends, family and schools?
- There are simple actions we can take to help our planet stay clean and healthy. For example, ways to save energy at home. We can walk, cycle or use the bus more often. We can switch off lights when we are not using them, use less electricity by spending less time watching TV or using our computer/mobiles. Spend time in the garden instead!
- Everybody's talking about the 3 R'S; Reduce, Recycle, Reuse. What does this mean? Where can we go to find out more about this? How will this help our planet? What can each of us do?
- Make a list of what we can do...break it down into simple steps. Ask others to help and to do these actions on a regular basis. Create new habits. What is a habit?
- Create a poster showing people doing these actions.
- Make a sculpture or a work of art using only recycled materials.
- Use something old to make something new.



Page 16: What next?

Page 16: What next?

- Choose a page from this book “Planet Earth Needs Your Help”. Write and illustrate your own short story, poem, haiku, dance or song about something that inspires you from this page. You can choose words and images from this book to help you make a start.
- Make a Planet Earth storybook on your own or with others; how many pages will the book have, how will you create a story board, how many characters in the story, what will the characters and scenarios look like?
- Create your own illustration for each page, what images would you use to best illustrate the words on each page?
- What would you put in the picture and why? What will you use to help you do this? (for example; computer, pencils, paints, paper, canvas, 2D/3D materials)
- Share your story with others. How will you do this? Perhaps create an exhibition/event using your characters.
- What does a healthy lifestyle look like? Do family and friends have healthy lifestyles? What can we do to change our lifestyles now, if it is not healthy?
- What are schools doing to help people learn about Planet Earth and Climate Change?
- How can people spread the word, share what they know? What can people do to let others know more about ways to help Planet Earth?
- Take a journey with others to find out more about our planet and how it can be helped. Keep a journal and/or sketchbook to document the experience.
- Planet Earth, will be around for a long time still and so will future generations! This is the one Planet we have and the one chance we have to enjoy living on this beautiful Planet. Let’s do our best to look after Planet Earth and each other, together.

For more information and website links go to:

www.planeteearth.freeplay.me.uk

There is so much information available now about Planet Earth and Climate Change. For some website links that I found interesting (and may be useful to you) including some children’s books on topics relating to this book, please go to my website www.planeteearth.freeplay.me.uk

Some website links are local to Dorset, because this started as a local project in Poole, Dorset in 2016. Find out if there are similar organisations in your area. The internet provides an excellent resource for information, but do visit libraries, museums, galleries, heritage centres and local events near you and find out what your local authority, schools, supermarkets and other organisations are doing. “Bee” ACTIVE and ENJOY the “buzz” together!