



THE QUEEN'S  
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2019

# *GOLD AWARD*



*2019*

This is to certify that the Royal Commonwealth Society, on  
recommendation of the judges, has awarded this certificate to:

**Ahmad Zayaan**



**Dr Linda Yueh**  
*Chair*

**Dr Diana Owen OBE**  
*Chair of Junior Judging Panel*

**Vicki Wienand**  
*Chair of Senior Judging Panel*



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

## Connected by the oceans; can we work together to protect the environment?

Nowadays people forget the importance of the environment surrounding us. We take for granted the resources given to us by nature and believe that they are unlimited. Over the last century, the population on the planet grew rapidly and our needs increase with every year that passes. We achieved a great accomplishment in the growth and production of ground-breaking technologies, but this growth resulted in poor environmental conditions

Global Warming is one of the first effects of human waste emission. The ozone layer which prevents ultraviolet rays from the sun to enter our atmosphere is getting depleted due to the increase in harmful gases causing pollution in the environment. Because of the increasing demands of the human population, more and more industrial developments are made thus increasing pollution. The greenhouse gases that are being released from burning fuels are causing a thick coat of gas on our atmosphere, the heat of the sun penetrates the layer but cannot penetrate out, thus increasing the heat in the earth or better known as global warming. Global warming leads to polar ice caps to melt leading to a rise of sea level. This not only affects the habitat of certain species of animals but also us humans as the countries which are lower to the sea level are now at risk of being overcome by the sea. The forest trees are cut down to make space for land, this means there will be fewer trees and more pollution since there will be fewer trees to filter the dirty air. Fewer trees also lead to habitat destruction and imbalances in the food chain. We can reduce all of these if we turn to an eco-friendlier option like using renewable energy instead of using fossil fuels and other hydrocarbons. We can also install catalytic converters into our personal mode of transport to reduce the pollution and production of greenhouse gases. Reducing the amount of electricity we use every day could reduce the demands for more electricity and thus less pollution is emitted by powerplants. We can use solar energy for a much cleaner option for energy.

Land pollution is the key cause of major health issues for humans around the world. Untreated human waste, industrial pollution, agricultural waste, etc, harm people's health because of the toxicity of these pollutions. Over the past decades, hazardous waste such as heavy metals and nitrates were dumped without any plan or precaution. The result is badly contaminated groundwater and surface water, not to mention the lowered quality of the soil. The lower quality soil leads to fewer crop yields for farmers and a cycle of malnourished plants. The malnourished plants can cause a huge disturbance to the ecosystem's food chain, which could possibly lead to endangered or even extinction for some species of animals. Less number of crops could decrease food supply or even stop certain foodstuff from production because of the less amount of crop yield. The mining process can lead to the creation of large sinkholes beneath the surface of the earth. This can result in the land caving in, which compromises the structural stability of the land. Mining also is a heavy-duty work, making a lot of pollution due to the use of heavy vehicles. The garbage found at landfills is filled with toxins and plastic substances that eventually seep into the earth. During rains, the toxins are washed into other areas and the pollution is spread. The harmful toxins can affect a clean main source of water, which could break out diseases and poisoning eventually affecting us humans. We can help in keeping our environment clean by picking up litter, throwing litter in designated areas, reducing the number of plastics and paper bags we use, using eco-friendly packaging, recycling plastics and reusing simple things like cardboard boxes. Instead of throwing your furniture away, you can refurbish it, or you can disassemble it and use it for a DIY project. It is also important to remember not to waste paper since it takes 5 trees and a lot of water to just make one piece of paper. Paper can be recycled number of times so try to recycle papers. If you are going to buy something, try to buy it in recycled packaging. It is more efficient and less polluting. Recycled things will not have less durability as they are mixed with other things to renew its durability. So don't get put off thinking that recycled things are less durable.

Water pollution is a major factor in environmental pollution. This is regarding plastic since it's a very cheap and affordable material you can find it almost anywhere. Most people don't even consider the value of recycled plastic so they would throw a bottle every now and then. According to the United Nations Joint

Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP), almost 60 – 90% of marine pollution is plastic. Plastic is very harmful to marine life. Animals like turtles could mistake it for food and eat it but just to realize that it is suffocating on the plastic. Even if the marine life does not find the plastic very appetizing, plastics to have a biodegradable property which you might think is good but in fact, it just releases even more highly toxic chemicals called microplastics. Microplastics are basically just plastics that are much smaller and toxic. Microplastics could lead to a long and painful death to creatures which consume them by accident (not mention they are tiny fragment less than 5 millimetres long). Even if they do survive, these fish eventually would end up in our dinner plates. There is an unthinkable amount of microplastics in the sea and they usually take about 450 years to fully decompose. There many places on earth where pollution is just uttermost alarming such as the great Pacific garbage patch. This is just an area of the Pacific Ocean where all the plastics just clump all together. It is the largest of all 5 major garbage clumps. 1.15 to 2.41 million tonnes of plastic are entering the ocean each year and by recent years, the Pacific garbage clump is now twice its size and 3 times the size of France. Yet while we are here polluting the sea and our streams, people in rather economically unstable countries have a poor supply of water which is also most of the time contaminated. Only 2.5 per cent of the world water supply is fresh and only 1 per cent is easily accessible. We can all take part in conserving water by reducing the amount of time taken in showers, using a water-friendly shower head, fixing water leaks, throwing trash and hazardous substances in designated areas and by not wasting water during washing, cleaning, etc. Using and changing a water filter could greatly increase efficient water usage and there would be a fresh supply of water.

Air pollution is the deadliest pollution of all. Air pollutions are caused by the burning of fossil fuels, releasing toxic gas and mainly industrial waste gases. Air pollution poses many health risks for humans. Gases such as carbon monoxide can suffocate a person and other harmful gases will cause respiratory and heart diseases and illness. In recent reports study have shown that there are more people with respiratory-related diseases now than the 1960s. They claim the major issue is air pollution because all these problems started after the industrial revolution. Bad outdoor air caused an estimated 4.2 million premature deaths, 90% of them being in underdeveloped countries. We can prevent air pollution by planting trees, taking public transport to available destinations, carpooling, maintaining and properly servicing your vehicle, and walking short distances. Using air filters could also greatly increase the air quality in your homes. Making sure that there is enough supply of oxygen where you live is very crucial especially for newborns as they are still developing. Making sure the air is breathable and not warm and stuffy would make life much easier. Living by the seaside could also help in easing many respiratory diseases such as asthma. The sea breeze is a known cure for these diseases and is a peace of mind. We should reduce the number of trips we take on personal transport and use public transport more often. We should also avoid any burning any trash, leaves and other materials.

A few simple tips could leave us to help us to conserve our environment so our future generations can enjoy it. After all, it's a gift from God which all human beings should enjoy. So it's entirely up to you whether you would like your future generations to enjoy the pleasures and scenic beauty of this world.