Environment and Conservation

Multiple choice: local environment | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What causes air pollution near schools?
2. How can students collect useful environmental data?
3. Should schools change travel habits to protect health?
4. Why do people sometimes ignore pollution they cannot see?

Exercise 4 at a glance

Read one longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Choose A, B or C. The correct answer may depend on attitude, purpose or a detail across a whole paragraph, not just one matching word.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the article. What did Daniel learn from the air-quality project?

Measuring air near school

by Daniel Brooks

Our environmental club borrowed small air-quality sensors from the local university for one month. I joined because I liked the idea of using equipment, but I secretly doubted we would find anything interesting. The road outside school looked ordinary. There was traffic in the morning, of course, but not smoke or anything dramatic. Our teacher said that was exactly why measuring mattered. Some environmental problems are easy to ignore because they do not look serious.

We placed sensors near the school gate, beside the playing field and in a quiet street ten minutes away. The first results were confusing because the numbers changed with wind and rain. On one wet morning, the gate reading was lower than expected, while the quiet street was higher because delivery vans were waiting outside shops. We learned quickly that one surprising reading was not enough evidence. Patterns over time mattered more than a dramatic number on one day.

After two weeks, a clearer pattern appeared. Pollution near the school gate rose sharply during the fifteen minutes before registration, when cars stopped with engines running. It fell again once students were inside. We showed the graph at a school council meeting. Some parents said they had only waited for a minute or two, which was true. But the graph showed how many short waits added up when dozens of cars did the same thing.

The school did not ban cars, because some families lived far away or had younger children to drop off. Instead, it created a no-idling reminder zone and encouraged older students to walk from a car park five minutes away. At first, I thought the changes were too small. Then the next set of readings showed a slight improvement at the gate. It was not a perfect solution, but it proved that behaviour could change when people saw clear evidence.

The project made me less impatient with environmental campaigns. I used to think people ignored advice because they did not care. Now I think many people need a problem to become specific before they take it seriously. 'Air pollution' sounds huge and distant. A graph showing what happens outside your own school at 8.25 a.m. is harder to dismiss. Data did not solve the problem by itself, but it gave our community a reason to start.

3. Strategy focus

Read around numbers

If a paragraph includes figures, times or measurements, check what the number proves rather than choosing an option just because it repeats the number.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

Question 1

Why did Daniel doubt the project at first?

A The road did not seem visibly polluted.
B The sensors looked too difficult to use.
C The university had already collected all the data.

Question 2

What did students learn from the early readings?

A Rain always made pollution worse.
B Quiet streets never had high readings.
C They needed patterns, not single surprising results.

Question 3

What caused the regular rise near the gate?

A students exercising on the playing field
B cars waiting with engines running before registration
C delivery vans in the quiet street

Question 4

Why did the school avoid banning cars completely?

A The readings showed cars were not involved.
B Some families had practical reasons for driving.
C Parents refused to attend the meeting.

Question 5

How did Daniel react to the small changes later?

A He thought they proved sensors were unreliable.
B He wanted to end the project immediately.
C He saw that they could still make a difference.

Question 6

What is Daniel's main point about environmental problems?

A Specific local evidence can motivate action.
B Large campaigns are never useful.
C People ignore pollution only because they are selfish.

5. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: What environmental issue near your school could be measured?
2. Strategy: Identify one wrong option that uses a true detail from the wrong part of the text.
3. Writing: Write a short proposal for improving air quality near a school.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to pollution, evidence and conservation.

ANSWER KEY

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: He learned that local environmental data can make an invisible problem easier to understand and discuss.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

1. A; 2. C; 3. B; 4. B; 5. C; 6. A

1. A - He says the road looked ordinary, with no smoke or drama.
2. C - They learn patterns over time mattered more than one dramatic number.
3. B - The rise happened when cars stopped with engines running.
4. B - Some families lived far away or had younger children.
5. C - A slight improvement showed behaviour could change.
6. A - He says a local graph is harder to dismiss than a huge distant issue.