

YRE Workbook

Secondary

Name:



**Young Reporters
for the Environment**

Investigate

1. A Clean Environment is Your Right

Children and young people have rights. These rights are guaranteed by an agreement called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



This agreement was signed by many countries who have promised to look after these rights and to help children and young people use them.

One of the rights guaranteed in the Convention is the right to Health, Water, Food and Environment which means you have the right to clean water, healthy food and a clean, safe environment to live in.

In 2023, the United Nations published a comment with a special focus on climate change and children's rights. In this, they acknowledge that some rights are threatened by climate change and describe what governments should do to protect children's rights.



Watch Video 1: The Environment & Your Rights

What does a clean, safe environment look like to you?

2. Our Environment Needs a Voice

We know that Scotland is facing a climate emergency, a litter emergency and a biodiversity emergency all at the same time.

Climate change is affecting our weather, with Summer 2026 being our hottest ever, litter can be found on many of our streets, parks and beaches, and there is a need to preserve homes for wildlife.

This might sound alarming, but the good news is that there are a lot of things we can do to help, including speaking up about issues affecting our community. Have a look at some examples of environmental issues and choose one to report on.



Climate Change: Fast Fashion, flooding, drought, severe weather, coastal erosion, rising sea levels, wildfires, threats to local industry and farming.



Litter and Pollution: litter, flytipping, food waste, textile waste, single use plastic, marine litter, air pollution, water pollution.



Biodiversity: habitat loss, endangered Scottish species, rewilding, deforestation, overfishing, invasive species.

Choose an environmental issue to investigate and report on.

How does this issue affect your community?

3. Journalism & the Environment

There is a lot of news about climate change on social media and television, and you might wonder if journalism can make a difference. Helping the environment is not just taking action like planting trees or recycling, **talking** about environmental issues is **just as powerful** because it can motivate others to take action and speak up too.



Watch Video 2: Constructive Journalism

YRE focuses on Constructive Journalism which focuses on **solutions** instead of problems.

Looks at **both sides** of an issue - what's good and what's bad.

Focuses on **curiosity** rather than outrage.

How does reading bad news make you feel?

How could journalism help people share ideas instead of arguing?



Research

1. Good Sources

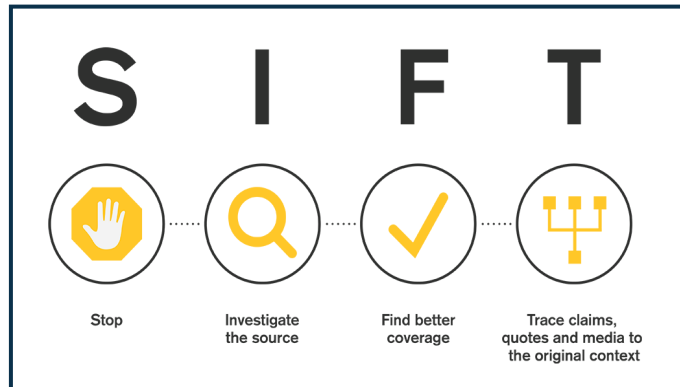
A good report uses information from people and from trusted sources. There are two ways you can gather information:

Primary Research: interviews, surveys or observations.

Secondary Research: looking at sources that already exist like books, journals, or films.

We can make sure our sources can be trusted with the SIFT Method developed by digital literacy expert Mike Caulfield.

SIFT stands for Stop, Investigate, Find, and Trace, and reminds us to be sceptical.



Watch Video 3: Good Sources

Discuss: What are some sources you can trust?

2. Gathering Facts

Spend some time doing research about your issue. Find two facts from the library, a teacher, the news, or a trusted website. Remember to check that your sources are trusted. Remember you can use both Primary and Secondary sources.

Make a note of where you find your information because next, we'll learn about citing our sources.

Fact 1

Source:

Fact 2

Source:

Decide: What action do you want your audience to take? Why?

3. Citing Your Sources

It's important to tell everyone where the information in your report has come from in a Source List. This is called **citing** your sources.

Citing your sources

- Helps your audience find your sources.
- Gives credit to the authors of your sources.
- Shows that you are building your report on a solid foundation.

To cite a website, find the title, author, the date it was written (if you can find it), the URL (website address) and the date you found the source.

Like this:



Let's take a look at an example.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/facts/spiders>



"Spiders: Facts and Information". *National Geographic*, 2026, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/facts/spiders>. Accessed: 19 August 2026.

Try citing one of your sources:



A large empty purple-outlined box intended for the user to practice citing one of their sources.

4. Disinformation

Disinformation is: False information that is meant to manipulate, cause damage, or guide people in the wrong direction.

How to spot disinformation:

Clickbait Headlines: A sensational or bizarre claim, without any facts to support it.

Emotional Triggers: Posts designed to provoke strong emotions

Anti-Expert Energy: The post claims "all mainstream experts are lying" or "here's what they don't want you to know" and only this individual knows the truth.

Missing References: Does not list any sources, studies, data sets, or quotes. Contains opinions and speculation.

Funding Sources: Studies or articles funded by sources interested in climate change denial

Unsure? Try a factchecker like fullfact.org or Project Real.



Watch Video 6: Disinformation

What might happen if a lot of people believe and share disinformation?



Report I

1. Know Your Audience

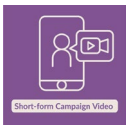
Who is your audience and what is the best way to get their attention. Who do you want to see your report?

How do you want your report to make them feel?

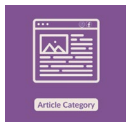


Watch Video 4: Good Reporting

2. Choose how you will make your report



Video Campaign: a short < 1 minute video filmed vertically.

☐

Written Article: A piece of writing 1,000 words or less. Can include pictures or graphs.

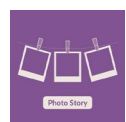
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Photo Story: a set of 3-5 photographs with descriptions.

☐

3. Craft Your Message

A good Call to Action grabs the attention of your audience. Asking for behaviour change can be tricky, but remember the 4 Rs!

A good Call to Action is:

Realistic: something most people can do

Repeatable: something that can become a new habit

Relatable: try to share your personal experience

Remember-able: something easy to remember



Watch Video 5: A Call to Action

What is your Call to Action?

How will you know if your Call to Action is successful?



Report II

1. Planning Your Report

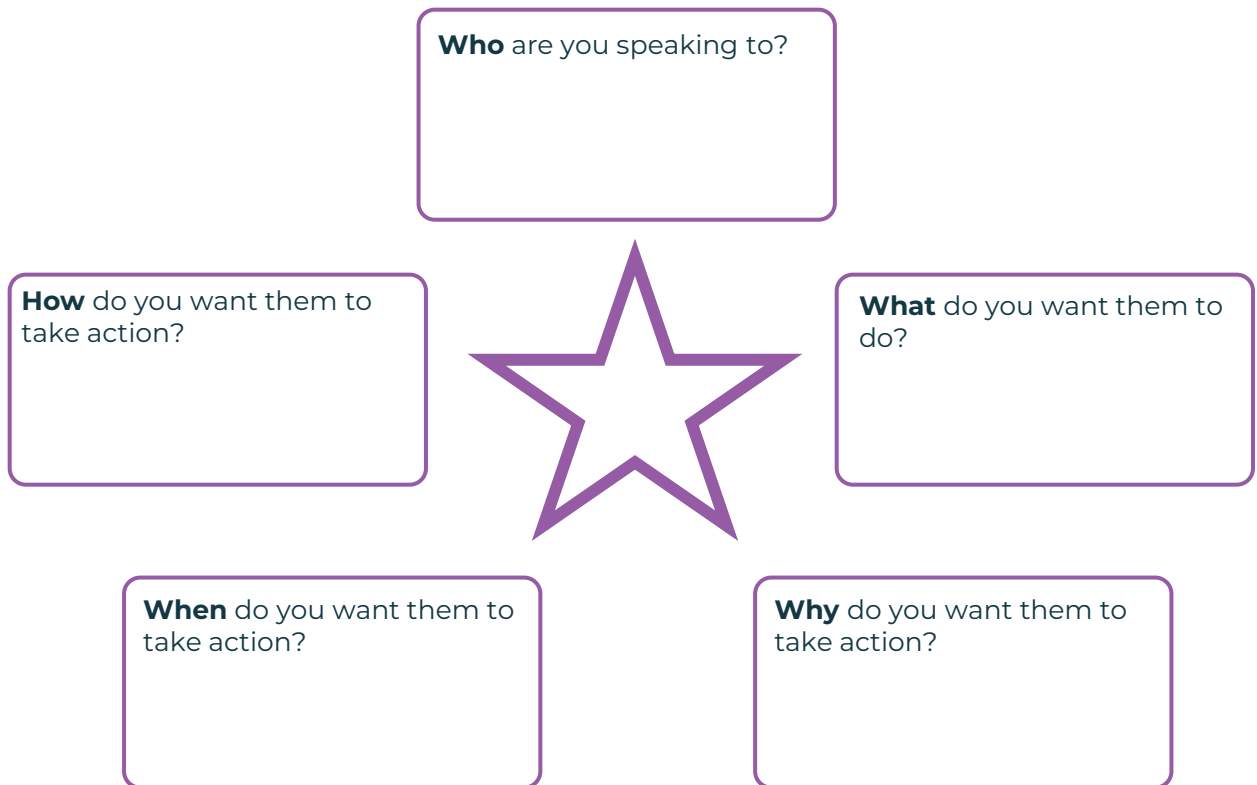
Now that you have found information from good sources, it's time to create your report. Whether you are writing an article, filming a video or taking photographs, start by laying out your story in words or drawings so your message is clear.

Mindmaps: help organise your thoughts using words.

Storyboards: help organise your story using drawings.

2. Start with the basics

Start by asking five questions: Who, What, Where, Why, and How.



Who are you speaking to?

How do you want them to take action?

What do you want them to do?

When do you want them to take action?

Why do you want them to take action?

3. Space for your notes

Use the rest of this lesson to work on your report.



Feedback

1. Give Feedback to a Peer

Feedback will help make your report the best it can be.

Trade workbooks with a classmate so they can give you feedback on your report, and you can give them feedback on theirs. Use the form below, or give feedback in your own way.

Your classmate will do the same for you. When you receive feedback, you can choose to make the changes suggested, or keep your report as it is.

Reviewer's Name: _____

Is this report ...

Relevant to the environmental issue chosen?

Evidence-based i.e. are facts and interviews cited?

Clear in communication?

Creative in approach? Does it catch your attention?

Impactful (includes a call to action)?

Describe one thing you think this report does well:

Describe one change you think would make this report even better:



Share & Reflect

1. Get Your Message Out There!

This could include sharing your report on social media, sharing with your school community, contacting local or regional news, or sharing with a community group.

List three places you could share your report:

1.

2.

3.

Who could help share your report?

2. Time for reflection

Take a few moments to think about your experience of Investigating, Researching and creating your report.

What is your favourite part of your report?

One thing you learned while making your report

How did feedback help you improve your report?

One action you would like to keep doing to help the environment:



YRE Entry Form

Name(s)

Age

School

Local Authority

Teacher

Teacher's Email Address

Report Type

Video Campaign ☐

Photo Story ☐

Written Article ☐

Report Theme

Climate Change ☐

Biodiversity Loss ☐

Litter & Pollution ☐

Title (max 140 characters)

Three places you have shared your report:

Can we publish your name with your report?

☐ YES: it is OK to
publish my name

☐ NO: please do not
publish my name

**Signature (for under 16s this should be a
parent or carer)**

☐ I understand my entry will be
published and submitted to the
national and international YRE
Competition.