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## **Understanding Air Pollution**

Air pollution is a mix of particles and gases that can reach harmful concentrations both outside and indoors. Its effects can range from higher disease risks to rising temperatures. Soot, smoke, pollen, methane, and carbon dioxide are just a few examples of common pollutants. Outdoor air pollution involves the exposures (no protection) that take place outside of the built environment.

The most common air pollutants of ambient air include:

- Particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5)
- Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)
- Carbon monoxide (CO)
- Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)

### **Causes and effects of air pollution:**

Air pollution is caused either from natural wildfires, by vehicles and also by the emission of gases from factory chimneys. Air pollution affects everyone such as: people, animals, and plants. Air pollution particles eventually fall back to Earth contaminating the soil and water. Like humans, animals can experience health problems due to the exposure of air pollution. Greenhouses are causing global warming and it is a known fact that such gases are trapping heat energy in the Earth's atmosphere and causing damage to the ozone layer.



Many developed countries have adopted laws to regulate emissions and reduce air pollution. Every human being can help by making simple changes in their life styles like making more use of public transport or (maybe) riding a bike rather than driving their car to go to work.

**One reasonable and effective solution is to: Use the 3R's- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.**

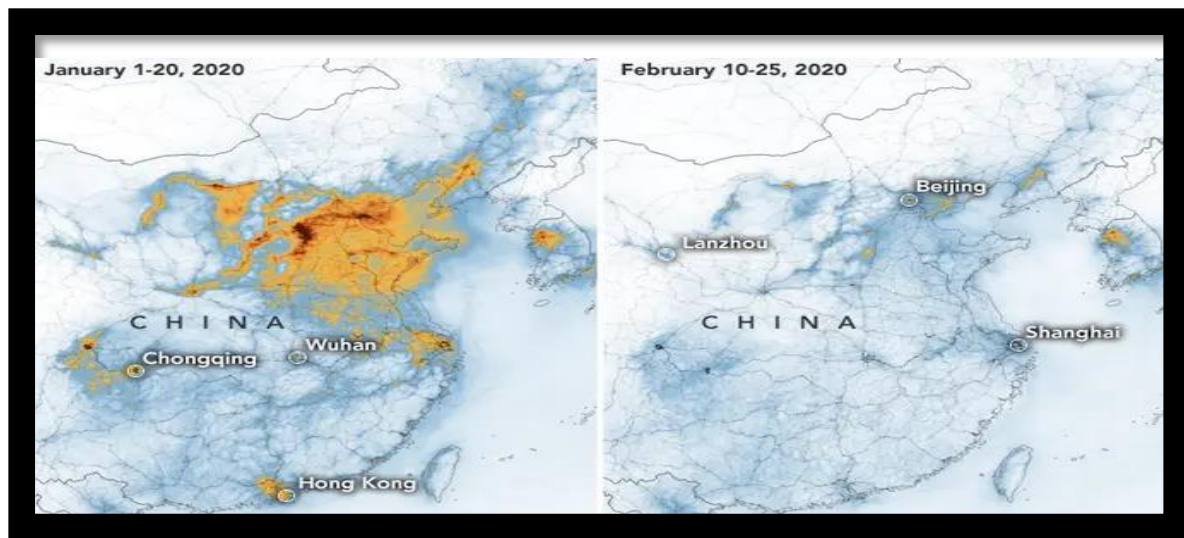
1. **Reduce means that** we use less consumables that are made up of natural resources. For example, reducing the wastage of electricity by switching off unnecessary lights and fans.
2. **Reuse means that** an object or resource material is used more than once.
3. **Recycling means that** we should collect the used and discarded items of paper, plastic, glass and metals, and send them to the respective industries for making fresh paper, plastic, glass or metal objects.

- ✓ **We must become** aware of Energy Consumption.
- ✓ **Minimise the Use of Fossil Fuels** powered automobiles.
- ✓ **Use lunch boxes instead of plastic bags or foil papers.**
- ✓ **Use reusable water bottles instead of plastic bottles** that can be thrown away.
- ✓ **Use less papers** and use it from its both sides.
- ✓ **Use public transport, bike or go to your our destination by walk** rather than by car.
- ✓ **Plant more trees.**
- ✓ **Get renewable.**
- ✓ **Go Green.**



## Reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemia

During this extraordinary time, it was reported that the air pollution has become less risky due to less dangerous fumes and less toxic air. The main reason for this is obviously that most of the people were staying at home. Schools were closed, most of the airports are still closed or only operating limited flights and many countries around the world closed their borders. Therefore, during this time, air pollution decreased and mother nature managed to do a substantial make over. Among various examples one can mention China, particularly Beijing area as one can see in the image below.



On April 22 we have celebrated **Earth Day**. While the coronavirus (COVID-19) has been spreading around the world, the need to take climate action has remained as urgent as ever. The pandemic is a stark reminder of the vulnerability of humans and the planet in the face of global scale threats. Earth day 2020 is not just the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, but also the anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement to take climate action. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres concluded that, "Had we been further advanced in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we could better face this challenge". (2020 climate & energy package - Climate Action - European Commission, 2020). Implementing the suggestions mentioned earlier; provide some practical solutions, through which all Global Citizens will co-operate to save the Earth from air pollution, which ultimately effect negatively us equally.

### Bibliography:

Climate Action - European Commission. 2020. 2020 Climate & Energy Package - Climate Action - European Commission. [online] Available at: <[https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020_en)> [Accessed 24 May 2020].