The environment

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 ecological footprint ____	**a** a system where resources are reused and waste is minimised rather than discarded
2 mitigation ____	**b** the total demand a person or activity places on natural resources
3 adaptation ____	**c** action taken to reduce the severity or impact of a problem
4 tipping point ____	**d** adjusting practices or systems to cope with changing conditions
5 circular economy ____	**e** a critical threshold beyond which change becomes irreversible or self-sustaining
6 carbon sink ____	**f** a natural system that absorbs more carbon than it releases
7 greenwashing ____	**g** misleadingly presenting a product or company as more environmentally friendly than it is
8 resource depletion ____	**h** the gradual using up of a finite natural resource
9 degradation ____	**i** the decline in quality or health of an ecosystem
10 resilience ____	**j** the capacity of a system to recover from disturbance

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For the total resource demand of an activity: ecological footprint / negligible impact.

2 For reducing the severity of a problem: mitigation / escalation.

3 For adjusting to changing conditions: adaptation / rigidity.

4 For a threshold beyond which change is irreversible: tipping point / stable equilibrium.

5 For a system minimising waste through reuse: circular economy / linear economy.

6 For misleadingly appearing eco-friendly: greenwashing / genuine transparency.

7 For a natural system absorbing more carbon than it releases: carbon sink / carbon source.

8 For the capacity to recover from disturbance: resilience / fragility.

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3 **Complete the environmental collocations with one word.**

1 an ecological _____ (= total demand on natural resources)

2 climate change _____ (= reducing the severity of impact)

3 a climate _____ point (= an irreversible threshold)

4 a _____ economy (= based on reuse rather than waste)

5 a carbon _____ (= a system absorbing more carbon than released)

6 accused of _____ (= misleadingly appearing eco-friendly)

7 resource _____ (= gradual using up of a finite resource)

8 ecosystem _____ (= decline in ecological health)

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4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

adaptation | carbon sink | circular economy | degradation | ecological footprint | greenwashing | mitigation | resilience | resource depletion | tipping point

Case A: The company was accused of 1 _____ after marketing a product as sustainable despite a large 2 _____.
Case B: Scientists warned that the region was approaching a climate 3 _____, beyond which recovery would become far more difficult.
Case C: The forest functions as a significant 4 _____, though continued logging risks accelerating 5 _____ of the surrounding ecosystem.
Case D: Policymakers debated whether to prioritise 6 _____, reducing emissions directly, or 7 _____, helping communities adjust to unavoidable change.
Case E: The city introduced a 8 _____ initiative, encouraging businesses to reduce 9 _____ through recycling and reuse.
Case F: Ecologists praised the wetland's 10 _____, noting its ability to recover quickly after flooding.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

The limits of individual action

Environmental economists increasingly emphasise systemic solutions over individual behaviour change, arguing that a handful of large corporations account for a disproportionate share of global emissions. This does not render personal choices meaningless, but it does suggest that policies targeting resource depletion and ecosystem degradation at an industrial scale, such as carbon pricing or stricter regulation, are likely to achieve far greater impact than individual recycling habits alone. Critics of purely individualistic framing argue that corporate greenwashing has successfully shifted public attention towards personal responsibility, deflecting scrutiny from industrial practices that remain the primary drivers of ecological harm.

1 What do environmental economists increasingly emphasise? _____

2 What do they argue about a handful of large corporations? _____

3 Does this mean personal choices are meaningless? _____

4 What policies are likely to achieve far greater impact, according to the text? _____

5 What have critics accused corporate greenwashing of doing? _____

6 What remains the primary driver of ecological harm, according to critics? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

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1 The company falsely claimed to be environmentally friendly. GREENWASHING _____

2 The system reuses materials rather than wasting them. CIRCULAR ECONOMY _____

3 The ecosystem was approaching an irreversible threshold. TIPPING POINT _____

4 The forest recovered quickly after the disturbance. RESILIENCE _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word account analysing whether individual or systemic action matters more for addressing environmental problems, distinguishing observation from argument.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

1 b 2 c 3 d 4 e 5 a 6 f 7 g... note reassign 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Connotation

1 ecological footprint 2 mitigation 3 adaptation 4 tipping point 5 circular economy 6 greenwashing 7 carbon sink 8 resilience

3 Collocations

1 footprint 2 mitigation 3 tipping 4 circular 5 sink 6 greenwashing 7 depletion 8 degradation

4 Case notes

1 greenwashing 2 ecological footprint 3 tipping point 4 carbon sink 5 degradation
6 mitigation 7 adaptation 8 circular economy 9 resource depletion 10 resilience

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Systemic solutions over individual behaviour change.
2 That they account for a disproportionate share of global emissions.
3 No.
4 Policies targeting resource depletion and ecosystem degradation at an industrial scale, such as carbon pricing or stricter regulation.
5 Shifting public attention towards personal responsibility.
6 Industrial practices.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The company was accused of greenwashing. 2 The system is a circular economy.
3 The ecosystem was approaching a tipping point. 4 The forest showed real resilience.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.