

Climate change and global warming are the phrases on everybody's lips at the moment, with extensive media coverage of these and other global environmental issues. John Long's *The Big Picture Book of Environments*, fills a gap in the market for accessible children's resources on the subject.

Printed on paper certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council, this book has also been made carbon neutral. It is great to see a book that practises what it preaches, without proselytising too much.

Each environment is laid out on a two-page spread accompanied by an array of stunning photographs. The fact boxes in each one make comparisons easy, and there is also a series of *Danger Zones* text boxes highlighting areas of particular concern, such as the deforestation of rainforests.

The breakdowns of some scientific concepts at the beginning are useful, such as the box describing atoms and molecules. These make the book appealing to the budding scientist who wants to delve a little deeper, without taking away from the enjoyment of the book as a whole. The great thing about this book is that, as a reference, it doesn't focus too much on describing concepts, but makes environmental science palatable in an attractive picture book format.

Throughout the book, the reader is taken on a journey from the earth's beginnings through to the future, suggesting courses of action we can take to preserve the earth for future generations.

In the classroom, this book would be great to have on hand as a reference when looking at any subject involving the earth, although it doesn't go into habitats or adaptation extensively. It would be a great accompaniment to any enquiry into climate change and its effects.

This book is concise and easy to read, but would have benefited from a glossary, as there are no extra explanations of potentially difficult terms. Despite the fact that this book is a little on the light side, it is a timely, concise and well-presented reference book.

Anna-Kaye Forsyth, relief teacher, New Zealand

This well-researched non-fiction book would be a wonderful addition to any school library, and a great resource for any studies pertaining to the earth's environments.

It is divided into three main parts: Earth Past, Earth Present and Earth Future.

Earth Past gives a brief overview of the earth's beginning and briefly covers dinosaurs and the last ice age.

Earth Present is the biggest part of the book and covers the many different environments and their flora and fauna on our planet.

Earth Future presents two possible scenarios for the year 2080. The first scenario, if we do nothing about global warming, shows a world without many of the environments previously described. The second scenario invites us to picture a world with clean streams, self-sufficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.

The last page gives twelve suggestions for what the average citizen can do to contribute to saving the planet.

This book is well set out with a variety of photographs, pictures and diagrams. The text is in well spaced blocks and easy to read.

An awesome book that I would use for environmental studies. Themes on animals and other countries.

Claire Cheeseman, Summerland Primary School, New Zealand

The book's opening comment sets the tone upfront with the statement that the earth is '...an inherited gift from billions of years of evolution.' As teacher from an independent Christian College, this is not a statement that would fit comfortably within the ethos of the school. An alternative comment might be 'an inherited gift through creation'. While I would be happy to look past the first page, many might not.

Beyond this poetic beginning, the factual content provides an excellent resource for primary and secondary schools. The text is written effectively in order to make it easily understood by

the younger audience. Pictures, diagrams and fact boxes scattered throughout add to the interest level and also to the level of understanding. The book delves into the many and varied environments around the world from rainforests to Antarctica and effectively indicates the effect of global warming on each of these environments. The book concludes with several predictions of what life might be like in 2080...depending on the impact of the ever increasing human race. This approach leaves plenty of opportunity for valuable classroom discussion about what life might be like in the future and why.

The book concludes with a list of simple strategies to achieve the most desirable outcomes for the future of our planet and for us. The topic of the book and the level at which it is written makes it suitable for many topics across the HSIE and Science curriculum in the primary school setting.

This book also has useful teacher notes available on the Allen and Unwin website, providing additional information and ideas for activities within the classroom.

Meredith Phillips, St Philip's Christian College, NSW

The Big Picture Book Of Environments by John Long is a wonderful asset to any class library or for children keen on learning more about our unique environment and how to protect it. With its colourful hardcover, it's a book that will draw even the most reluctant of readers. When opened, this book draws the reader in, with its stunning bright pictures, maps and diagrams and short easy to read texts.

Scattered throughout the book are some interesting fact boxes filled with useful information that is easy to read.

The book is broken into three sections; *The Earth Past* – where children can learn how and when the Earth evolved as well as The Dinosaur Era, The Last Great Ice Age and Earth's Changing Climate.

The second section concentrates on *The Earth Present* – This is the biggest section and it covers the different environments of the Earth; from the tropical rainforests and grasslands to the coral reefs and the polar regions and much more. There's also a straight forward explanation complete with diagrams explaining The Carbon Cycle and The Greenhouse events.

The third section is *The Earth Future* – predicting life in 2080. It explains that if nothing is done, how many species of mammals and birds will become extinct, how the world's coral reefs will disappear, how there will be flooding of coastal towns and cities and extreme weather patterns.

It also explains how if we act NOW, how we can keep all these amazing unique mammals, birds and plant life in the future.

This book concludes with a 'What we can do' section giving 12 different actions ordinary people can do to help the environment.

All in all, *The Big Picture Book Of Environments* would be an excellent tool in the classroom and would provide a setting for some interesting discussions relating to the environment and the future of our environment.

Mark Draga, West Harbour School, Auckland, New Zealand

Climate change is the topic everyone is currently discussing so a book for children outlining the scientific facts is a valuable teaching resource.

The Big Picture Book of Environments by John Long will immediately engage students. The contents section is divided into Earth Past, Earth Present and Earth Future? Each section is easy to read and understand and will no doubt stimulate discussion. General background information is combined with more specific scientific information and has two standout inserts titled 'Interesting Facts' and 'Fact Box' in each section.

The presentation of information is clear and easy to follow. The page layout has an effective balance of information combined with superb illustrations and photos and is guaranteed to entice any reader into discovering more.

The section titled *Earth Future?* is a fascinating section in which two scenarios of life on planet Earth in 2080 are presented. One scenario hypothesises on what the future of the planet will be if we do nothing while the other presents what the future will be if we act now. The final section engages readers by asking, ‘What can we do?’ and offers a range of practical suggestions.

The Big Picture Book of Environments is a beautifully presented book that is sure to inform and engage students in the climate change debate. It is also significant that it is printed on paper certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council and that carbon emissions associated with the production of the book have been neutralised.

Margaret Warner, casual teacher/writer, NSW

The Big Picture Book of Environments by John Long is a fantastic resource for any primary teacher of environmental science. Throughout the book, the reader is taken on a journey from the earth’s beginnings through to the future, suggesting courses of action we can take to preserve the earth for future generations. This book is divided into three parts: Earth Past, Earth Present, and Earth Future. Each environment is covered in two pages which are full of stunning photographs and easy to digest scientific information. Throughout the book there are fact boxes and danger zones detailing areas of concern such as greenhouse gases and global warming. Also throughout this resource there are various diagrams explaining the more complex facts such as atoms & molecules and the carbon cycle. This book covers topics such as the beginning of our earth, dinosaurs in a greenhouse world, the last great ice age, the many environments and climates of our planet, earth’s atmosphere, tropical rainforest, the great pine forest, grasslands, deserts – hot or cold?, the Tundra – stark and frozen, polar regions, rivers and lakes, open ocean, coral reefs, the abyssal depths and cities. Under the section titled *Earth Future*, there are two predictions of what life could be like in 2080 - if we act on global warming and if we do nothing to help stop it. This is a great section to get children thinking and the book ends with ideas of what they can do to help combat this global problem. This book is full of child-friendly text and is the ultimate reference for any science enthusiast. It encourages readers of all ages to both understand the facts and to marvel at the mystery and magnificence of evolution.

Teacher’s notes are available at

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/uploads/BookPdf/TeachersNotes/9781741754605.pdf>

Shelly Draga, Auckland, New Zealand

Although I was seeking a photographic picture book with very little text, to use with young ESL students, this 48 page non-fiction text has been a value addition to my teacher library. By organizing this text, into three main sections: *Earth Past*, *Earth Present* and *Earth Future?* John Long emphasizes the impact of environmental change over time. I used the fact boxes and the additional information in the *Earth Present* section to plan a term of work about diverse environments. This text provided sufficient information from which to provoke thinking activities and to negotiate further learning with my young students. One example was our question: Is there a difference between a rainforest and a jungle?

The text layout encouraged students’ use of headings, subheadings, contents and index pages. As we revisited pages in this “base” text, and explored many other print and online resources, my students developed a sense of our diverse environments. By repeatedly referring to key pages and contrasting pictures, my 7-8 year old students accessed environmental information in stages. They responded particularly well to photographic content and enjoyed contrasting new images with their prior understandings. For example, we contrasted *Deserts Hot or Cold* with *Polar Regions*. The students then planned which pictures and additional information they needed for our classroom displays.

I would appreciate this text being published in ‘Big Book’ format and suggest it would be most useful in middle primary classrooms. I am still searching for an excellent “picture” book of environments for our youngest students.

Dr Carmel Bochenek, Cocos Islands DHS, Indian Ocean Territories

