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# Sustainability Cards



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- These Sustainability Cards are designed to help generate ideas, make links and associations and to aid thinking critically and creatively.
- Pick one or two cards, use the key word or phrase to help you think about how sustainability might link to your current learning task or activity.
- Instructions:

Download this PDF. Cut and paste to A6 size cardboard.



# Biodiversity

... the variety of plant and animal life in an area and how they interact within habitats and ecosystems (like lakes and native forests).

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.3)



# Economic Sustainability

... is the practice of conserving natural and financial resources to create long-term financial stability. It entails evaluating the environmental impact of economic activity and devising sustainability goals to create a more livable future.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.4)



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# Social Sustainability

... refers to the ability of an economy to support growth and development over time, without depleting natural resources or causing long-term damage to the environment or people. It requires that resources are used efficiently and responsibly.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.4)





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# Environmental Sustainability

... involves protecting and preserving natural resources for future generations, through practices such as conservation, renewable energy and responsible waste management. It ensures we are living within the means of our natural resources and not breaching replenishment rates.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.4)





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# Climate Change

... is the long-term changes in the Earth's climate that are warming the atmosphere, ocean and land. Climate change is affecting the balance of ecosystems that support life and biodiversity and impacting health. It also causes more extreme weather events, such as more intense and/or frequent hurricanes, floods, heat waves, and droughts, and leads to sea level rise and coastal erosion as a result of ocean warming, melting of glaciers, and loss of ice sheets.





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# Global Warming

... is an increase in the Earth's average surface temperature that occurs when the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increases. These gases absorb more solar radiation and trap more heat, thus causing the planet to get hotter. Burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests, and farming livestock are some human activities that release greenhouse gases and contribute to global warming.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Food Miles

... is the distance between the place where food is grown or made  
and the place where it is eaten.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Energy Efficiency

... using less energy for the same output or producing more with the same energy input, and minimising energy waste.

(EEA, 2023).





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# Sustainable Resource Management

... is about responsibly balancing the use of natural resources to meet current needs while preserving them for future generations. The United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) provides a comprehensive system for classifying and managing these resources, ensuring consistency and transparency.

(UN Economic Commission for Europe, 2023)





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# Food Waste

... is food that is intended for human consumption that is wasted and lost and refers not only to food that consumers don't finish at restaurants and are thrown out at home, but also raw materials and produce that are lost in the farming stage, harvesting processes, during transportation, and storage.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.3)





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# Sustainability

... is the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.3)





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# Biodegradable

... is the capacity of a material to be broken down by living organisms such as fungi and bacteria into decomposed biomass and constituent substances such as carbon dioxide, water, and elements. This process results in the production of fewer pollutants that could harm the environment.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.9)





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# Agenda 2030

... is the United Nation's plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity.

It seeks to strengthen universal peace eradicating poverty in all.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.8)







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# 5 Ps of sustainability

People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and  
Partnership

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.21)





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# Quality Education

... aims to

ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote  
lifelong learning opportunities for all.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.22)





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# Sustainable Development

... is development that meets the needs of the present  
without compromising the ability  
of future generations to meet their own needs.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.3)





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# Sustainable Development Goals

... the 17 Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs), adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing -in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.3)





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# Circular Economy

... are models of production and consumption that minimise waste and reduce pollution, promote sustainable uses of natural resources, and help regenerate nature.

Circular economy approaches are all around us. They can be employed in a number of different sectors from textiles to buildings and construction, and at various stages of a product's lifecycle, including design, manufacturing, distribution, and disposal.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Fair Trade

... is an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between some of the most disadvantaged farmers and workers in the developing world and the people who buy their products. When farmers and workers can sell on Fairtrade terms, it provides them with a better deal: an opportunity to improve their lives and plan for their future. Fairtrade offers us a powerful way to reduce poverty through our everyday shopping.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.15)





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# Gender Equality

... aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Gender bias is undermining our social fabric and devalues all of us. It is not just a human rights issue; it is a tremendous waste of the world's human potential.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.15)





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# Recycling

... is the process of collecting waste and turning it into other materials or objects that can be reused. When we recycle, we use less raw materials than when producing a new product, which reduces air pollution and improves the environment.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.23

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# Climate Crisis

... is the serious problems that are being caused, or are likely to be caused, by changes in the planet's climate, including weather extremes and hazards, ocean acidification and sea-level rise, loss of biodiversity, food and water insecurity, health risks, economic disruption, displacement, and even violent conflict.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Carbon Footprint

... is a measure of the greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere by a particular person, organisation, product, or activity. A bigger carbon footprint means more emissions of carbon dioxide and methane, and therefore a bigger contribution to the climate crisis.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Climate Justice

... is putting equity and human rights at the core of decision-making and action on climate change.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Renewable Energy

... is the energy derived from natural sources that are constantly being replenished, such as wind, sunlight, the flow of moving water, and geothermal heat. In contrast to energy sourced from fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas, which accounts for 75% of the harmful greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change, energy from renewable sources is cheap, clean, sustainable, and generates more jobs.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Regenerative Farming

... is a way of farming that nurtures and restores soil health, and therefore reduces water use, prevents land degradation, and promotes biodiversity. By minimising land ploughing, practicing rotating crops, and using animal manure and compost, regenerative agriculture ensures that the soil stores more carbon, conserves more moisture, and is healthier due to thriving fungal communities.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Composting

... is the process of recycling organic matter, such as food waste or leaves, naturally. Over time, the organic matter turns into a material called compost which is full of nutrients and can be added to soil in the garden or indoor plants.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.12)





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# Fast Fashion

... is inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends. Producing clothes uses a lot of natural resources and creates greenhouse gas emissions which are responsible for climate change.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.3)





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# Green Schools

... is Ireland's leading environmental management and award programme working with primary and post primary schools across the country. Schools participate in the programme which is set out under a number of themes including: Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, Biodiversity, and Global Citizenship.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.15)







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# Microplastics

... are tiny plastic particles that result from both commercial product development and the breakdown of larger plastics. As a pollutant, micro-plastics can be harmful to the environment and animal health. Plastics can take hundreds or thousands of years to decompose—and in the meantime, wreak havoc on the environment. On beaches, micro-plastics are visible as tiny multi-coloured plastic bits in sand. In the oceans, micro-plastic pollution is often consumed by marine animals.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.19)





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# Natural Resources

... include air, water, soil, minerals, plants, and animals.

(Cambridge Dictionary, 2024)





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# Pesticide

... is an umbrella term that describes plant protection products (PPPs), that includes herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and biocides. They are chemicals applied directly to crops and vegetables in the field (or in storage) to protect them from attack by pests and diseases.

All pesticides are designed to kill a particular target group of organisms, and as such are potentially dangerous to humans and the environment.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.21)





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# Responsible Consumption and Production

... relates to ensuring that everyone has the resources they need to meet their needs, but consuming in a way that preserves the planet for future generations to use and enjoy. Our planet has provided us with an abundance of natural resources. But we have not utilised them responsibly and currently consume far beyond what our planet can provide. We must learn how to use and produce in sustainable ways that will reverse the harm that we have inflicted on the planet.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.23)





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# Solar Power

...is the energy converted from sunlight into usable electricity. Sunlight is harnessed directly through the use of solar panels. Solar panels are made up of a transparent photovoltaic (PV) glass as well as PV cells which are responsible for converting sunlight into electricity.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.24)





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# Greenhouse Gas Emissions

... are gases that trap heat from the sun in our planet's atmosphere, keeping it warm. Since the industrial era began, human activities have led to the release of dangerous levels of greenhouse gases, causing global warming and climate change.

The main greenhouse gases released by human activities are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases used for cooling and refrigeration.

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)





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# Global Citizen Education

... is a lifelong educational process, which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, inter-dependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, GCE helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives and how they can act to build a better world.

(DE Sustainability Guidelines, 2023, p.16)





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# Conservation

... is the prevention of wasteful use of a resource; preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment and of wildlife.

(Oxford dictionary)

... conservation is the practice of caring for these resources so all living things can benefit from them now and in the future.

(National Geographic)







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# Reforestation

the process of replanting trees in areas that had recent tree cover but where forests were lost, due to wildfires, drought, disease, or human activity such as agricultural clearing

(United Nations Development Programme, 2023)



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# Cultural Diversity

culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind.

(United Nations Declaration on Cultural Diversity)





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# Human Rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

(United Nations, 2024)





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# Migration

... any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of:

- the person's legal status
- whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary
- what the causes for the movement are
- what the length of the stay is

(United Nations, 2024)





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# Sustainable Consumption

... is buying goods and services that do not harm society,  
the environment or the economy.

(United Nation, 2024)





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