



BRANCHE	SECTIONS	ÉPREUVE ÉCRITE
ANGLAIS	B, C, D, E, F, G	<i>Durée de l'épreuve :</i> 150 minutes <i>Date de l'épreuve :</i> 21 mai 2019

An Optimist's Guide to Climate Change

Even for optimists like me, it is getting harder to be hopeful about the fate of our planet. Grim environmental news is nothing new, but 2018 brought a deluge of it. One report noted that vertebrate populations have declined by 60% in the last four decades, and less than a quarter of the Earth's land has escaped the effects of human activity. Perhaps most sobering was a United Nations study, which warned that the world is not on track to meet emissions targets needed to keep global warming to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the threshold set by the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

The consequences of this failure grow more extreme with every fraction of a degree by which the mark is missed. Amid these negative trends, some now argue that the world has reached the point of no return for climate change. But it is not too late to change course. What we discovered is that with smarter strategies, a growing population can be accommodated even as we tackle climate change. For example, by changing how and where humans grow crops, the world could reduce water shortage and dramatically shrink the land footprint of agriculture. Best of all, these gains could be achieved while maintaining current trends of economic growth.

By implementing a few dramatic but manageable changes over the next few decades, it is possible to realize a sustainable future for both people and nature. Despite evidence of what is possible, few countries around the world are acting with any urgency. Climate inaction is often blamed on a "lack of political will." Policymakers and public activists have been discussing climate change for over 30 years but have made only modest gains.

Similarly, countries around the world have taken only half-hearted and inconsistent steps to protect biodiversity. In fact, few countries are on track to meet the targets, and many governments have actually relaxed protections as they approve development in ecologically sensitive areas. Moreover, international climate and environmental agreements often lack teeth. While progress has been made to finalize the so-called Paris rulebook – the regulations that will govern implementation of the Paris agreement – most policing mechanisms have encountered resistance from countries that put short-term costs above longer-term benefits.

In fact, a big part of the problem is precisely this either-or framing of the issue. Too often, climate-related strategies are presented as impossible choices between energy security and environmental protection, or between economic growth and reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions. Our data show that this is a simplistic narrative that won't serve us well in the long run. The most productive approach is one that accounts for environmental, social, and economic needs. To be sure, meeting the climate-change challenge will require major adjustments to industrial and agricultural systems. We will need new policies that hold polluters accountable, embrace investment in natural infrastructure, establish protected areas, and support smarter planning.

But all of this *is* possible. As with any policy shift, some sectors or individuals will face new costs; this is especially true for policies addressing pollution, biodiversity loss, and other consequences not accounted for in marketplace transactions. But polluters should be made more responsible for climate change. For many others – such as farmers, fishermen, and clean-energy producers – it would actually bring more economic and environmental benefits, not less.

The stakes are too high for inaction. Around the world, communities are being damaged or destroyed by rising oceans and extreme weather, while safe drinking water is fast becoming a luxury. I still believe we will navigate the threats we face, but even a climate optimist knows the sentiment may not last forever.

(600 words)

adapted from an article by Lynn SCARLETT in The Project Syndicate, January 8, 2019

I) Working with the text **30 marks**

A) Comprehension **(20 marks)**

Use your own words as far as possible to answer the comprehension questions.

- 1) Why is it getting harder for optimists to be hopeful about the fate of our planet? (4 marks)
- 2) What are the reasons for the 'climate inaction' mentioned in the article? (8 marks)
- 3) How can climate change be slowed down? (8 marks)

B) Personal Opinion **(10 marks)**

Word limit: 100-150 words

Considering oneself a climate optimist is irresponsible. Do you agree?

II) Essay **30 marks**

Write an essay (between 300 and 400 words) on ONE of the following topics. Indicate your choice CLEARLY and include the word count.

1. Modern technology is creating a single world culture. Discuss!
2. Is artificial intelligence a blessing or a curse?
3. "The classroom hasn't changed much in the past 50 years. Even the bell design is the same as it was 50 years ago." — Vicki Albritton, educator in Georgia, United States

What should an education for the 21st century be like?