



INTERNATIONAL HUMANITIES CHALLENGE

Can We Fix the Environment?

Can environmental damage be reversed?

Exploring ideas. Challenging thinking. Connecting the humanities.

Environmental Crime Scene

Three damaged environments. One question.



**A damaged
landscape**



A water crisis



**A broken
ecosystem**

If humans caused the damage, can humans undo it?

Discuss with a partner.

Three Comeback Stories

Costa Rica — Forests

Large-scale deforestation was reversed and forest cover recovered.

Singapore — Water

A country with very limited natural freshwater developed a much more secure water supply.

Yellowstone — Wolves

Wolves were reintroduced after disappearing from the ecosystem.

Which sounds like the greatest environmental success?

Vote now. You can change your mind later.

The Environmental Jury

Your table gets ONE comeback story.

IMPACT

How much improved?

SUSTAINABILITY Will the improvement last?

PEOPLE

Who benefited or lost out?

CONSEQUENCES Did solving one problem create another?

Your verdict: ★★★★★ Remarkable ★★★★★ Strong ★★★ Mixed ★★ Questionable ★ Not really

The Jury Delivers Its Verdict

60 seconds per group.

“Our case deserves ____ stars because...”

AUDIENCE JOB

Challenge the verdict.

Ask one question OR identify something the group has not considered.



Nature Without Us

CHERNOBYL

**Humans left.
Wildlife returned.**

The exclusion zone remains contaminated — yet many wild animal populations have returned.

Does nature sometimes recover better when humans do nothing?



How Far Should We Go?



Great Green Wall

Restore degraded land across Africa.



Geoengineering

Deliberately alter Earth's climate system.



Direct Air Capture

Remove CO₂ directly from the atmosphere.



Ocean Cleanup

Use technology to remove plastic from oceans and rivers.

Are we fixing nature — or interfering with it even more?

The Risk Line

Move to show what YOU think.

WE SHOULD DO IT

TOO RISKY

Plant billions of trees.

Reintroduce predators.

Remove carbon directly from the air.

Reflect sunlight away from Earth to cool the planet.

You may move after hearing somebody else's argument.



The Environmental Council

Scientists have developed a technology that could significantly cool the planet.

Nobody can be certain about all the consequences.

APPROVE

TEST FIRST

REJECT

Your team has 5 minutes to reach ONE decision.

Everyone must agree.

Give your verdict — then give the strongest reason **AGAINST** your own decision.

Big Question Thinking

Can environmental damage be reversed?

YES

SOMETIMES

NO

Choose TWO examples that best support your judgement.

Then choose ONE example that could challenge it.

Strong humanities thinking considers evidence that does not fit neatly.



One Last Question

Which is usually better?

**PREVENT
ENVIRONMENTAL
DAMAGE**

OR

**DEVELOP BETTER WAYS
TO REPAIR IT**



Keep exploring! Use the online resources.



Find an environmental comeback story.

Is it really as successful as it first appears?