

Our Grandchildren's Climate

Booklist: Books about the Climate Crisis

1. Picture-story books for the very young

The Blue Giant by Katie Cottle.....2020, Pavilion Children's Books

A beautifully illustrated, imaginative story about the sea, the seashore and plastic pollution, with an uplifting ending. The blue giant brings a message to Meera and her Mum, asking them to help clear out all the rubbish, so they do their best, and their friends all help.

Somebody Swallowed Stanley by Sarah Roberts/Hannah Peck....2019, Scholastic

Clever story with fun illustrations about stripey Stanley, who is swallowed by various sea-creatures. Children will be able to tell you that Stanley is a plastic bag, even though it's not stated at first. Creative ending.

Saving Tally by Serena Lane Ferrari/Giorgia Vallicelli.....2019, Save the Planet Books. Tally Turtle is rescued from a plastic bag by her friend Ara Lobster. They write a message on the sand on the seashore saying 'no more litter in the ocean'. A page at the end about how to tackle plastic pollution.

Little Turtle and the Sea by Becky Davies/Jennie Poh.....2021, Little Tiger Press

Beautifully illustrated turtle life-cycle story, in which Turtle goes down the beach to the sea, travels, and is rescued from a net by scuba divers restoring the seagrass and coral. Not a very engaging story, but educational. Other titles from Little Tiger Press: Like the Ocean We Rise; The River; A World Beneath the Waves: SEA.

Rainforest by Helen Cowcher.....1993, Picture Corgi

Strikingly illustrated story of how the rainforest creatures learn that the trees are falling down, are scared, and encounter a destructive machine, with an ending that's pure wishful thinking. It asks how long the tall trees will be there to guard the animals. Realism, not hopeful.

The Tin Forest by Helen Ward/Wayne Anderson.....2001, Templar publishing

This is an extraordinary feat of the imagination. An old man lives surrounded by rubbish, which he uses to build an imaginary forest, all made of tin. Then a real bird arrives, and soon comes back with its mate. The birds drop seeds which grow, and eventually a real forest is re-established, full of birds, insects and small creatures. It's about urbanisation, rubbish, the need for nature, hope for the future. Highly recommended.

Dear Earth by Isabel Otter/Clara Anganuzzi.....2021, Little Tiger

Tessa's grandfather had been an explorer. He tells Tessa of his adventures and she decides to write a letter to the Earth, describing the wonders she would like to see too. 'Grandpa says that humans have hurt you, but we can heal you.' A message to children to realise how special Earth is and help look after it. Two pages of explanation and action ideas at the end. A beautiful book.

Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James.....1991, Scholastic

A really amusing story of Emily's letters to Mr. Blueberry, her teacher, who gently sets her straight, but becomes more and more emphatic in refuting her ideas about the blue whale she believes lives in her pond! He suggests that she might like to sail the ocean studying and protecting whales when she's older, but of course she's still immersed in thinking about her imaginary blue whale. Pure delight.

Greta and the Giants by Zoe Tucker/Zoe Persico.....2019, Frances Lincoln

Inspired by Greta Thunberg's stand to save the world. The greedy giants chop down forests, build cities, factories, shops, cars and planes until there's hardly any forest left. Greta helps the animals to tackle the giants, and others join her, until at last the giants take notice. Two pages at the end tell the real Greta's story and suggest ideas for helping her to make a difference. Very moving. (A donation goes to Greenpeace for every book sold.)

2. Positive action books for children and teenagers: activism

Old Enough to Save the Planet by Loll Kirby/Adelina Lirius.....Changemakers

Meet kids taking action against climate change and learn about the work they do. Age 7+

Dear World Leaders by Aled Jones of the Global Sustainability Institute (GSI) at Anglia Ruskin University.....Recent (no date given) printed by Amazon

This gives responses to real letters written by children from a variety of different countries to World Leaders. Four pages at the end describe what leadership is necessary, with three activities sections. Excellent for top primary or early secondary children, with the emphasis on our individual and communal agency.

Earth Heroes: 20 inspiring stories of people saving our world, by Lily Dyu/Amy

Blackwell.....2020, Nosy Crow Ltd

In-depth true-life stories, each 5 or more illustrated pages long, of both young people and adults all around the world who have taken action in a wide variety of ways. Gives a wide-ranging view of what can be achieved with determination and imagination. Inspirational.

Guardians of the Planet: How to be an Eco-Hero.....2019, Clive Gifford/Jonathan Woodward in partnership with Client Earth.....Buster Books

Highly detailed, colourfully illustrated with dense text suitable for older secondary school students. Covers all aspects of what's needed. Would require real dedication from the reader, or could be used for children's research.

Climate Action: the future is in our hands by Georgina Stevens/Katie Rewse 2021, Little Tiger

Fully illustrated with bite-sized text sections, for older secondary students. Four sections: Causes; Effect; Our Part; Inspiration. Excellent pages at the end on how to get active, activism, Green jobs you might like to consider doing, the author and illustrator, and how you feel – excellent for young people who are feeling overwhelmed. Highly recommended.

3. What is Climate Change?

What Every Child Should Know About Climate Change: Baby Professor book.....2017, Speedy Publishing LLC

Early childhood with adult help; age 7 – 10 reading alone, with photographic illustrations. Thorough coverage. Amazingly, suggests political action.

DK find out! Climate Change written by Maryam Sharif-Draper.....2020, Penguin Random House.

Perfect for older primary and early secondary students. Excellent illustrations with plenty of photos and carefully controlled amounts of text. Covers all aspects very clearly and concisely, with suggested actions. Highly recommended.

DK Eyewitness: Climate Change, author John Woodward.....2021, Penguin Random House

For senior school students. Extremely detailed text with excellent diagrams and photos explaining all aspects. Ideas for reducing your carbon footprint. (Doesn't mention the fact that this term was invented by BP, but good to do anyway.)

Usborne: Climate Crisis for Beginners plus Usborne.com/Quicklinks, 2021

For senior school students. Extremely detailed and thorough text with painted illustrations. Tries hard to give different points of view and many options.

The Climate Crisis Emergency by Roy Jelinek.....2023, Little Galileo Books

Causes, effects, what we need to do. Middle School Earth Science.

The Climate Crisis by Cynthia Kennedy Henzel.....Focus Readers

Ages 10-15 years. Causes, effects, solutions, debates, challenges.

4. Problems and solutions

This book Will Save the Planet by Dany Sigwalt.....2022, Frances Lincoln

Handbook for adolescents and the adults in their lives. How we can work to put people over profits. Principles of Climate Justice. Activities and calls to action.

A planet Full of Plastic by Neal Layton.....2019, Wren and Rook, Hachette

Picture-factual book for young readers, which explains manufacture, terms like biodegrade, microplastics, reduce, reuse, recycle and ideas scientists and engineers are coming up with, in simple, accessible language. Very good.

Plastic Planet: How plastic came to rule the world (and what you can do to change it) by Georgia Amson-Bradshaw.....2020, Watts Publishing Group

For older Primary and early Secondary students. Thorough coverage of every type of plastic problem, including impacts on humans, wildlife and oceans. What is already being done, what you can do, and further reading, including websites and films.

Our Planet; the one place we all call home by Matt Whyman/Richard Jones, foreword by David Attenborough.....2019, HarperCollins Children's Books

Large sized book with detailed text and photographs in sections describing Frozen Worlds, Jungles, Coastal Seas, Deserts and Grasslands, High Seas, Fresh Water and Forests. Each descriptive section is finished with pages on protecting that environment. Senior School students. Beautifully presented.

**Climate Change and How We'll Fix It by Alice Harman and Andres Lozano
2020, Sterling Children's Books, NY.**

In three sections, What We Know; The Problems; The Solutions. Very detailed text with colourful illustrations throughout. Suitable for older secondary school students.

**Bright New World: Building a Better Planet by Cindy Forde/Bethany Lord
2022, Welbeck Editions, imprint of Welbeck Children's Ltd.**

Large sized book, enormously detailed, covering all aspects realistically but in a relentlessly hopeful tone, including climate justice and fighting ecocide. Senior school students.

**What a Waste: Rubbish, recycling and protecting our planet by Jess French
2019, Dorling Kindersley**

Describes every kind of waste imaginable, plus air pollution, deforestation and conservation, in enormous detail, with causes and solutions. Combination of painted and photographic illustrations. 'You have the power to make a positive change' covered at the end. Very thorough, for senior school students.

5. Environmental Issues; plants, animals, soil

Oxford Reading Tree Fact Finders (educational materials for schools):

Amazing environments

Primary age range. Descriptive of an exciting range of environments with both painted and photographic illustrations.

Caring for our environment

Primary age range. Describes a wide range of activities undertaken by schools, including gardening, tree planting, a pond, road safety, helping elderly people and painting a mural.

Last: The story of a white rhino by Nicola Davies.....2020, Tiny Owl publishing.

Picture-story book for young children. Desperately sad true story about Sudan, one of the very last Northern White rhinos, with an upbeat ending, as he's returned to Africa. (Unfortunately, Sudan died in 2018 leaving just two elderly females. But Southern White rhinos have been conserved and people are working hard to protect them.) Only read this with a child if you're feeling strong and upbeat. It makes me cry every time.

Almost Gone: the world's rarest animals by Steve Jenkins.....2006, Harper Collins, Lets Read and Find Out Science series.

Ages 5 to 9, educational materials. Each page shows and describes an endangered animal, with number remaining and reason for decline. As this book is out of date, some of the creatures described may be extinct, others may have been successfully captive bred in good conservationist zoos. The book does explain that not all endangered animals become extinct, and why.

It's Now or Never by Peter Haswell.....1992, Red Fox

Picture-factual, beautifully illustrated. Describes endangered and extinct animals, with causes. Final pages give hope for the future. Early childhood to age 7 or 8.

Endangered Animals.....2007, Go facts, A & C Black Publishers

Educational. Age 7 to 11. Photographic record with clear texts, describing endangered animals, projects to save them, and arguments for and against captive breeding. Sadly, still relevant.

**Will We Miss Them? Endangered Species by Alexandra Wright/Marshall Peck
1992, Charlesbridge, MA**

Ages 5 – 11, educational picture-factual book. Very fine painted illustrations. Describes the problems faced by a range of animals, and what is being done to protect them. Final pages appeal to children to learn about endangered species and do something to help.

Countdown to Extinction: Animals in Danger by David Burnie.....2008, Oxford University Press

For the oldest Primary children and all secondary school students. Fabulous photos and text in small bites. Talks about global warming, pollution, oil spills, diseases, habitat loss, poaching, the wildlife trade, habitat protection, conservation and captive breeding. Impressively relevant even now.

Superhero Animals by Chris Packham/Anders Frang.....2024, Red Shed, an imprint of Harper Collins

Full colour, painted illustrations, serious but humorous text, for primary/early secondary aged children. Chris P doesn't simplify his language and talk down to kids. He uses words like apex predators, primates, arthropods, phytoplankton, carnivorous and bioremediation, but all of these terms are explained. He emphasises the importance of each species within its habitat, making clear that animals perform important functions in their ecosystems, and doesn't hesitate to put forward his belief that we should eat less meat. Excellent.

Green: The Story of Plant Life on Our Planet by Nicola Davies/Emily Sutton 2024, Walker Books

Primary and early secondary age ranges, very colourful paintings. The text is real science, carefully worded to be understandable for young readers, but complicated and challenging nonetheless. Explains how plants grow, how fossil fuels were formed, how carbon dioxide affects the planet and how plants can help. Challenging.

Plants Save the World by Annabel Savery/Qu Lan.....2022, Wayland/RHS

Primary/early secondary age groups. Sets out the vital importance of plants to life on Earth, with definitions, life-cycles, the Web of Life, trees, habitats for animals, seeds, medicines, wood and much, much more. Finishes with threats, protection and rewilding. Brilliant.

Bugs Save the World by Buglife/Qu Lan.....2022, Wayland

Like the previous book, the importance of these creatures is fully explained and elucidated. It never ceases to annoy me that the American term 'bugs' has been so widely adopted in the UK. A bug is actually a specific type of insect. However, this book covers far more invertebrates than just insects, so as a coverall term it's probably justified.

Earth, the natural science of Soil by Ben Lerwill/Xuan Le.....2025, Nosy Crow, National Trust Wonder World

5 - 10 years. Science and nature writing, not focused on climate change, but a crucial introduction to the importance of soil. Well illustrated, clear text.

Wild and Wonderful: poems about the natural world, selected by Tony Bradman, illustrated by Susan Wintringham.....2002, Wayland/WWF

Beautifully illustrated anthology of poems, many about endangered species and conservation. Older primary, younger secondary students. Still entirely relevant. (In the interests of transparency I should state that I have two poems in this book. PK).

7. Adult

Parenting in a Climate Crisis by Bridget Shirvell.....2025, Workman Adult

Bridget Shirvell is an American environmental journalist and parent who aims to help parents (and grandparents) answer tough questions and get kids connected to and responsible for the natural world; kids who feel empowered to meet the challenges of the climate crisis and who can fight for change.