

Sustainability fact sheet - Primary

You may have heard people talking about the word 'sustainability'. It's a big word and a big idea. But it's also a really important idea and we want to help you understand it.

Where does sustainability come from?

People started talking about sustainability when they started to realise that the way humans were living was harming our environment. While people in the past often lived very closely with our environment (through things like farming or fishing or hunting), it has only been very recently that humans have begun to understand how important our environment is to all life on Earth, including us humans.

We now understand that humans need our environment for almost everything; for fresh air, clean water, food, medicine, and for everything we wear, live in, own and do. And future generations will need it for exactly the same things. How we treat our environment isn't just about us now; it's also about the people living in the future.

And because we now understand how important our environment is, we need a word to describe how we can all live in a way that causes the least amount of harm to our environment. We need a word to help us think about how we can live in a way that is better for our environment and for people, both now and in the future. And that word is sustainability



A simple definition

If you're looking for a simple definition for what sustainability is, try this one: *Sustainability is about making sure there is enough for our environment and for everyone on Earth, both now and in the future.*

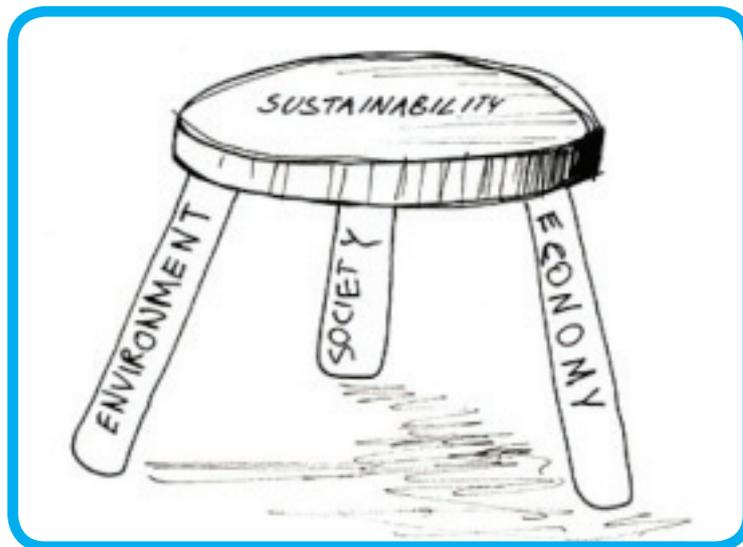
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Sustainability in three parts

Another way to think about sustainability is to think about it in three parts. The first part is the environment (how can we help our environment?). The second part is society (is what we're doing good for people living now and in the future?). The third part is the economy (is what we're doing the best thing for our economy?). The aim of being sustainable is to answer YES to all three parts. If you're not answering YES, then you're not being sustainable.



Examples of living sustainably

When we say 'Buying less stuff is more sustainable' we mean that because making stuff uses so many things from our environment, buying and using less will mean there is more stuff left for the environment and more stuff left for future generations.

When we say 'Using green energy is more sustainable' we mean that because our environment provides green energy naturally, it won't harm our environment and it will cost less money.

When we say 'Using less water is more sustainable' we mean that by using less water we are taking less water from our environment and we are taking less water from future generations.

When we say "We should all be living more sustainably" we mean that we should thinking about how we live and whether we are harming or helping our environment and future generations.

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