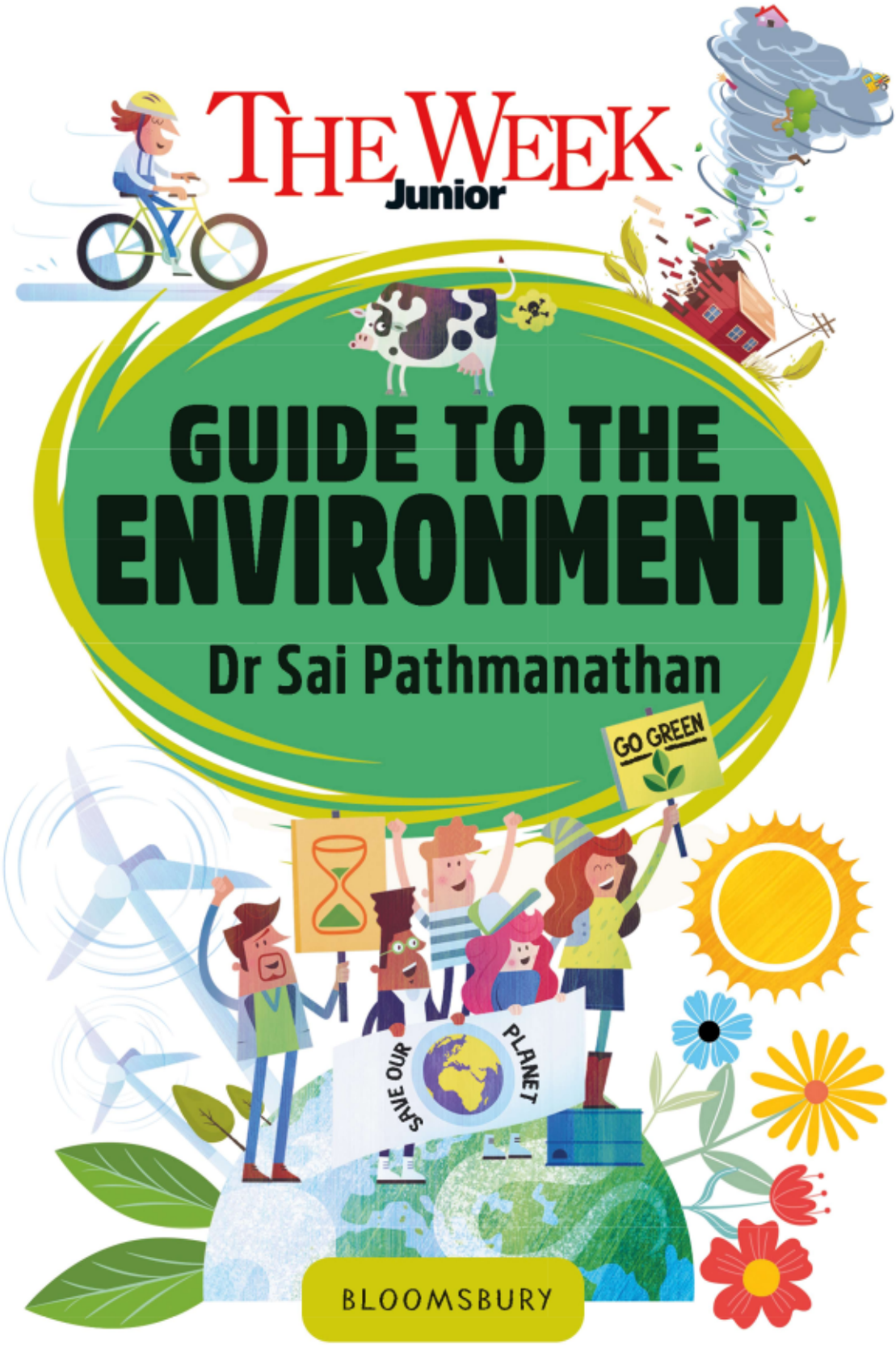
THE WEEK Junior

GUIDE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Dr Sai Pathmanathan



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Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
Bloomsbury Publishing Ireland Limited
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 AY28, Ireland

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First published in Great Britain, 2025 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB: 9781801995856; ePDF: 9781801995870; ePub: 9781801995863
2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Text design by Sophie Gordon and Laura Neate

Printed and bound in India by Manipal Technologies Limited



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Illustrated by Tim Bradford

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

An explanation of a key concept

A fun fact

A brief introduction to an important person

A key word defined in the glossary at the back of the book



A way for you to get involved and make a difference

A quote from an important person

An environmental win

INTRODUCTION

Our planet is incredible; it gives us so much. The air we breathe, the magnificent trees, unique plants and amazing wildlife: from the tiniest tree frogs in our rainforests to the huge whales in our oceans. However, all isn't well on planet Earth. You've probably heard people talking about things like saving the environment, the climate crisis, pollution, **microplastics** and **greenhouse gases**. It can feel like there's a lot of pressure to solve the planet's problems. However, many inspiring people and organisations are working together to save our Earth – and you can help too.



> **'I'm telling you there is hope [...] it does not come from the governments or corporations. It comes from the people.'**
>
> GRETA THUNBERG, climate justice activist

What's the problem?

The Earth has existed for millions of years and has seen **asteroids**, dinosaurs and **ice ages**. So what's the issue now?

If we imagine Earth as 46 years old rather than around 4,600 million years old, then its life story goes like this…

1–42 years old: We know hardly anything about this time

42–45 years old: Living **organisms evolve**

Age 45 (last year): Dinosaurs rule



Humans have only been around for a small part of the life of our planet, but we have had a big impact on it. The way we produce and use food, homes, transport, clothes and more is using up the Earth's resources. We've destroyed **habitats** animals need to live. We've been burning **fossil fuels**, causing the world to get warmer and creating problems for wildlife and humans across the globe. We've been throwing lots of stuff away, and the waste we create is causing problems for the planet.

The reality of problems like **climate change** and plastic pollution is quickly sinking in, and we need to take action now to protect ourselves and the planet.

8 months ago: Mammals evolve

Age 46 (this year):

- This weekend: The Ice Age (brrr)
- 4 hours ago: Humans evolve
- 1 hour ago: Humans discover agriculture
- 1 minute ago: The **Industrial Revolution**
- The past few seconds: Humans turn the planet into a rubbish tip

