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Helping you choose books for children

Opening extract from

You Can Save The Planet

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A & C Black

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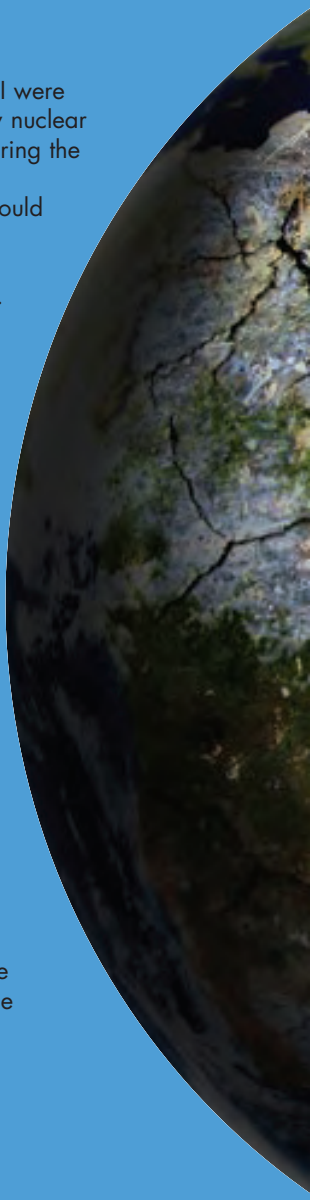
SAVING THE PLANET



When I was a child, back in the seventies, my friends and I were convinced that civilization was about to be wiped out by nuclear war. It wasn't just an idle fear; everyone felt that way during the Cold War as the USA and Soviet Union competed to build nuclear weapons, and made threatening noises. There didn't seem much I could do in the way of ending the arms race, but I read books about radiation sickness, imagined all my hair and teeth falling out and worried how food could be grown in earth that had been poisoned.

In the end the superpowers made a grumpy sort of peace. It's nice to think that my own children are not anxious about nuclear war, but they have something else to worry about. Humans are threatening to destroy the planet in a different way.

Ever since the Industrial Revolution, 200 years ago, people have been living in a way that puts pressure on Earth's natural resources. All those years we were campaigning against nuclear bombs, we were developing more bad habits: driving everywhere, flying more often, using stacks of plastic bags and leaving lights on everywhere we went. The planet, after years of neglect and thoughtlessness, is in a bad way as a result. New dangers are springing up like acne.

The good news is that there are things we can all do, every day, which will really make a difference. From changing your own bad habits to getting your friends and family involved, this book will give you loads of ideas for saving the planet.

Best of all, it will give you the information you need to start campaigning: write letters to politicians and business leaders, ask teachers and school leaders what your school is doing about climate change, and nag your family as much as they nag you. Because one person can make a difference. And that person could be you.



Bibi van der Zee

Bibi van der Zee writes about ethical living and the environment for the *Guardian*.







SCHOOL DAYS

We are all responsible for saving our planet. Even the smallest actions can make a real difference.

This section is packed with ideas for helping the planet on a school day. You will find out how to save water and energy. You will learn what Fairtrade is all about (see page 56) and will discover how to reduce your carbon footprint (see page 73).

EVERY DAY COUNTS

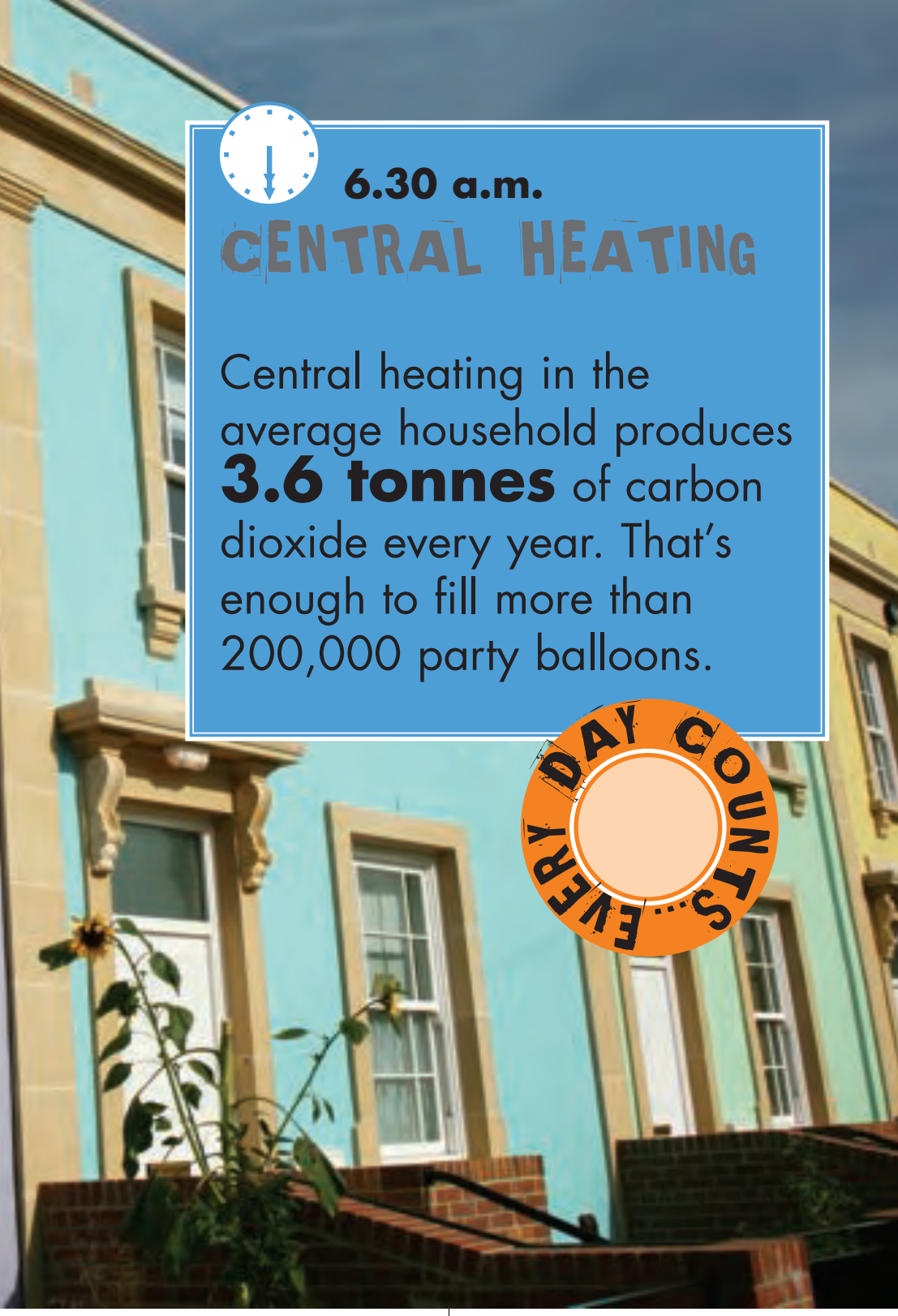
Each page looks at one part of a typical school day, from getting up in the morning and making your way to lessons, to relaxing in the evening and going to bed. On each left-hand page you'll find out about everyday things that harm the planet and its wildlife. On each right-hand page you'll find a list of practical steps that you can take to reduce your impact – starting today!

Use the diary at the end of the book to record your planet-saving actions.

GET EVERYONE INVOLVED

You can start using some of the ideas in this book right now. You will need help from your family or school staff to implement others, such as buying organic food and recycling paper. Some suggestions are for you to pass on to other members of your family. Remind them they are helping to save the planet. Try to persuade everyone – politely – to give up environmentally unfriendly habits, with this book to back you up! The planet is in serious trouble and your actions really will make a difference.





6.30 a.m.

CENTRAL HEATING

Central heating in the average household produces **3.6 tonnes** of carbon dioxide every year. That's enough to fill more than 200,000 party balloons.

EVERY DAY COUNTS...