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Opening extract from

Your planet needs you: Kids Guide to going Green

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like you. So follow Max, Henry and Flora on their adventures around the world to see what is happening and what you can do to make a difference!



MAXIMUS – SAVIOUR OF WORLDS, CHAMPION FOR GOOD, PROTECTOR OF HUMANKIND AND CHOCOLATE FANATIC – IS HAVING A BAD NIGHT IN HIS TOP-SECRET ICE CAVE IN THE ANDES. IT'S TOO HOT AND THE DRIPPING OF THE MELTING ICE IS KEEPING HIM AWAKE.

SUDDENLY THE PHONE RINGS . . .

PRESIDENT OF EARTH HERE, MAXIMUS. WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM, AND THIS ONE'S A BIGGIE!

WHAT? ALIEN INVASION? MUTANT ANTS? WORLD CHOCOLATE SHORTAGE?

HELP!

WORSE. THE PLANET'S HEATING UP AND WE CAN'T SEEM TO STOP IT.

AH! THAT EXPLAINS WHY I'M STANDING IN A PUDDLE OF WATER. LEAVE IT TO ME, MR PRESIDENT – I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO!

UP INTO THE NIGHT SKY MAXIMUS SOARS. HIGHER AND FASTER HE FLIES WHILE BELOW HIM MILLIONS OF LIGHTS SHINE IN HUNDREDS OF CITIES.

WELL, THIS IS A POSER. NO ONE TO FIGHT, NO MONSTERS FROM OUTER SPACE TO CAPTURE AND THIS PLANET-WARMING PROBLEM IS EVERYWHERE! WHERE ON EARTH DO I START?

In the far distance is another town and, as the sun begins to rise, Maximus heads on over.

'It certainly feels pretty warm here. Switch to heat vision. Now I can see the heat escaping from all the houses . . . Hang on, what's that?'

Tucked in among the rows and rows of glowing houses there is one that doesn't glow at all.



The non-glowing house in question is number 24 Acacia Drive, home of Henry Hutchinson. It's Sunday morning and Henry is lying on his bed reading a comic. It's a really good comic and the massed armies of Grumph the Great are just getting ready to charge towards the castle walls of Hugrawn the Horrid.

Out of the corner of his eye Henry sees a shadow pass his window. Now, it could have been his imagination, but he's sure he saw a person out there. This is weird because his bedroom window is five metres above the ground.

Carefully, Henry tiptoes to the window and with a quick tug pulls the curtain back. Hovering outside, and looking rather embarrassed, is Maximus.

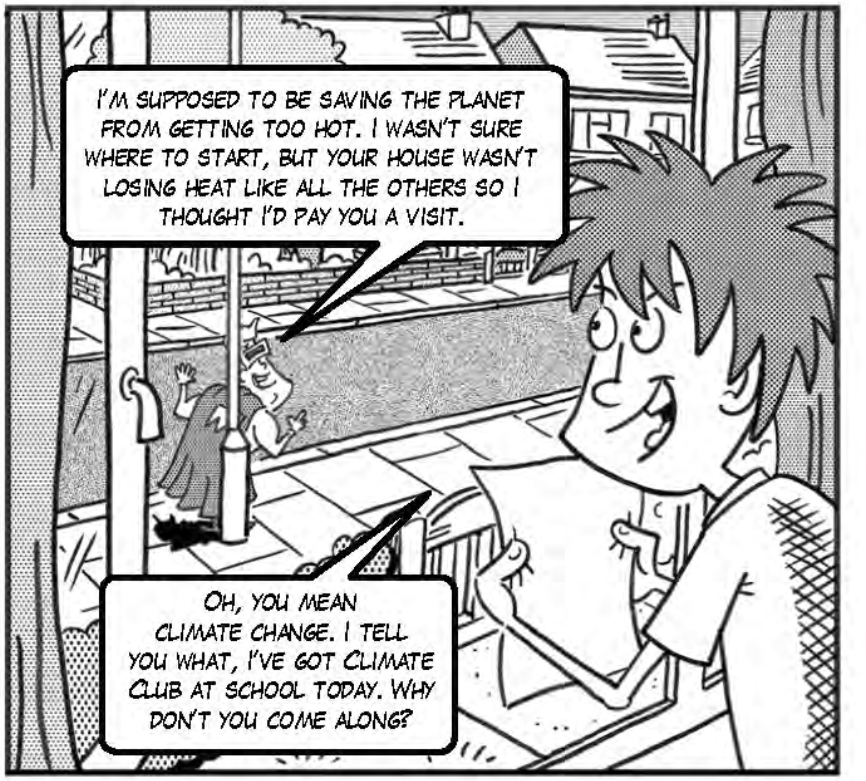


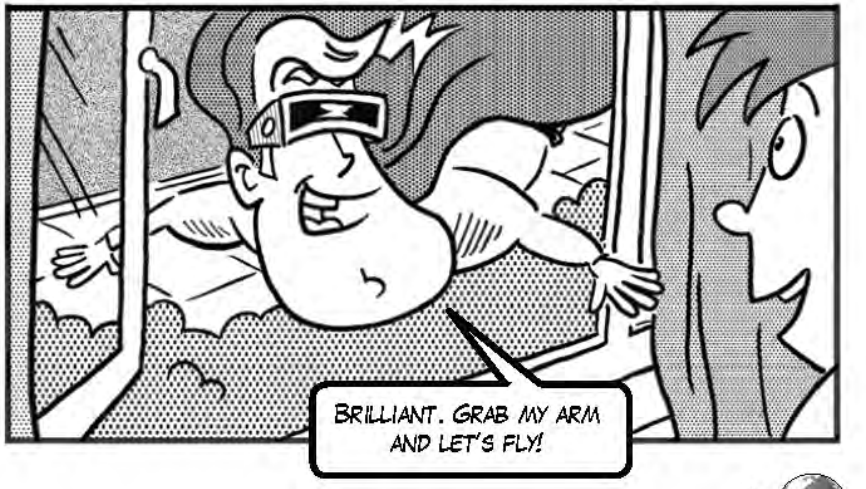
Faster than a speeding bullet Maximus hides behind the nearest lamp post.


ER . . . I CAN STILL SEE YOU.


OH DEAR. I'M NOT REALLY SUPPOSED TO LET PEOPLE SEE ME. MY NAME'S MAXIMUS BUT YOU CAN CALL ME MAX.


HI, I'M HENRY. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?


I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SAVING THE PLANET FROM GETTING TOO HOT. I WASN'T SURE WHERE TO START, BUT YOUR HOUSE WASN'T LOSING HEAT LIKE ALL THE OTHERS SO I THOUGHT I'D PAY YOU A VISIT.
OH, YOU MEAN CLIMATE CHANGE. I TELL YOU WHAT, I'VE GOT CLIMATE CLUB AT SCHOOL TODAY. WHY DON'T YOU COME ALONG?


BRILLIANT. GRAB MY ARM AND LET'S FLY!



At Climate Club, Henry introduces Max to his best friend, Flora, who is busy making a poster.

'Max, this is Flora. She knows loads about climate change.'

'Hi, Max,' says Flora, looking up from her poster. 'I like your tights. So, do you want to be a climate champion too? We can always use more help.'

'Er . . . yes, I think so. But I don't know much about it.'

'Don't worry. Miss Weatherbottom is really good and I can tell you loads of stuff as well if you like.'

Henry points at a grumpy-looking boy standing in the corner picking his nose.

'That's Gripper Jenkins. He's only here because he's on detention.'

They stop chatting as Miss Weatherbottom sweeps into the room.

'Hello, Climate Clubbers!' she says. 'I see there are some new faces here today. Now, I recognize Gripper – do stop picking your nose, Gripper.' She turns to Max, who has squeezed into a chair that is far too small for his superhero bottom.

'And you are?'

Max stands up, but the chair comes with him. 'I am Maximus, Saviour of Worlds, Champion for Good, Protector of Humankind and Chocolate Fanatic. But you can call me Max.'

'Then hello, Max, and welcome! Right, first of all, well done, Henry, for your excellent homework from last week. It was so good I've made a copy for everyone.'

Henry Hutchinson

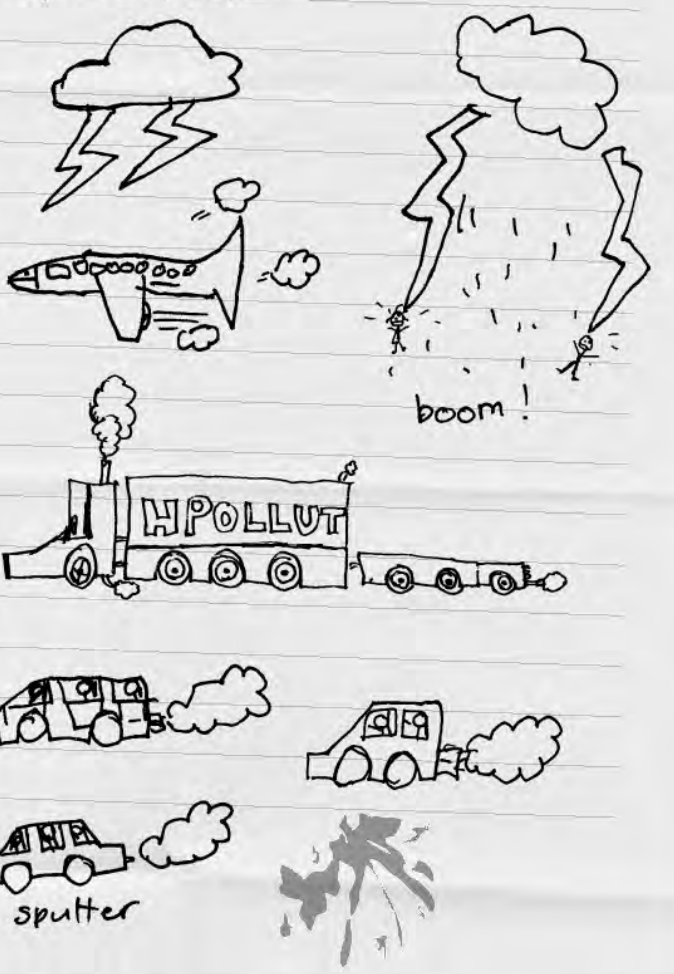


In your own words, describe what climate change is.

The whole planet is warming up. And the warmer it gets the more the weather all round the world is changing. That means that cold places aren't as cold any more and dry places are even drier.

Whenever we use electricity, drive cars or go on aeroplanes we add more and more gases to the air. These gases are called 'greenhouse gases' and they're special because they can trap heat. The greenhouse gas that humans add most of to the atmosphere is called **carbon dioxide** and there's now so much of it up there

trapping heat that it's making the whole planet warmer.



Reading Henry's homework, Max is beginning to understand the problem. 'So climate change is the same as global warming?' he asks.

'People often use the words to describe the same thing, Max,' says Miss Weatherbottom, 'but an easy way to think of it is that the world is warming up – which is global warming – and this increase in temperature is in turn changing the patterns of weather – climate change. So climate change is caused by global warming. And the reason the world is heating up is because we are adding more of these heat-trapping gases – called greenhouse gases – to the air.'

Gripper puts up his hand. 'Miss, my uncle's got a greenhouse and it gets really hot inside. Is that bad?'

'No, Gripper, but the reason it gets hot does help explain the extra warming we're seeing around the whole planet. As the sun shines down on your uncle's greenhouse it heats up the air inside, but the glass keeps the heat from escaping. The gases that cause global warming act like the glass, keeping the heat from escaping from our planet and into space. That's why they're called greenhouse gases.'

Gripper's hand shoots up again. 'Miss, my uncle's got a big car with a button you can press that says Climate Control. Does that mean he can control global warming?'

'I'm afraid not,' Miss Weatherbottom explains. 'In fact big cars are one of the big problems. They produce a lot of the greenhouse gas called carbon dioxide and so can give you a really big carbon footprint.'

'Er . . . I'm a size six, miss. I don't know how big my uncle's feet are, but they're very smelly.'

Miss Weatherbottom laughs. 'No, Gripper! Your carbon footprint isn't about how big your feet are. It's about the amount of greenhouse gases each person is responsible for. Someone who travels in a big car and wastes lots of electricity at home can produce enough greenhouse gases to fill ten houses each year and will have a really big carbon footprint.'

'I get it,' says Henry. 'So to make your carbon footprint smaller you need to cut down

on the greenhouse gases you produce, like by saving energy at home.'

'That's right, Henry. And that's your challenge for today's homework. I want each of you to draw a picture of your house and make a list of the ways you can make your own carbon footprint smaller at home. The best one wins a special climate-champion prize.'

'Do ice caves count?' asks Max.

'Absolutely, Max. No doubt Flora and Henry will be able to help you. See you all tomorrow.'

Max, Henry and Flora head for the school gate.

Max looks confused. 'I think I understand a bit more about these heat-trapping gases that are causing the problem,' he says, 'but how come I've never seen them?'

'They're invisible,' replies Flora. 'If we could fly as high as a jet plane, I could show you.'

'No problem,' says Max, swishing his cape. 'Hold on to my arms, you two . . . and off we go!'

