

Key Words:

Environment	The natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity.
Big Bang	A theory that says the universe began with an infinitely hot and dense single point that inflated and stretched.
Evolution	A process of gradual change that takes place over many generations, during which species of animals, plants, or insects slowly change some of their physical characteristics.
Genesis	The origin or coming into being and the first book of the Bible.
Conservative (viewpoint)	Take their Holy Book (e.g the Bible) literally.
Fundamentalist	A person who believes in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture in a religion.
Liberal (viewpoint)	The Holy Book offers guidance, support and stories which show God's qualities but not literal factual truth.
Compatible	Where two things work together (for example, science and religion).
Pollution	Putting harmful materials into the environment.
Recycle	the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as rubbish and turning them into new products.
Fossil Fuels	Coal, oil, and natural gas.

The aim of this unit is to understand the different viewpoints as to how the world was created. You will look at this from a religious and secular (non religious viewpoint).
You will then look at different religious responses to the environment and how we treat the world.

Overview:

Non-Religious attitudes to the environment:

Many people believe the world governments must do something at an international level. The problem is too great to be dealt with any other way. In 1997, 55 nations signed Kyoto Protocol under which agreed to cut greenhouse emissions. The UN feels that without international government co-operation and action, global warming will result in disaster. We should look at alternative ways of making electricity, which do not produce carbon dioxide or nuclear waste, for example wind/sea/solar power. Car manufacturers are looking at water, sugar cane and electric batteries as ways of powering cars. We need to improve efficiency and reduce pollution coming from cars. Scientists are working on using chemicals from plants rather than oil to produce things such as plastic. People could only use natural products, eat organic foods or ride bikes rather than drive a car.

Religious attitudes to creation and the environment:

Christianity

- God created the universe in 6 days & rested on the 7th. (Genesis)
- Produced an environment on the earth which is perfectly suited for human life.
- Genesis "God saw what He had made and it was good."
- Because God made the earth, the earth belongs to God.
- As everything has been made by God, the whole environment must be respected by humans.
- The environment is a gift from God to humans and so must be treated with care.
- God gave humans the stewardship of the earth & its resources.
- God gave humans the right to rule over the earth, control of animals, all other living creatures & plants. (dominion.) The Bible makes clear that this right also gives humans many responsibilities.

Islam

- Universe & everything in it was created by Allah as a place perfectly suited for human life.
- Created by one God so unity in all of creation. Tawhid – only one God & nothing is in any way to be connected with God, but also means unity in creation.
- Balance in the universe which is revealed in this unity & the Qur'an, like extending the idea of an ecosystem to the whole universe.
- As everything has been made by God, the whole environment must be respected by humans.
- The environment is a gift from God to humans and so must be treated with care.
- There is a unity & balance in creation, therefore Muslims have a duty to preserve the environment and make sure that it continues to be what God intended it to be.

Science and Religion in more detail:

Natural Selection:

In each generation of a species there's always variation. The most valuable qualities are the ones that help animals survive. These animals are more likely to survive and breed. Their qualities will be passed on to their offspring. The animals without these qualities will eventually die out.

Big Bang Theory:

In the Big Bang theory, the universe began as very hot, small, and dense, with no stars, atoms, form, or structure. Then about 14 billion years ago, space expanded very quickly (thus the name "Big Bang"), resulting in the formation of atoms, which eventually led to the creation of stars and galaxies. The universe is still expanding today, but getting colder as well. As a whole, space is growing and the temperature is falling as time passes. Cosmology is the name given to how the universe began and how it has developed. Scientists that study cosmology agree the Big Bang theory matches what they have observed so far.

The Big Bang might also have been the beginning of time. If the Big Bang was the beginning of time, then there was no universe before the Big Bang, since there was no concept of "before" without time. Other ideas state that the Big Bang was not the beginning of time 13.8 billion years ago. Instead, some believe that there was a different universe before and it may have been very different from the one we know today.

Liberal Christians:

Believe God created the world in six periods of time. They accept the majority of geological and cosmological theories put forward but ultimately believe God is responsible for creation.

Conservative Christians:

Believe God created the world in actual six days. They disagree with the theory of evolution.