

no one is too small to make a difference

The Radical Geographers' Handbook

This is a playful response to “business as usual” in the geography teacher community. Teachers do a great job BUT with global events such as Brexit, Climate Breakdown and Coronavirus some of us think we should be asking more provocative questions and doing things differently.

Is the world in the state it is because of us?

How can we increase diversity?

Could we teach for a happier and healthier world?

Could we be radical geographers?

Curated by a group of geography teachers and bringing together a variety of voices, this publication provides a platform for alternative opinions and challenges the status quo.

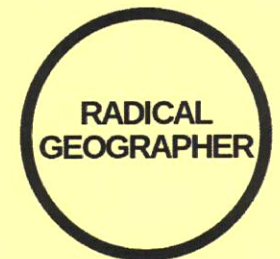
Please read me and pass me on

What is radical geography?

Radical geography recognises the need for a reclamation of geography, from its imperialist past, showing how geographical knowledge and thinking could play a key role in radical social, political and environmental activism.

Radical Geography Teacher Challenges:

1. Teach what you love and not to the exam
2. Buy no new clothes for 12 months
3. Challenge the school community to score 100% on the Gapminder Ignorance Test
4. Declare a climate and ecological emergency
5. Organise a positive climate action instead of a strike
6. Sell your car and cycle or walk to school
7. Use the charity commission website to calculate the pay difference between the CEO of your academy chain / school and the average worker
8. Tell everyone the gender pay gap for your school / academy chain / trust and don't stop until it's zero
9. Calculate the carbon locked away in trees on your school site / local town and triple it
10. Calculate the carbon emissions from trips and travel only by ground
11. Calculate the entire carbon emissions of your school and commit to becoming carbon neutral by 2030



GA eConference Bingo

Technical difficulties mean no one can hear the speaker	You're wearing pyjamas	You have a serious top half but sweatpants on the bottom
Someone turns on a zoom background	Someone shares a link to their resources	There's a personalised zoom background
Your children run into the room	You wave to someone you know on zoom	You're daytime drinking
Someone shows you around their home	Someone readjusts their hair	Someone private messages you on the chat
Statement not question asked	Mentioning this year's grading of GCSEs and A levels	Someone virtually raises their hand
Someone rolls their eyes	Someone has a gamer headset with a mic	Someone needs tech support for their webcam to be on

Someone Mentions...

Pandemic	COVID-19	Unprecedented
Google Classroom	Remote Learning	Schools Closed
Back to Normal	Assessment	Wellbeing
NEA	Develop KS3 Curriculum	Greta
Climate Strike	Behaviour Management	Engaging Starters
Reading for A level	Steep Learning Curve of Technology	GIS
Geographical Literacy	Ready for Anything	Geography better than History

Courtesy of <https://twitter.com/GeogAnna>



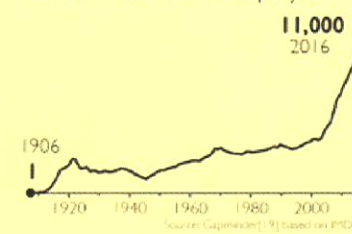
Are you teaching hope?

What's there to be hopeful about?

60% of the girls in low-income countries finish primary school

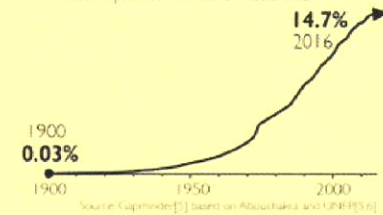
NEW MOVIES

Number of new feature films per year



PROTECTED NATURE

Share of Earth's land surface protected as national parks and other reserves



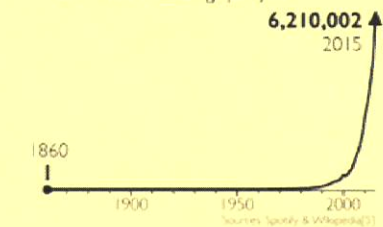
WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Countries with equal rights for women and men to vote (out of 194)



NEW MUSIC

New music recordings per year



Another World is Possible

#socialactivism



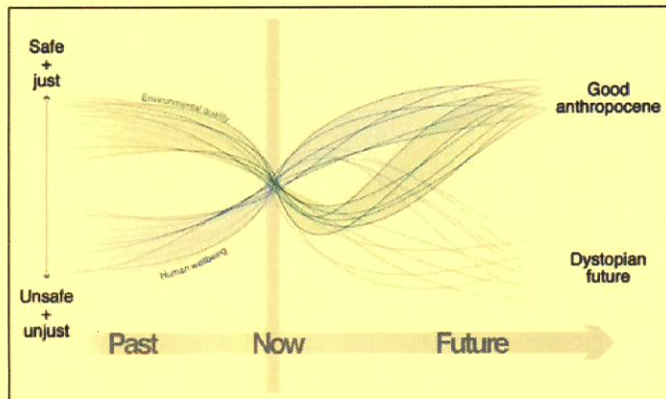
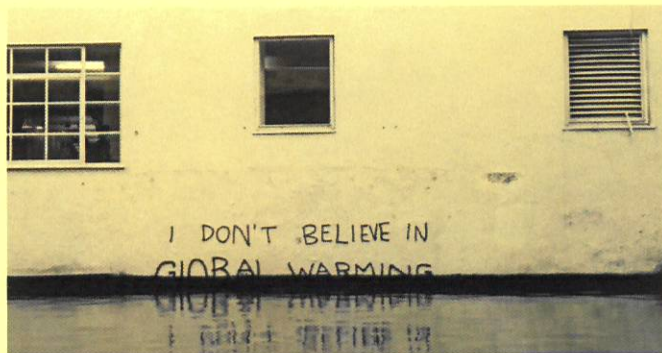
Mark Maslin @ProfMarkMaslin ·
'Welcome to the Anthropocene'

7.7 billion humans & growing
3 trillion trees cut down
1000s of species extinct
37% of land used for farming
Nitrogen fixation doubled
Atm CO2 up 47%
Atm CH4 up 245%
Micro-plastics in all oceans
Global temp. up > 1 C

How do we change the future?

Help to save the planet by:

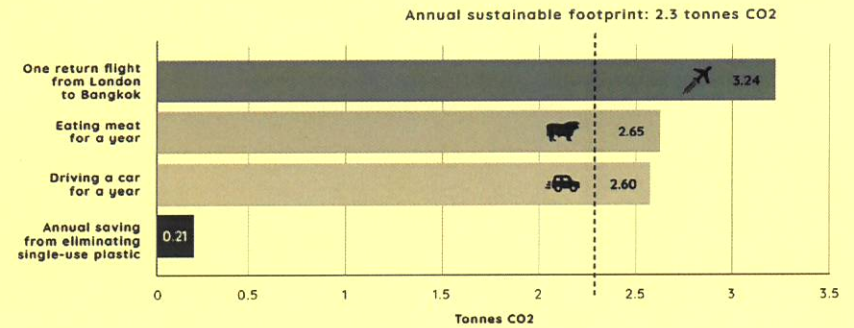
- Talk about #climatechange
- Switch to vegetarian or vegan diet
- Switch to renewable energy
- Reduce, reuse & recycle more
- walk/cycle more
- Use an electric/hybrid car
- Stop flying
- Divest pension from fossil fuels
- Protest
- Vote!



Another World is Possible

#environmentalactivism

Is tackling single use plastic a distraction?



James Wong @Botanygeek · Oct 5

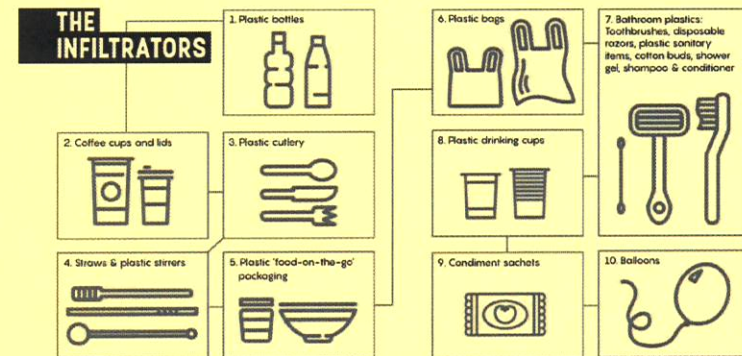
Ocean plastic sources:

- Plastic straws = 0.03%
- Fishing gear = 46%

Eating less fish would tackle a source of ocean plastic x1500 that of straws.

When it comes to headlines & Facebook memes it's funny how there aren't x1500 the stories on eating less fish.

107 2.4K 5.6K



BOYCOTT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

#environmentalactivism

How do your pupils and staff travel to school?



3/4 of UK children spend less time outside than prisoners

Imagine if there were no cars on the road. Imagine if there was more space for nature.

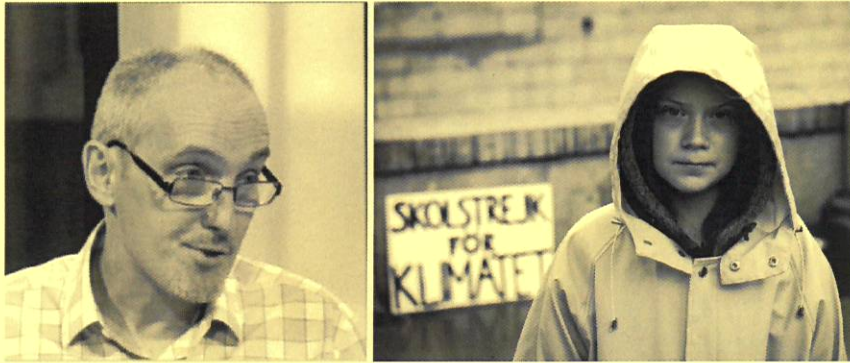
Visit <https://playingout.net>

#socialactivism



“Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever had”

Education or Activism: where is the line?



Alex Standish (Senior Lecturer in Geography Education at UCL Institute of Education)

While many teachers are motivated by social, economic, political and environmental issues, teachers need to be mindful of where the line is between education and activism so that their teaching doesn't slip into indoctrination. Here are some indicators:

Is the purpose of your lesson to explore and understand the issue or are you trying to change pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards this issue? If you have predetermined behaviours and attitudes in mind then you are denying pupils the freedom to think and reach their own conclusions.

Does your lesson allow open exploration of different perspectives on this issue (including those that you disagree with)? We are also preparing children for participation in a democracy, so being tolerant of other people's views is important and how can you develop your own views if you have not explored all sides? How does exploring this issue fit into my progression model for the geography curriculum? In other words, what is your justification for including it – **personal or epistemological**?

Make sure that you are clear on the difference between teaching concept knowledge and issues. With the former we are aiming for common understanding while issues are about applying knowledge and synthesising to understand the complexity of a problem in a given locale.

American academic Stanley Fish (2008) suggest that, 'To academicize a topic is to detach it from the context of its real world urgency, where there is a vote to be taken or an agenda to be embraced, and insert it into a context of academic urgency, where there is an account to be offered or an analysis to be performed.'

Misanthropy versus Optimism?

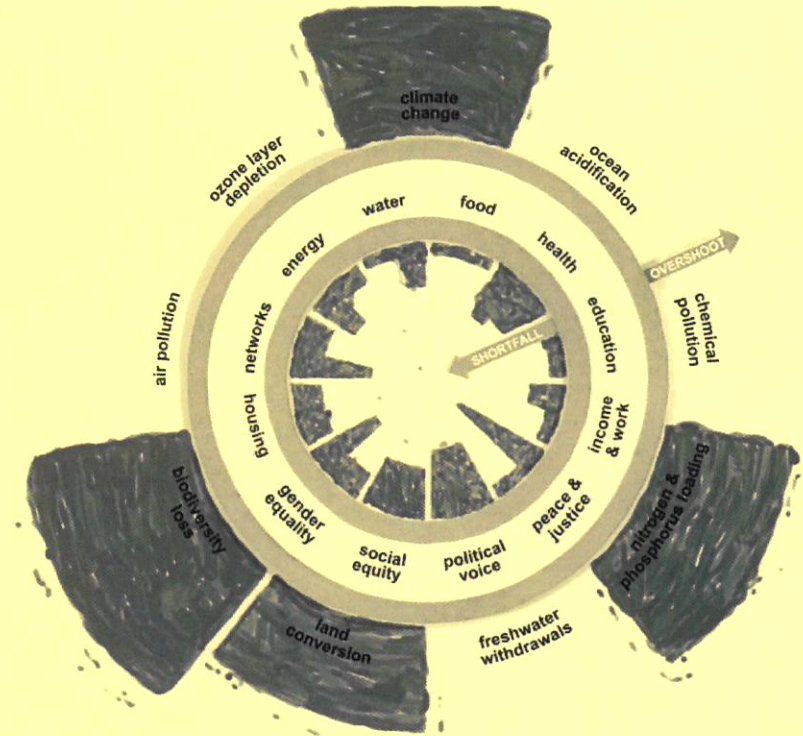
A particular problem of the early 21st century is when the geography curriculum reflects the prevailing cultural narrative of misanthropy – including climate apocalypse, species extinction, environmental destruction, extreme weather, overpopulation, disease (Coronavirus!) or migration.

With all issues, teachers need to be **morally careful** and aim for balance and perspective in your curriculum. We need to explore the reality of the state of the world, but be mindful to not leave children with the view that people are the problem. Instead, we need to also teach them about how humanity has improved quality of life and environmental conditions for billions of people, compared to say 100 or 200 years ago. And, we need to show them how people are addressing the problems of today, like global warming, so that they can see a way forward to a better world to which they can make a contribution.

Children are the future and educators need to be optimistic about prospects for a better tomorrow, even if they have concerns. Teachers need to help children to interpret and filter the news, not reinforce simplistic and alarmist narratives.

#environmentalactivism

Do you still talk about GDP/capita in class? Why?



“GDP measures everything except that which makes life worth living”

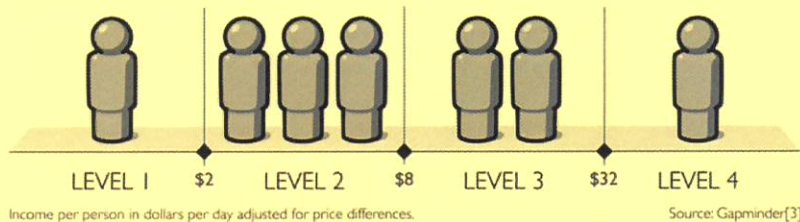
Teach: doughnut economics + the Happy Planet Index

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What income is normal?

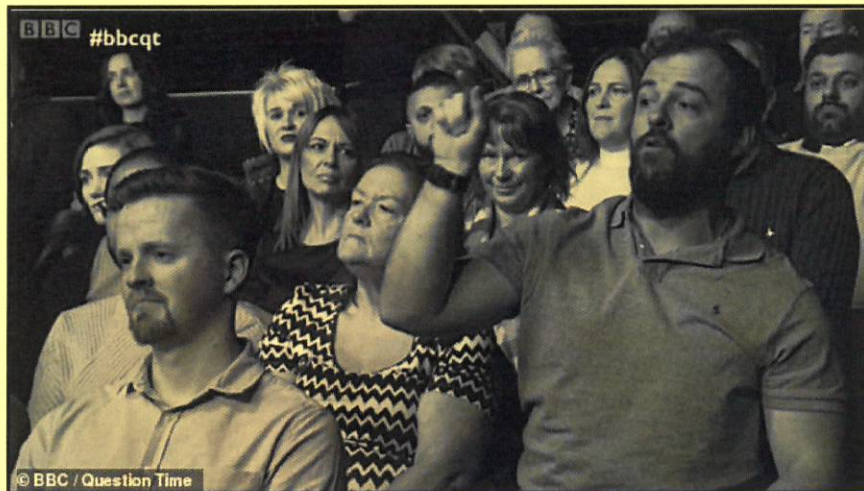
FOUR INCOME LEVELS

The world population in 2017. Billions of people on different income.



Median income in the UK of £28,400 puts a person in the top 1% of richest people in the world

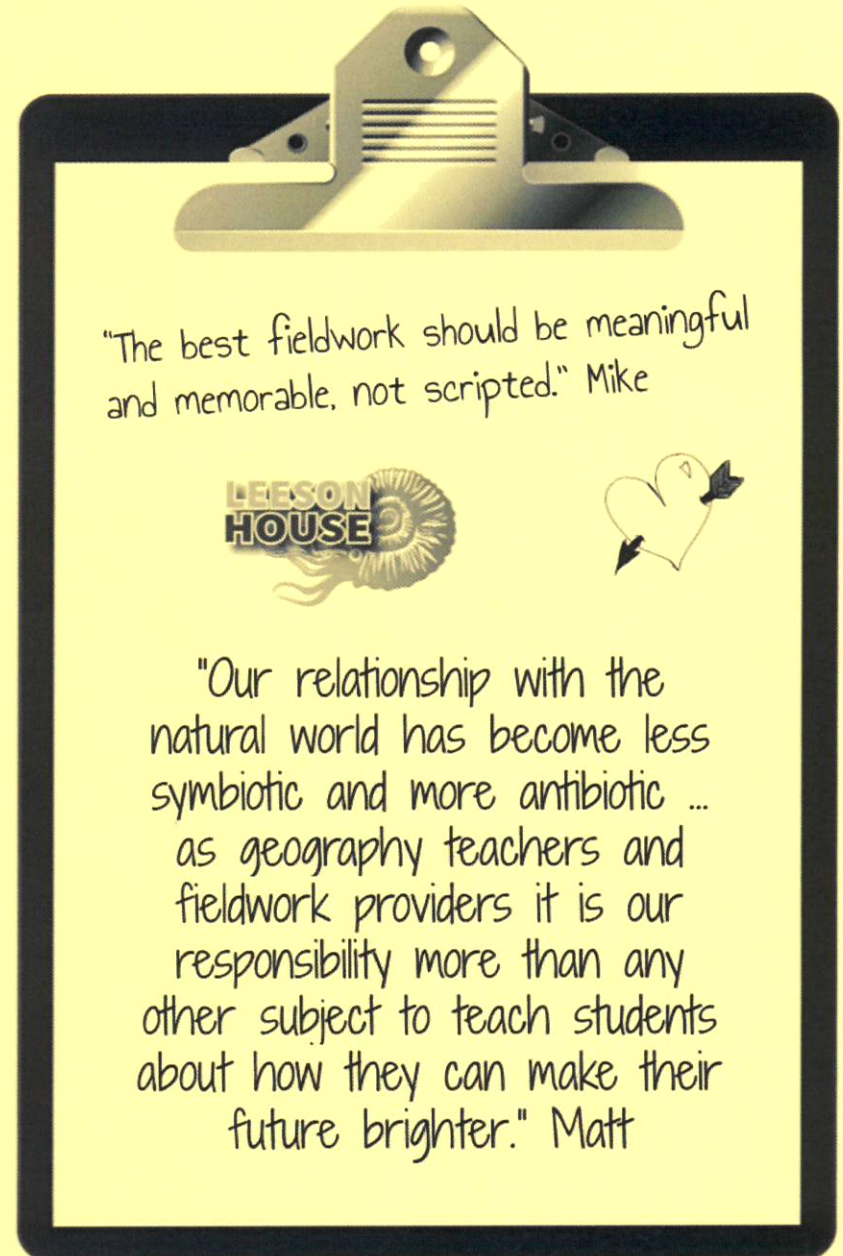
Does £80,000 put you in the top 5% of earners in the UK?



A Question Time audience member went on a bizarre rant slamming tax increases – despite earning £80,000 a year, insisting his healthy annual income was "nowhere near even the top 50%" of earners in the UK ...

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STOP killing the imagination & wonder of Fieldwork



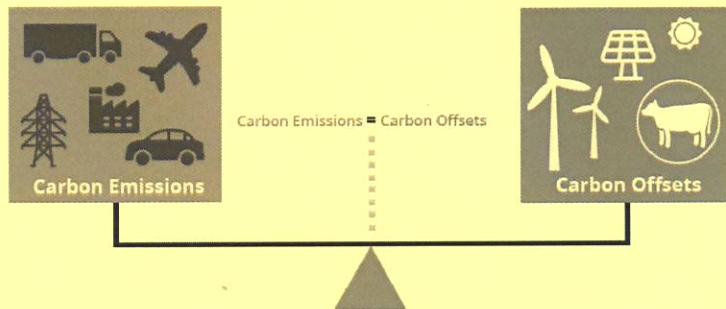
Are you still flying for school trips? Why?

FLYGSKAM
THE FEELING OF SHAME FROM
FLYING IN AN
AIRPLANE, KNOWING
HOW MUCH
CARBON POLLUTION IT CAUSES



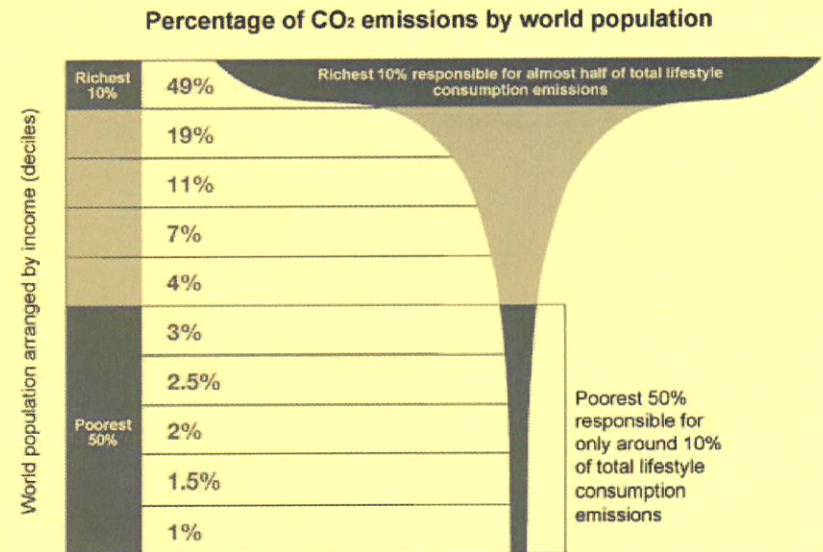
Challenge your school to travel by ground
use trains / ferries / buses

Does Carbon Offsetting really work?



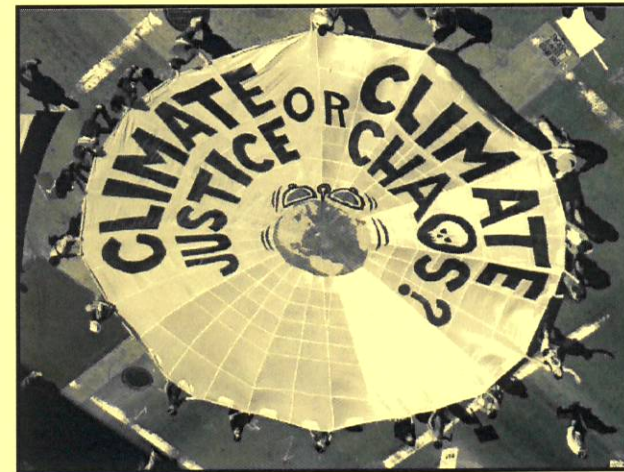
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CARBON EQUALITY - CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW

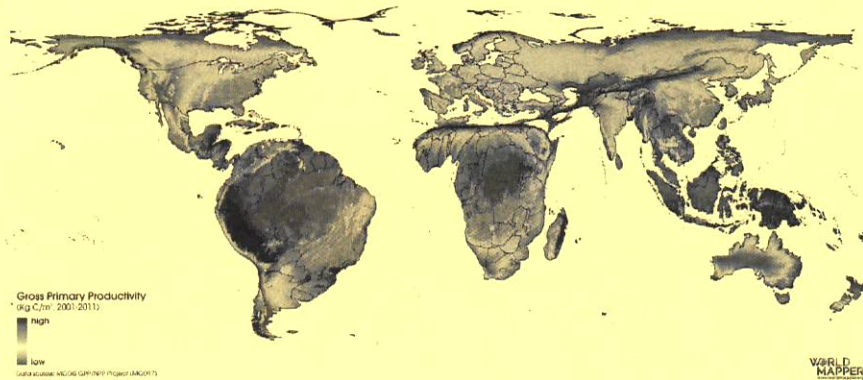


Source: Oxfam

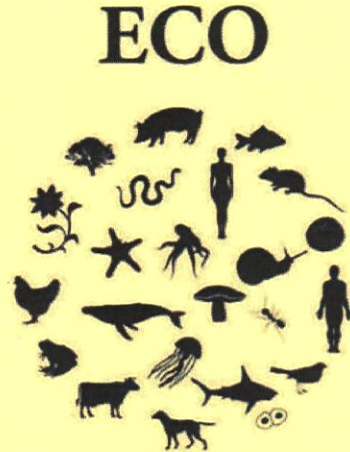
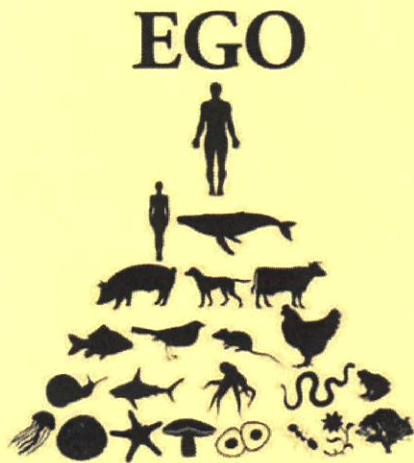
We have to cut our CO₂ emissions dramatically whilst letting the majority of people in the world emit a little more.



Humans are a part of nature, not apart from nature.

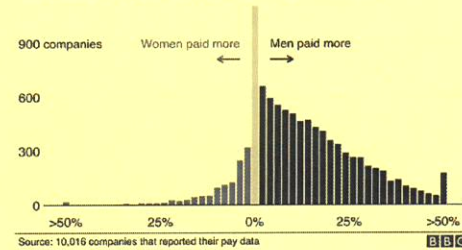


“I wanted to teach people to listen to the pulse of nature, to partake of the wholeness of life and not forget, under the pressure of their petty destinies, that we are not gods and have not created ourselves but are children of the earth, part of the cosmos.”
 Hermann Hesse (Quoted from Hermann Hesse's Fictions of the Self)

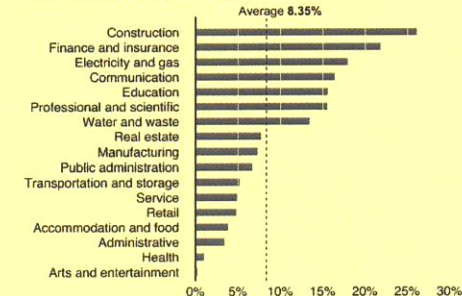


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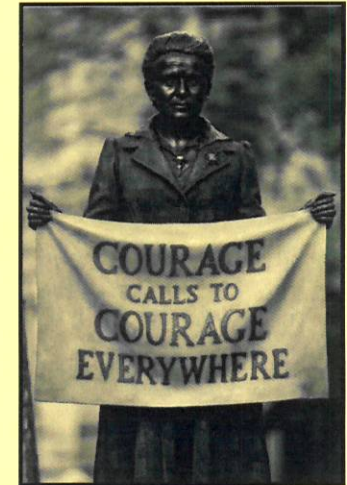
78% of companies pay men more
 Median hourly gender pay gap at companies in Great Britain



Every sector pays men more on average
 Median hourly pay gap by sector*



*Note: Only includes sectors where at least 10 companies have reported so far
 Companies that have reported to gov.uk by 3.45pm Tuesday 19 February 2019



100 years since the Representation of the People Act, which first gave women the right to vote

How much has really changed?

All Schools

- 74% of all classroom teachers are female
- 66% of headteachers are female
- 92% of teaching assistants are female
- 82% of support staff are female

Secondary schools

- 64% of teachers are female
- 39% of headteachers are female

- 0.5% of teachers are disabled
- 22% of the UK population are disabled

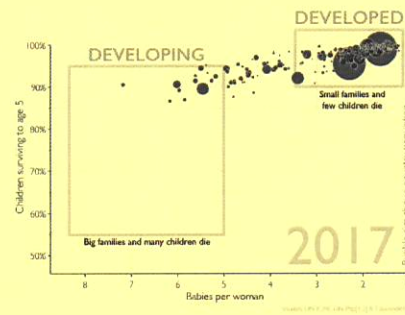
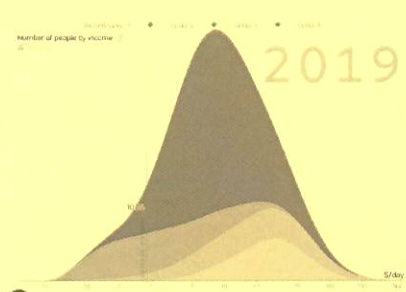
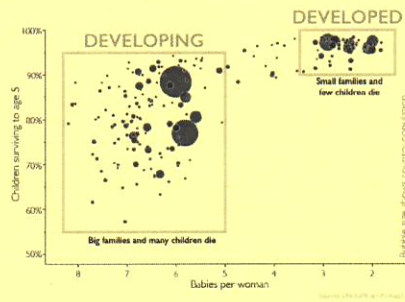
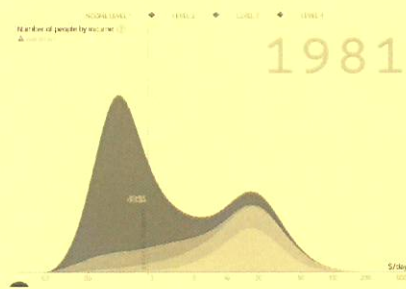
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Stop calling them

Developed / Developing
 Less Economically Developed / More Economically Developed
 First / Third World

Take the Gapminder - Ignorance Test

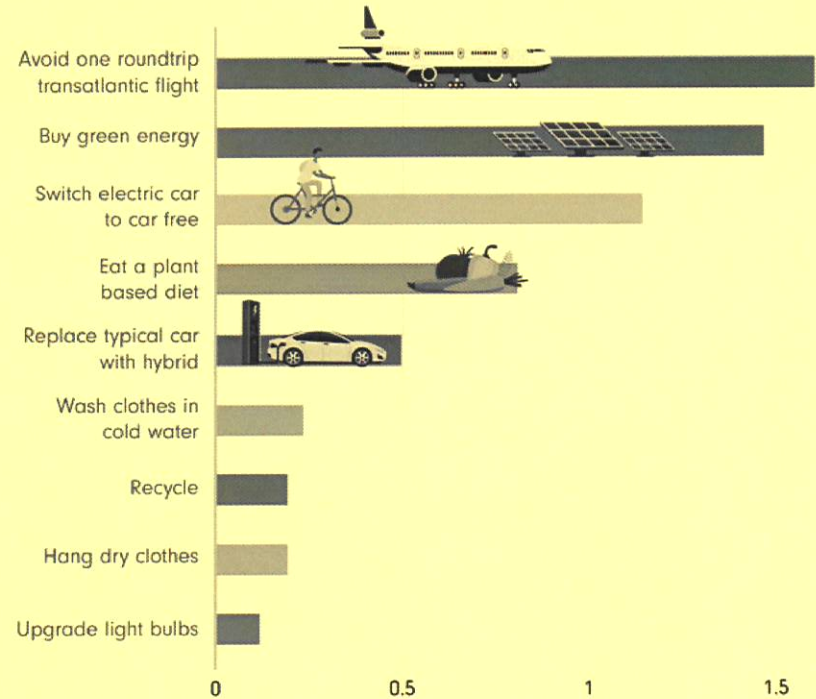


The world is not divided

Does your school have an eco group? Why?

Personal choices to reduce your contribution to climate change

Annual equivalent CO₂ savings (tCO₂e)



Average values for developed countries, based on current emissions

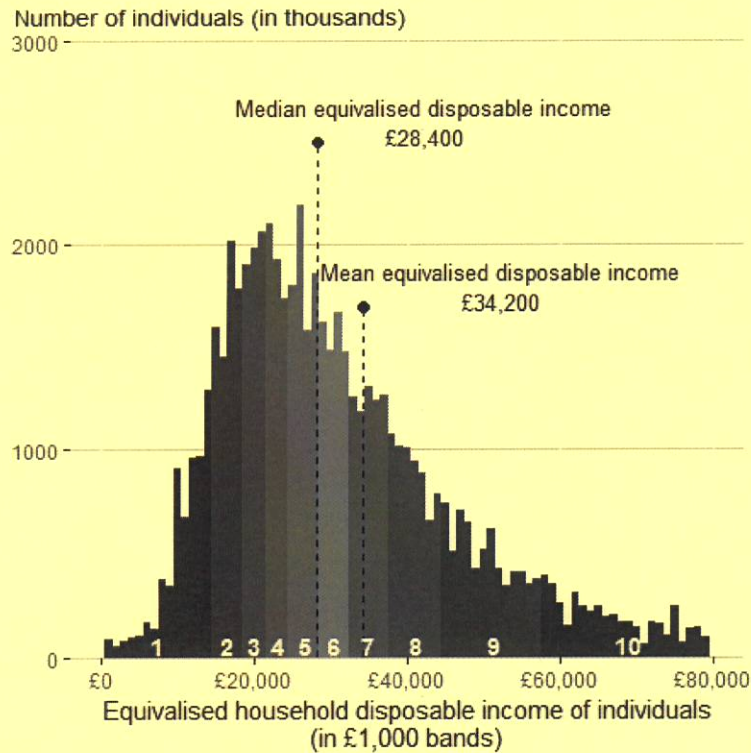
Source: Seth Wynes and Kimberly A Nicholas, 2017 Environmental Research Letters; Fidelity International, September 2019

Is your eco group wasting their time?

Are they targeting the areas with the high impact?

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Do we value the right jobs? Who's a key worker?

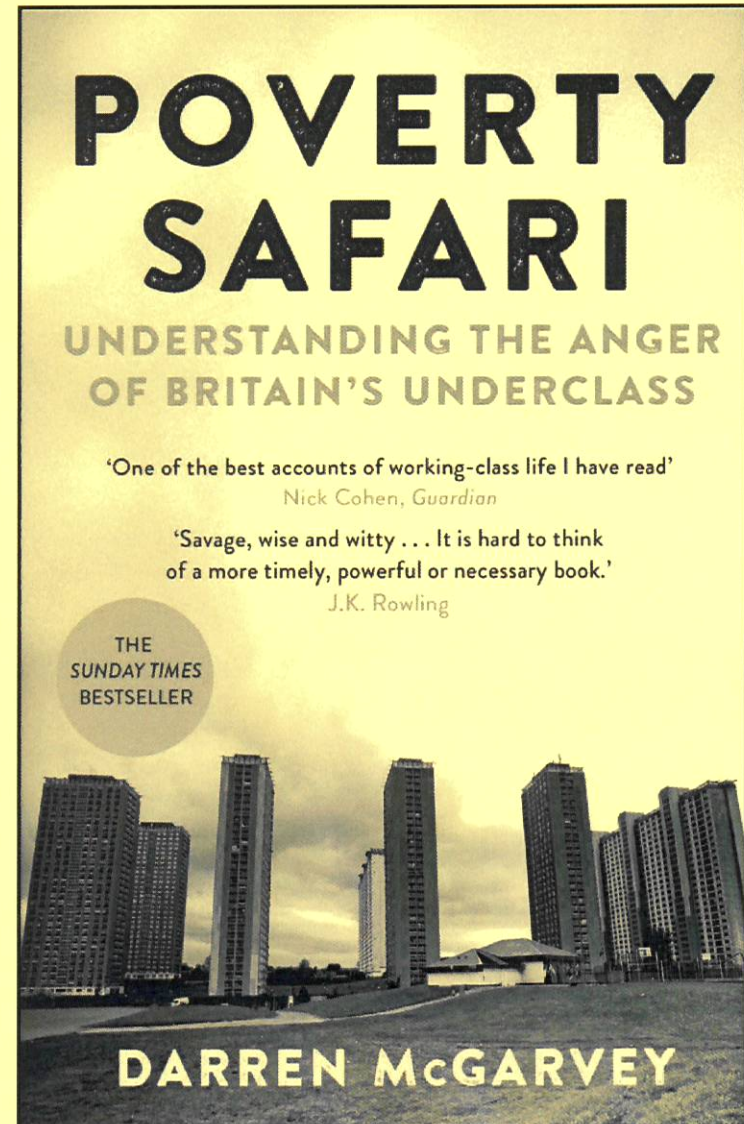


Disposable income is the amount of money households have available for spending and saving after direct taxes have been accounted for.

What's the difference between the median and mean?

Average UK Salary
Care Worker £17,200
Teacher - £37,500
Investment Banker - £75,000

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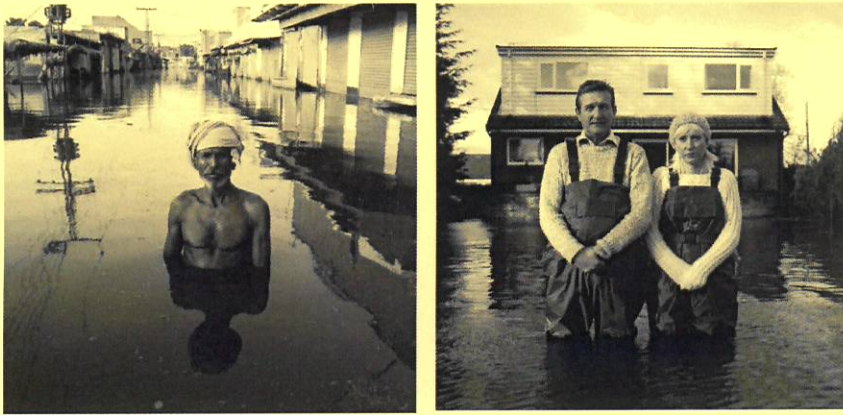


Why not take your students on a Poverty Safari?

Where's the richest / poorest / average street near your school?

Human Faces

Do you use photographs, stories and narratives to bring geography to life?

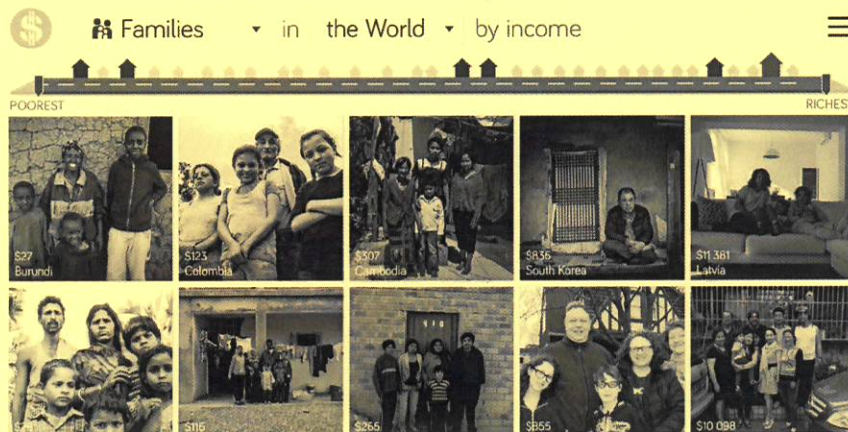


Gideon Mendel – Submerged Portraits

Drowning World is an exploration of flooding using photography and video. Gideon's aim in this long-term project is to portray the human condition within the context of overwhelming climate events around the world.

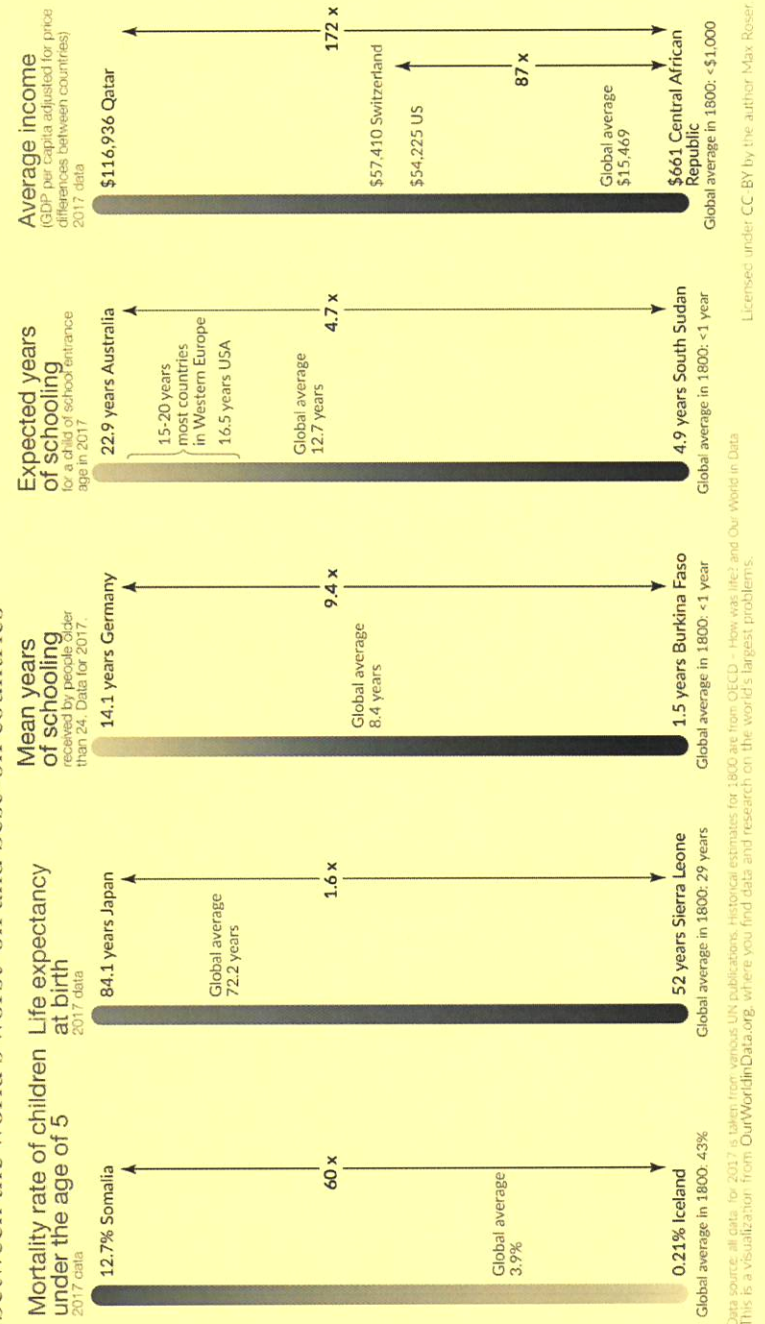
In 2007 Gideon photographed two floods that occurred within weeks of each other, one in the UK and the other in India. Gideon was struck by the contrasting impacts of these floods, and the shared vulnerability that seemed to unite the people he encountered in this landscape.

Dollar Street



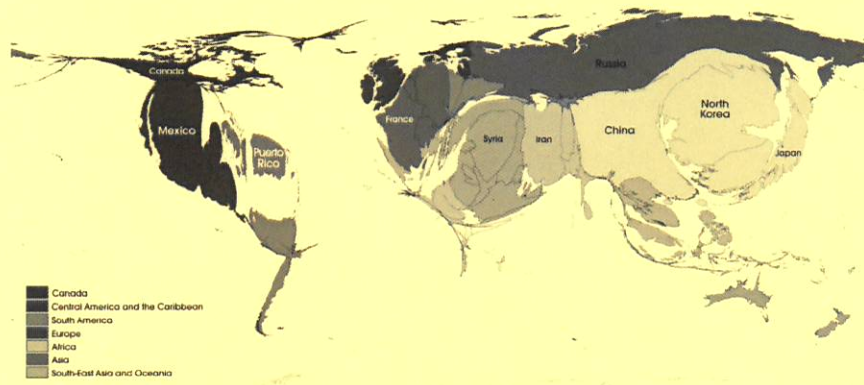
Global inequality in living conditions between the world's worst-off and best-off countries

Our World in Data



Do you challenge misconceptions or perpetuate them?

Misconception	Reality
Africa is a country	Africa is made up of 54 diverse countries (the largest number of any continent)
Africa is poor	Average income in North Africa is \$8,042 Nigeria is the wealthiest country in Africa with a gdp per capita of \$1,968
Greenland is the same size as Africa	Greenland is 2 million square kilometres and Africa is 30 million square kilometres, nearly 14 and a half times larger
Plate tectonics is driven by convection currents	The major driving force for most plate movement is slab pull
The hole in the ozone layer has caused global warming by allowing more heat in	Greater concentrations of greenhouse gases that trap infrared radiation have caused increases in observed temperatures
Most people in the world live like us	The average wage of £28,500 in the UK places a person in the top 1% of world income Most people (3 billion people) live on Level 2, they get by on between \$2 and \$8 a day and might have some possessions like a bicycle, a mattress, or a gas canister for cooking at home



Countries mentioned by Donald Trump's tweets

Plastic is EVERYWHERE



- Ban single use plastics
- Organise a community beach clean
- Create a plastic pollution sculpture



Ben See @ClimateBen · Nov 14

Plastic is in

- the air you breathe
- the water you drink
- the food you eat
- the wildlife you love
- the deepest oceans
- the soil
- the rain
- the atmosphere
- the Arctic
- your blood
- your shit
- Outer Space

And it's made from oil, gas and coal by the fossil fuel industry.

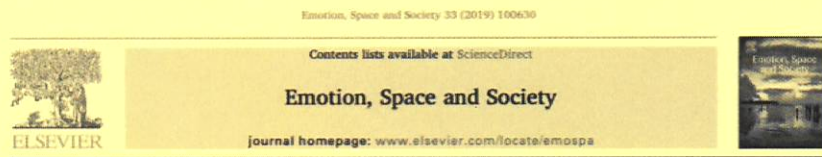
14

567

1.3K



Geography is a soft option for posh students who cannot do other subjects – headline from the Independent (Nov 2019)



Kindness: A new kind of rigour for British Geographers

Danny Dorling

School of Geography and the Environment, Oxford University Centre for the Environment, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3QY, United Kingdom



ABSTRACT

Let's face it, those of us who work in the academic discipline of Geography, largely work on the subject of failure. The failure of political leaders worldwide to avert disastrous climate change. The need to prevent the continuation of the fastest species extinction the world has ever known. The social and personal repercussions of enormous global income, wealth and power inequalities. We describe all this, usually, as if it were just an interesting set of observations. Then we tell students to write an essay about it. If they cogently analyse our collective failure, we give them a high mark. Many of them can then take their university degrees and head out to banking, advertising and management and make the world an even worse place, armed with the knowledge of what they might be criticised for by those who taught them, but never convinced them. Perhaps if we were kinder to our students when they were at university, were kinder and clearer in what we wrote and taught, more of them would use what they have learnt for good, rather than seeing their degrees as stepping-stones to their allotted place in the social hierarchy.

Since the “posh and dim” story the proportion of state school students that Oxford takes across the board (all subjects) rose to 69% of offers this January – the largest single year rise since 1965 – and the highest proportion ever – I expect 67% will get the grades.

The posh and dim stuff appeared in the press in at least eight newspapers the week before the Oxford admissions interviews (that some students are heavily coached for) were set to take place.

It is possible that it concentrated the minds of the people doing the admission interviews. Partly because of this I am not annoyed about the press coverage.

The university hit its published targets in some access areas three years early I'm told. Figures for Oxford Geography get released in May 2020. 33% of the intake will be from private school (still very high). But hopefully the ones who are not coming are the ones who might have been less interested (very hard to tell although many people who do interviews tell me this is what they are useful for spotting). I'd rather we didn't interview.

We don't have children who are dim and not dim – although Geography at University attracts a disproportionate number who did not find studying easy aged 8 to 17, but were later given extra help to get high marks at school – not necessarily in a way which meant they enjoyed school, or studying or thinking or imagination.

In short I think we need a few more “Greta's” studying geography at university – students who are passionate about climate change or some other geographical topic; and a few less who are so disinterested in their actual degree subject.

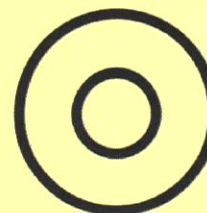
Connect with these future thinking organisations



SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE



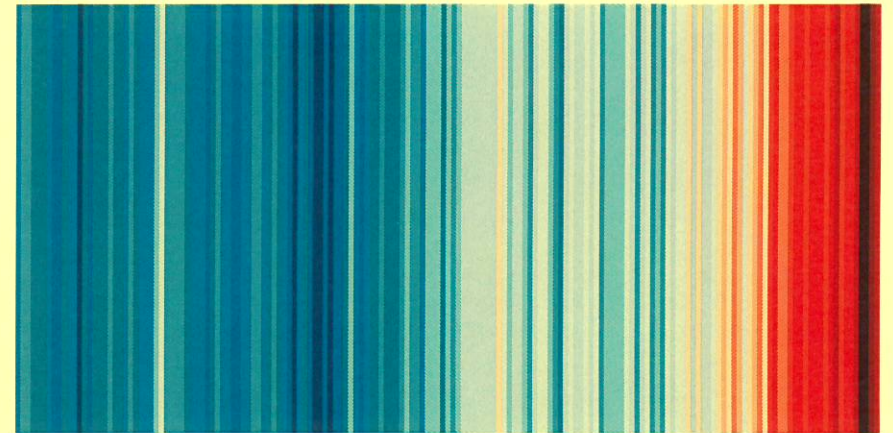
Certified



DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS ACTION LAB



Read these thought provoking books



Use Ed Hawkins - Warming Stripes as a tool to engage people in conversation about climate change

Wear them as a tie / Hang a banner of them in your classroom / Wrap your car in them / Paint them on the outside of your school / Bake them as a cake / Use them everyday

