

<WRWeb 19.4 webtask ***>

Climate change ***

Footprint fantasy

40 minutes

Individual work



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Introduction

Carbon dioxide emissions are the primary driver of global climate change. It is widely recognised that to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, the world needs to urgently reduce emissions. But how this responsibility is shared between regions, countries, and individuals has been an endless point of contention in international discussions.

This debate arises from the various ways in which emissions are compared: as annual emissions by country; emissions per person; historical contributions; and whether they adjust for traded goods and services. These metrics can tell very different stories. Learn a little bit more about this by doing this assignment.

Exploration

A: Carbon Footprint

When determining the carbon footprints of countries, there are several other things to consider as well. Read the first section ('Carbon Footprint') of this article and answer the questions:

<https://www.footprintnetwork.org/our-work/climate-change/>

1. Besides carbon emissions, what are the other human demands on our planet?
2. Looking at the first graph in the article, what are some of your observations? That is, what do you notice?

B: Paris Climate Agreement

Which countries are responsible for carbon emissions? Do big countries automatically carry more responsibility? Read the second section of the article ('Paris Climate Agreement') and answer the following questions.

1. Look at the circle graph in the article. Write down what you notice about the data for the ring 'Share of World's Carbon Footprint'. Anything that stands out to you?
2. Now look at 'Share of World's Population' (same graph). Anything that stands out here?

3. Combining the two sets of data, what is at least one observation that everyone should be able to make? Based on that observation, how unequal or inequitable are the distributions we see when we compare the data from both circles?

C: Paris Renewable Energy

1. Now look at the data under 'Renewable Energy'. How are the 'polluting countries' doing? Do they each do their 'fair' share? Explain your answer.
2. Think about how the Netherlands is doing. How proportionate do you think its data are? That is, does the Netherlands have a carbon footprint that is way bigger compared to countries similar in size and population? Where could you find that information?

Final task

1. Without doing your research first to find specific and precise information, create a two-circle chart – like the one in the article – that highlights the following countries: the Netherlands, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. The inner circle must show the 'Share of Europe's population'; the outer circle the 'Share of Europe's Carbon Footprint'. In other words: your circle graph will show your best estimated guesswork.
2. When done, find as much information as you can to check how good your estimated guesses were and amend your circle graph accordingly.
3. Based on the data, which of the seven European countries seems the healthiest to live in?

Extra

How do you think we should reduce the human impact on climate change? Write down some ideas.