

DARE TO BE YOU



STORIES & IDEAS
FOR EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

Dare to be you

This book is dedicated to
all the people
who have had the courage
to make our world a great place to live.

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Introduction and how to use this book

This book was written for all the people who want to help teenagers grow up to become confident members of our society who actively shape the world we live in.

It examines strategies to face both big and small problems in a courageous and maybe even joyful way, as every challenge holds the opportunity of learning more about oneself, one's strengths and limits.

The process of raising people's awareness of a topic and giving them the chance to become better at making decisions and solving problems is called empowerment. Empowerment is about encouraging people to be active members of society and take concrete actions. It is thus a crucial element of an education based on the principles of sustainable development.

TARGET GROUP

This book is intended to serve as an educational resource as well as reading material for teenagers from the age of 12 onwards. It may also be suitable for other age groups, depending on their level of maturity and prior knowledge.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK IN CLASS

This book examines topics and methods particularly suitable for teaching in new secondary schools and in the lower cycle of academic secondary schools. It offers a large variety of methods for motivating pupils to reflect on their values and opinions, improve their reading and writing skills and prepare texts for various media. Therefore, the book serves many of the objectives defined in the curriculum and can be used in German, history, ethics, religious education, political education, psychology, philosophy, geography and economics, communication, cooperation and conflict mediation and communication and social education classes. Moreover, this book lends itself well to project work realised across several classes.

PRINTABLE ONLINE MATERIALS

For some of the methods and work assignments presented in this book additional online materials are available (templates **M1** to **M12**), which can be downloaded free of charge at www.umweltbildung.at/empowerment and printed out.

THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The texts published in this book are centred around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (UN). The page header states which goal(s) is or are discussed in the respective chapter.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) apply to all countries and all people around the world. They express how the world has to develop so that all people can lead a good life now and in the future.

THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE:



For further information on the SDGs, please visit the website of the Austrian Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria at www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/en/topics/sustainable-development-2030-agenda-sdgs or download the booklet "Zwischenstopp 2030. LehrerInnenunterlagen für die Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen von 9 bis 14 Jahren" at www.umweltbildung.at/zwischenstopp2030 (in German only).

EMPOWERMENT ON THREE LEVELS

The various chapters of the book offer stories and methods which are intended to help teenagers learn to stand up for themselves and other people and experience that they can have an impact. In the exercises, empowerment is explored on three levels:

- 1. Individual empowerment = having the courage to be oneself:** individual empowerment means knowing yourself and your strengths, being aware of different participation opportunities and voicing your opinion.
- 2. Social empowerment = having the courage to stand up for one another:** social empowerment means being able to build relations with others, to define and communicate interests and to speak up for what you believe in. It also means perceiving yourself as a valuable member of a group or of society.
- 3. Collective empowerment = having the courage (not) to speak up for something, to work together towards a better world and be optimistic about the future:** the goal of collective empowerment is to raise awareness of global dynamics and to join forces with others who share your beliefs in order to achieve a common goal.



A SPECIAL PACK OF CARDS: DARE TO BE YOU

In the course of the Dare to be you project, also a pack of cards built around the 17 SDGs was developed. The cards were designed to be open to interpretation and present various approaches, questions, problems, hopes and solutions related to the SDGs. In this way, the cards offer plenty of opportunity to discuss different aspects of sustainability and encourage the players to debate their ideas on how to solve personal as well as global issues. The cards come with instructions for twelve simple methods to use them. Some of the cards' illustrations are also shown in this book.

You can order the cards at the online shop of FORUM Umweltbildung. Please visit www.umweltbildung.at/empowerment for further details.



HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE YOURSELF

Everybody is a unique individual, contributing his or her individual strengths, ideas and traits to the world. Fostering individual empowerment is a good start, as a confident self is well-equipped to positively interact with other people.

To feel confident, a person has to feel accepted and appreciated by others and know his or her strengths and weaknesses.

Confident personalities form and voice their own opinions. They make informed decisions and work towards solving problems. In order for empowerment to be effective, individuals need to have a sense of self-efficacy. The following stories and exercises are aimed at supporting young people in reflecting on themselves – their strengths and weaknesses, values and identity.



MY STRENGTHS

Which of these strengths do you possess? Circle them in the illustration or in the template **M1**. If you have positive qualities that are not mentioned in this exercise, feel free to add them. Then write down or tell a story related to one of your strengths: describe how you obtained it, who noticed it or how it has helped you solve a problem. In which situations have you used it so far?

The Matrix of Values

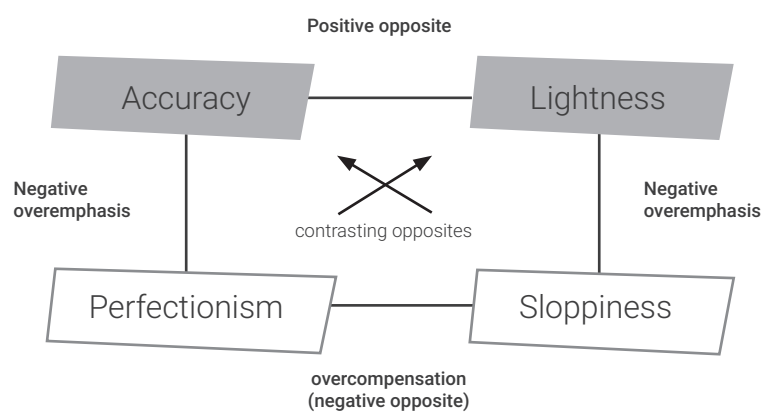
Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Very often, they are shaped by the very values and qualities we appreciate the most. An excessive focus on a strength can, however, turn it into a weakness. A weakness, in turn, can actually be a strength in a given situation.

The Matrix of Values helps you identify your own strengths and where you might still have to grow and find the positive aspects of an apparent weakness. At the same time, you can broaden your vocabulary and learn more about your personal qualities. Developed by Paul Helwig in 1967, the Matrix of Values was later adapted by Friedemann Schultz von Thun, who applied it in contexts of human communication.

APPLYING THE MATRIX OF VALUES BY USING THE EXAMPLE OF "ACCURACY"

First, fill in the value "accuracy" as an example of a strength in the box to the upper left side of the matrix. Then add "lightness" as a positive contrasting quality in the opposite box in the upper right corner.

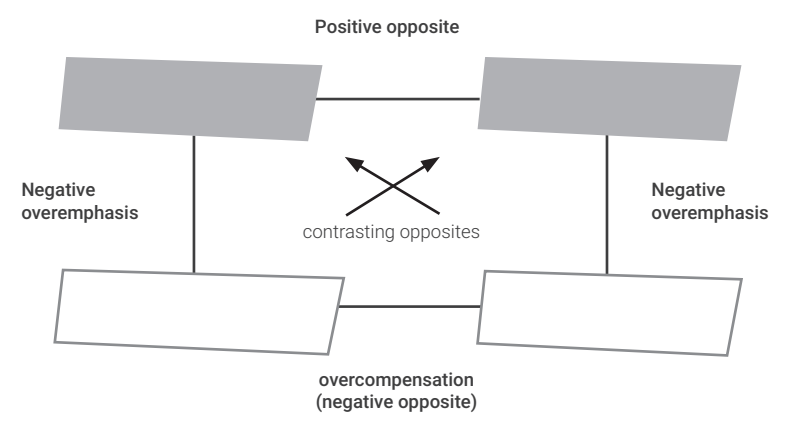
What is the opposite of this quality and what happens when there is too much focus on it (i.e. negative overemphasis)? Write the answers in the respective boxes below. For instance, perfectionism might be the downside of accuracy, whereas too much lightness might result in sloppiness.



THE MATRIX OF VALUES (TEMPLATE M2)

- **Step 1:** everyone in class writes down three values or personal qualities which he or she considers a positive value or a strength.
- **Step 2:** pair up with one of your classmates. Each of you chooses a value or personal quality he or she would like to work with. Then write this value/quality in the upper left box.
- **Step 3:** try to complete the matrix together by filling in all four corners.
- **Step 4:** collect your results on a pinboard or poster. Share and discuss your results in class.
- **Step 5:** reflect individually on the following questions:
 - What are your learnings from this exercise?
 - Has the way you perceive your strengths and weaknesses changed?

TEMPLATE FOR CREATING YOUR OWN MATRIX OF VALUES



Appreciating your skills and talents

Once upon a time there was an old nobleman who sent his only son, whom he thought to be stupid and incapable of learning, away to become an apprentice to a famous master for a year.

'What have you learnt?', the father asked the son after his return.

'The language of dogs. Now I understand everything they bark', the son answered. Infuriated by such useless knowledge, the father disowned the son and ordered his servants to take him into the woods and kill him. However, they took pity on the young man and let him go. So as not to enrage his father and to prove that they had followed his orders, they brought him the eyes and tongue of a deer.

The son, though, moved on and reached a region haunted by ghost dogs. While the dogs had devoured every human being that had crossed their way, they did not even touch the young man. As he found shelter in the dogs' tower and fed the dogs, they told him that they had been cursed to keep watching a treasure until it was discovered. They also told him how to uncover the treasure. Thus well equipped, the young man found the treasure and saved the region from its curse. As a sign of his gratitude, the local lord made the young man a nobleman and gave him his daughter's hand.

The young man, who had become a nobleman, travelled the world together with his wife. He became widely known as the man who could talk to dogs. Thanks to his special gift, he could accomplish many noble deeds and lived happily ever after.

Abridged and adapted version of the fairy tale 'The three languages' by the Brothers Grimm



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What is the message of this old tale in your opinion?
- Why did the father think his son was stupid?
- What kind of knowledge, which abilities, etc. are deemed useless in our society and which are deemed valuable?
- Which of your skills and talents do you think are not fully appreciated by your parents, class mates and teachers?
- Do you tend to focus on your strengths or your weaknesses? Why do you think that is the case?

THE TREASURE CHEST (TEMPLATE M3)

Gather around in a circle. The teacher (or another person) presents the treasure chest (a small box containing a mirror), describing the chest's content as a picture of a very special person. The box is then given to the first person in the circle, who hands it to his or her neighbour with the lid closed. Now it is this person's turn to peep into the box and then pass it to the person sitting next to him or her. This continues around the whole circle. In order for this exercise to be effective it is important that everyone is quiet and only peeps into the box when it is his or her turn. In a next step, everyone writes a fan letter to himself or herself (written as a proper letter containing a form of address), in which the following questions should be addressed:

- What are your strengths (what do you appreciate about yourself and what are you good at)?
- How do you know that you are particularly good at something?
- Do you have weaknesses as well?
- Are there fields in which people tend to underestimate you and why do you think this is the case?

The letters are stored in a safe place and returned to their respective authors after a month.



What makes us strong

EVAN RUGGIERO, born in 1990

I was 19 and studying musical theatre when I started to feel pain in my right leg. I was diagnosed with bone cancer. In the course of the following year, I had to undergo nine operations and finally had to have my leg amputated above the knee in order to survive.

Despite the loss of my leg I did not want to give up dancing. I found inspiration in Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates, who had lost his leg in a cotton mill accident at the age of twelve, after which he continued dancing on a peg leg made by his uncle.

This spurred me on to quickly learn how to use my new prosthetic leg. Unfortunately, the cancer also spread to my lungs and it was not until I had completed chemotherapy that I could take up dancing again.

I made videos in order to document my progress. Soon I could use my peg leg for creating new beats. My roommate finally convinced me to post one of my videos online. By the next morning, it had gone viral.

Today, I also play in a band and give talks in schools. I have also danced at Paralympics events in London and at the Oscars. I didn't choose any of this, but I guess my peg leg boosted my career.¹



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How are people with physical or mental disabilities perceived and treated in our society?
- How does Evan deal with his disability?
- What defines a strong person in your opinion?
- Do you think Evan is a strong man?
State reasons why you think he is (not).

Lined area for writing reflections.



A woman in trousers

GREAT-GRANDMA REGINA, born in 1928

My great-grandma Regina was born in the city of Temerin, in the Vojvodina region of Serbia, in 1928. The region has always been home to many Hungarians and my great-grandma was one of them. She grew up on a farm and only went to school for four years. She practically worked her entire life: everything around her was self-made or cooked and prepared by hand. When she had to go to school or run errands, she walked there.

There are many things about her that make her unique, but there is one fact that is particularly striking: my great-grandma was the first woman in her village who dared to wear trousers! She had always been making her own decisions, sometimes even breaking the so-called “unwritten laws” of womanhood. Back then, young girls and women most of all had to look pretty. While others wore dresses and skirts and put on make-up, she was confident enough to sport a comfy pair of trousers. At the age of five or six years, she went to the hairdresser by herself and had her hair cut short, leaving only a few centimetres left, because that seemed more practical to her.

I don't know how Regina met my great-grandpa. I guess, it was more of a marriage of convenience. My great-grandpa wasn't a bad person. He worked hard. I hardly know anything about him. Once they had a fight in the kitchen and he wanted to hit her. My great-grandma took a chair and threw it at him. My great-grandpa was deeply insulted and didn't come back home for three months.

My great-grandma told us many stories about Russian and German soldiers. Once, she refused to knit socks for one of them. Because she didn't want to knit, she simply pretended not to know how to do it.

Everything about my great-grandma was authentic. She was a simple but incredibly wise person. She built several houses in her life, worked in the garden and on the farm and raised two children and several of her grandchildren. She also played a crucial role for me and my siblings growing up. When I played the piano in her room, she got completely absorbed in the music and kept listening for hours. In the

rare evenings my parents went out, she stayed with us in our room and didn't go to sleep herself: she wanted to check that we were still breathing.

Based on a story by Ivana Vlahusic, born in 2000, public speaker, story-teller, mother tongue: Hungarian, father tongue: Serbian, favourite language: music, writes songs in German under her stage name Ivana Bunt. Loves language(s), writes and reads all kinds of things, talks a lot (and in different languages), likes travelling and learning new things. Lives to encounter new things and people.



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What are gender roles? How are women and men expected to behave and dress in different cultures?
- How do you think the other women behaved at that time and in the situations described?
- Which tasks used to be considered “typically male” and which “typically female” ones?
- How was a “typical woman” expected to behave, how a “typical man”?
- What does the situation look like today?
- Which actions by men or women would be considered “inappropriate” for their gender and raise eyebrows today?
- What does it mean to swim against the tide? Can you think of any examples? Why is it so hard to swim against the tide?
- Can you think of situations in which it is important to swim against the tide and why?

GENDER ROLES OF THE PAST

Do an interview with your (great-)grandparents or other members of their generation:

- What did their everyday lives look like in their youth?
- What were women and men (not) allowed to do?
- What were they obliged to do and what were the dominating gender roles?



Video on Youtube

That's how beautiful I am

Emilia

Look at this eyelash serum Lisa-Maria is wearing in her latest Insta post, so amazing. Gosh, these lashes! 😍😍 So great, her eyes always look so beautiful...

Hannah

As if, that's all so fake. 😬 I'm sure she edits these pictures a lot. You really can't take that for real.

Emilia

Yes, maybe, but they are still soooo pretty. Look at this picture with her little sister. The two of them are so cute. And their eyes are sooo beautiful.

Hannah

Yeah, sure, but what do they look like in real life?? 😬

Emilia

I'm sure they look like this in real life as well. Just look at the picture in today's Insta story. She is wearing no make-up and still looks so pretty with ultra-long eyelashes. Different, but really beautiful.

Hannah

Oh! Maybe this serum works after all... I should give it a try.



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Which features of Lisa-Maria likely appeal to the girls?
- What is beauty to start with?
- What is a beauty standard? What are beauty standards for men and women today?
- Even though Hannah thinks that Instagram star Lisa-Maria's pictures are all fake and edited at first, she ends up curious about and willing to buy and try the advertised products.
- Why does she change her mind? Have you been in a similar situation?
- Instagram and YouTube stars are often paid by companies to influence children and teenagers, who sometimes do not realise what influencers are doing. How could you help them see what an influencer does?

FIND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCERS

Some influencers promote important topics and the use of sustainable products online. Search the internet to find such influencers and then write a story about one of them who represents a topic that is important to you. You can use the following search terms: environmental influencer, green-living influencer, sustainability blogger.

- Which qualities does the person you chose possess?
- Which message(s) does he or she want to convey to others?
- What can we learn from him or her?
- What is this person's motivation?

For more information on this topic, see www.saferinternet.at.



5 IDEAS

FOR STRENGTHENING STRENGTHS

STRONG NAMES ★

Write down a positive quality for every letter of your name on a sheet of paper. If you want to, you can put it up somewhere you see it every day. TIP: use the wordle of strengths or template **(M1)**. Example:

P...patient
A...adventurous
U...upbeat
L...loyal²

HIDDEN STRENGTHS ★★

For this exercise, everybody writes down at least five qualities they possess or things they are good at. All items are then collected and written on a board or flip chart. Discuss the following questions in the group:

- Which qualities or skills have you been praised for?
- Which of these qualities or skills are very visible (e.g. diligence, physical strength, ...) and which ones not so much (e.g. working to create harmony, generosity, ...)?
- Which are the ones you usually get praise for?
The visible ones or the invisible ones?

At the end of this task, you can all agree to praise each other for invisible strengths.³



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER ★★

Pair up with another person who knows you well. Then write down three things the other person can do particularly well in your opinion. Note down an example or story about an occurrence in which he or she exhibited this strength. Then present your lists to each other.

- Were you surprised about any items?
- Did the other person name something you had not considered a strength?
- Did you find it easy to identify your strengths?

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU ★★★

Everybody receives three to five cards with names of people in the group. Do not reveal your cards. Then take a post-it note and write down a strength or positive quality you admire in the people you drew. When everybody is done, you can walk around the room and stick your post-it note to the table of the respective person.

Now everybody reads through the post-it notes he or she received. To conclude the task, discuss in the group which message(s) you were particularly happy about or which strength(s) you were not aware of.

A WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE ON YOURSELF ★★★

Write a fictitious Wikipedia article on yourself that contains a short biography of your life. Find inspiration by looking at existing Wikipedia articles on famous people. Start with basic information (name, birth year, nationality, family background) and then answer the following questions:

- What are your essential personal qualities?
- What have been your greatest successes so far?
- Which setbacks and crises have you overcome?
- What or who have you passionately lobbied for?

COURAGE TO STAND UP FOR EACH OTHER

From the moment we are born, relationships shape our life. For most people, close family members are the first important attachment figures. Later in life, friendships and romantic partners become more important.

Some qualities help us build positive relationships. One example is the ability to openly speak about one's experiences, needs and wishes with others. Another example is the ability to handle conflicts constructively and without bias and be able to deal with them.

The following stories and methods can serve as tools to help you investigate and reflect on your relationships with other people and your spheres of action for getting along well with each other.



MIND MAPS

Read through the terms on the topic of relationships in the image below. Then create your own mind maps (associations) on various terms related to this topic (e.g. family, love, friendship, conflicts, etc.). Write the main ideas into grey circles and the associated ideas into the white circles close to the respective grey circle. Then link all the circles associated with each other by drawing lines between them. For this task, you can use template **M4**, which is available online. Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong in this exercise.



Then tell each other stories about things you have experienced related to one of the terms and discuss similarities and differences between your mind maps.

Friendship

Two friends were hiking through the desert. During the trip, a dispute erupted and one hit the other in the face. The hit person felt hurt. Without saying a word, he knelt down and wrote the following words in the sand:

Today, my best friend hit me in the face.

The two continued their hike and soon reached an oasis. They decided to both take a bath. Suddenly, the one who had been hit got stuck in the mud and almost drowned. His friend saved his life by pulling him out just in the nick of time. When the person who had been saved this way had recovered from the shock, he picked out a boulder and engraved the following words into it:

Today, my best friend saved my life.

Bewildered, the friend who had both hit the other and saved his life asked: 'When I hurt you, you wrote down your words in the sand but now you are engraving them in a stone. Why are you doing this?'

His friend replied: 'When somebody hurts or insults us, we should write it in sand so the wind of forgiveness can blow it away. But when somebody helps us, we can engrave it in stone so that no wind can ever blow it away.'

Unknown author



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What do you look for in a good friend?
- What makes you a good friend?
- What would you do for a good friend?
- What would you not do; where do you draw the line?
- What is harder for you: forgiving or asking to be forgiven? Why is that the case?
- Are there people where forgiving or asking to be forgiven is very easy or very hard for you? Why is that the case?

YOUR STORY ABOUT FRIENDSHIP (TEMPLATE M5)

Write a story about yourself and a friendship of your choice. Recount a situation in which this friendship was tested and whether or not it has changed as a result. If so, how has the friendship changed?



Showing moral courage online

Cybermobbing means intentionally insulting, shaming or threatening a person on the internet or via smartphones over an extended period of time.

Cybermobbing comprises spreading insults, lies or embarrassing pictures via Whatsapp, Instagram, YouTube or Facebook. It can also mean harassing a person in chats or creating fake accounts of the mobbed person. Excluding the person from group activities or computer games is another form of cybermobbing.

On the internet, information spreads very quickly and sometimes it is virtually impossible to erase pictures and data once they have been published. For this reason, it is very important to protect your privacy whenever you use the internet.⁴

The following organisations offer support for children and teenagers affected by mobbing:

- SAFERINTERNET.AT: advice and information on being safe when using the internet
www.saferinternet.at
- 147 RAT AUF DRAHT: emergency phone counselling for children and teenagers www.rataufdraht.at
- INTERNET OMBUDSMANN: offers help in getting unwanted pictures deleted from the internet
www.ombudsmann.at
- CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS: www.schulpsychologie.at
- OMBUDSOFFICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: consultation and information available throughout Austria
www.kija.at



THE WHATSAPP FLOOD (TEMPLATE M6)

Read the story about Max. Then think about ways you could help him deal with the situation he is in. Write a happy ending to the story.

Paul has noticed that his friend Max is not doing so well. Something is wrong. Max doesn't want to play online games with him anymore. He does not answer Whatsapp messages within a couple of minutes the way he used to.

And then Paul discovers a new Whatsapp group. Its members are a whole clique of their class who use the chat group to harass Max. It is even named "Max, the a...". Founded yesterday night, already 324 messages have been sent in this group. Paul is shocked. He can hardly breathe. What should he do? How did he end up a member of this group? Does Max know? Max is his friend!

The next day ...

My pictures are mine!

It all started last year. My mother found an old box containing pictures, which she decided to scan and digitalise. Then it occurred to her that all her friends, including all of her Facebook contacts (and in her case that meant an impressive 853 followers), should see the pictures as well. And I was okay with that – up to that point.

But then she started publishing embarrassing pictures of me: pictures of me on the loo, pictures in which I pull a funny face, pictures of me taking a bath ... And of course, somebody from my school found these pictures and shared them with the stupid comment ‘Anyone interested in seeing Sarah naked?’

The most embarrassing pictures spread extremely fast and even though I asked my parents to delete them, they refused to do so.

‘Don’t be silly! The pictures are nothing but sweet and our friends are so happy to get to know some things about your life,’ my mother told me when I complained to her.

It has only been a few weeks since, and more and more people in my school have found out about the pictures and now I get stupid remarks all the time. I have been trying to delete the pictures myself but somehow they always pop up again. I just don’t know what to do anymore.



THE MAGIC BUTTON (TEMPLATE M7)

Read Sarah’s story and try to help her. Imagine you had a magic button that would allow you to change the story at any moment you choose. Consider the following questions and conduct an internet search to find the answers:

- What are Sarah’s rights regarding her pictures?
- Who could possibly help her?
- Is there any way for Sarah to have her pictures deleted from Facebook?
- How could Sarah react to the stupid comments?

Write down an alternative version of the story:

5 IDEAS

FOR GETTING ALONG

OUR GROUP PUZZLE ★

A group is formed by individuals who somehow belong to each other. To visualise this, a poster is cut up into as many puzzle-shaped pieces as there are people in the group. Each person receives one of the pieces and designs it the way he or she wants. In the end, the puzzle is put together and hung up for everybody to see how we all belong to each other.⁵

THE SUGGESTION BOX ★

The Suggestion Box can be an actual box with a lock and a slot to submit a note. It can also be an e-mail address. Either way, it is where problems can be deposited. Any concerns, be it questions or difficult situations, can be submitted signed by the sender or anonymously, just as he or she wishes. A person charged with this task then deals with the questions or problems reported. This box offers an opportunity for young people to address difficult topics, for instance conflicts, mobbing or problems between pupils and teachers.⁶

THE PINBOARD OF ENCOURAGEMENT ★★

There are many opportunities in daily life to cheer others up by paying them a compliment or doing something nice for them. And sometimes you might need a little encouragement yourself. Create a pinboard of envelopes to be used on cloudy days. The envelopes should contain uplifting messages on topics such as love, sadness, friendship, community, stress, trust, courage and joy. Whoever needs a little pick-me-up can treat himself or herself to an envelope from the pinboard.⁷

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS ★★★

Read about the rights of all children and teenagers in the world:
www.unicef.at/kinderrechte-oesterreich

Protecting the rights of children and teenagers should be a matter of course, but unfortunately, there are many countries in the world where this is not the case. Answer the following questions and also conduct an internet search if you are not sure about something:

- Have you ever witnessed that children's rights were violated? Tell the others the story.
- Why do you think it is important to know one's rights?

MORAL COURAGE STARTS WITH SMALL STEPS ★★★

Nobody likes to be excluded. You can never go wrong in being attentive to your environment. If a person in your surroundings is being excluded or even harassed because of a given trait, gather up your courage and take the first step to change this. A kind comment, shared lunch or even just a smile at the right time can make a difference and help the affected person change his or her situation. Do a role play to simulate an emergency situation which requires moral courage. Discuss in the group how the six rules below could be applied to this emergency situation:

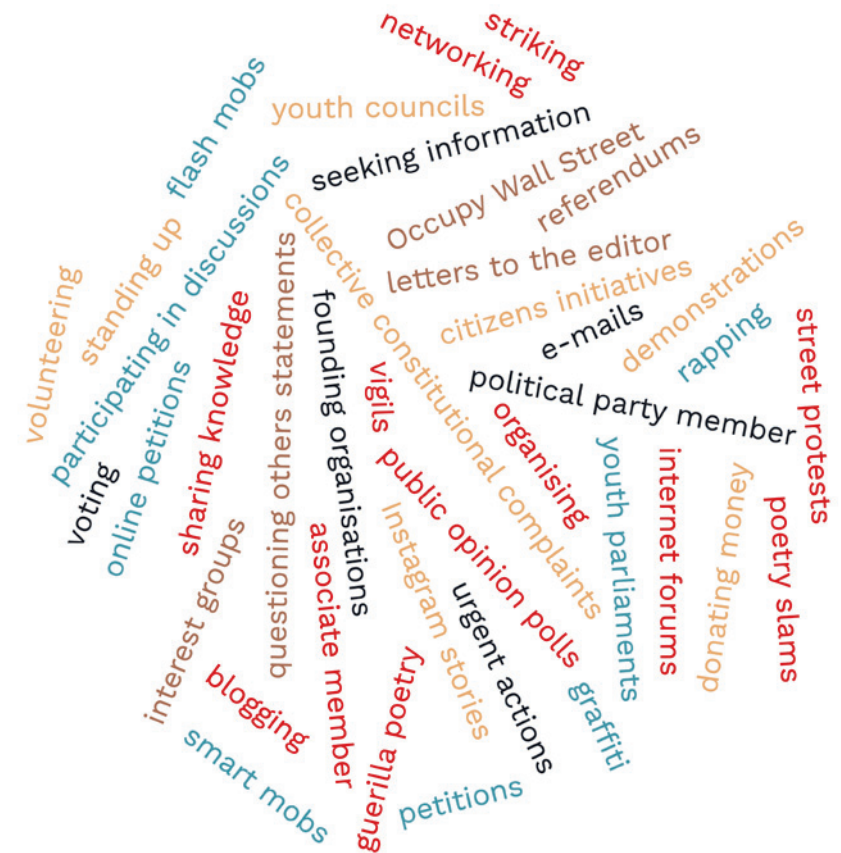
- I observe carefully.
- I get help.
- I keep my distance.
- I look for people who support my goal.
- I take care of the victims.
- I am a witness.



COURAGE TO SHAPE THE WORLD

There are many things that we can change. At the same time, we are members of a family, community, society or a political system. Sometimes, decisions with an impact on us and our surroundings are made by other parties, and we might not agree with some of them. But there are always opportunities to get involved and lobby for change.

Some things might seem impossible to change at first. It takes a lot of courage and also creativity and vision to believe in the change one seeks to realise. Joining forces makes things a lot easier, as the Fridays for Future movement shows. Its proponents call upon governments to take ambitious action on climate change.



TAKING POLITICAL ACTION

Pick a word from the wordle and search the internet for a description and an example.

You can also use template M8.⁸

From footprint to handprint

LEAVE A BIGGER HANDPRINT!

Human beings consume energy and resources and produce waste and emissions through the way they live. The ecological footprint visualises the amount of energy and resources a person consumes. Depending on how often we travel by car or plane, what kind of food we eat or how much electricity we consume, the bigger or smaller our ecological footprint becomes.⁹

However, keeping your ecological footprint small is not the only way to contribute to a better world. By getting active for a cause or treating others in a respectful way, every one of us can have a great impact. Here is where the concept of the handprint comes into play. Your handprint consists of your ideas and actions contributing to a good life for everyone. Unlike your footprint, you can (and should) leave a bigger handprint by getting involved in civic action and joining forces with others for a better world. Your handprint can be used to visualise what you as an individual or a group of people did to make the world a better place.

www.handprint.in



MY HANDPRINT (TEMPLATE M9)

Can you think of any areas where you are already contributing to making the world a better place? They can be small contributions, for instance, helping others or being environmentally conscious in your everyday life. Find inspiration by looking at the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Choose one goal which you would like to work towards for the next couple of weeks. Then take a sheet of paper to draw your handprint on. Fill in the captions according to the template below and cut it out. You can then create a poster with your other group members on which you join together all of your handprints.



Drawing inspiration from the past

No nuclear power in Austria!

On 4 April 1972, the construction of Austria's first nuclear power station was launched in the town of Zwentendorf upon the Danube river. Four years later, the project was finished at a cost of 14 billion Austrian Schilling (today about one million Euro¹⁰). With the radioactive fuel rods already in place, it would only have taken a push of the button to start-up the nuclear power station. Today, the nuclear power station in Zwentendorf is the only one in the world which, though finished and ready to get online, was never put into operation. Nevertheless, it generates electricity, which in fact stems from 100 per cent environmentally friendly solar power.

What happened?

The pain of the floodplain

The floodplain of Hainburg (Hainburger Au) and its wetlands are situated on the Danube river near the town of Hainburg in Lower Austria, east of Vienna. In May 1983, plans for constructing a hydropower plant including a 500-metre-long dam were announced. The then Federal Chancellor, Fred Sinowatz, supported the project. Others were critical of it because it would have completely destroyed a unique natural landscape, one of the last pristine forests in Central Europe.

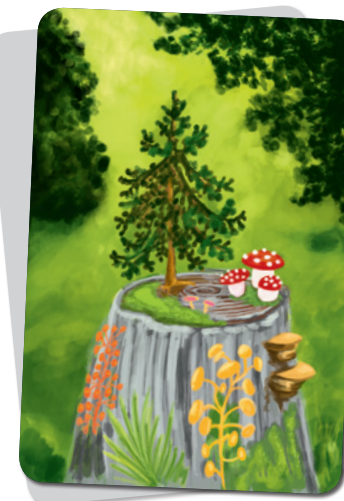
In the dawn of 10 December 1984, the first bulldozers moved onto the floodplain of Hainburg. However, the construction works never started.¹¹

What happened?



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA GAME

Every participant picks one of the two stories and reads it carefully, making sure that he or she has understood everything. Then he or she thinks of possible endings to the respective story – either alone or together with others – and writes it down, using a maximum of five to six sentences. At the end of the game, all written answers (including the correct ones) are read out by the game master or teacher. Everyone has to guess the correct answer.



NO NUCLEAR POWER IN AUSTRIA! – WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Even before the power station was finished, thousands of people were taking to the streets. Several mothers from Vorarlberg even went on a hunger strike to prevent that the Zwentendorf power station was ever put online. Eventually, the then Federal Chancellor decided to hold a referendum on the nuclear power station. The majority of voters voted against Zwentendorf, which was later transformed into a solar power station.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1975 – the nuclear power station was not finished yet – anti-nuclear power activists founded the “Initiative of Austrians against nuclear power” and soon managed to mobilise about 500,000 supporters. The nation was divided over the issue: opponents of nuclear power on the one hand and the Federal Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, the trade unions, industry and the chamber of commerce on the other hand. Even political parties in favour of nuclear power advocated against the nuclear power station in Zwentendorf. Federal Chancellor Kreisky announced that he would resign if the referendum turned out negative.

The referendum on nuclear power in Austria, which was the first referendum to take place in Austria after World War II, was held on 5 November 1978. A narrow majority of 50.47 % voted against putting Zwentendorf into operation. The Federal Chancellor and his allies had not expected this outcome. Nevertheless, they heeded the voice of the people. The same year, the Federal Constitutional Act for a Nonnuclear Austria was passed by the Austrian Parliament, which bans the construction and operation of nuclear power stations in Austria.

In 2005, EVN acquired the Zwentendorf nuclear power station and turned it into a training facility for German power plant engineers. At Zwentendorf they are trained in semi-real surroundings (without dangerous radiation) to be prepared for their future work at real nuclear power stations. Since 2009, Zwentendorf has also been hosting a solar power plant.

The referendum against Zwentendorf and the occupation of the floodplain of Hainburg marked turning points in Austria’s democratic processes. Both events greatly contributed to raising environmental awareness in Austrian society and politics.^{12, 13, 14}

THE PAIN OF THE FLOODPLAIN – WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

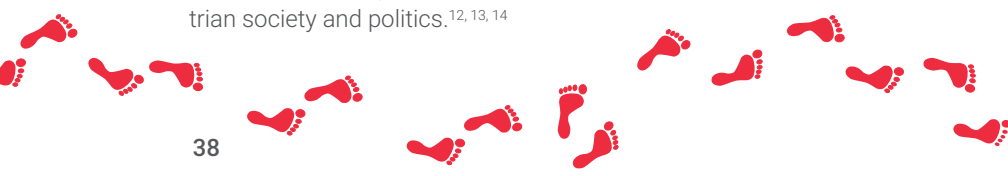
Numerous people protested against the construction of the hydropower plant on the floodplain near Hainburg. Despite the cold, some of the protesters even dove into the water to stop the construction workers. The police, resorting to the use of clubs, could not drive the protesters away. Media reports in newspapers and on TV were in favour of the demonstrations. Eventually, the politicians gave in and the floodplain of Hainburg and its wetlands were declared a national park.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As early as 8 December 1984, about 5,000 environmental activists marched onto the floodplain of Hainburg in order to prevent the construction of the power plant. Among the protesters were people of all age groups, from different professions and of diverse political persuasions as well as celebrities. Despite the freezing temperatures, some of them even put up tents. On 10 December, the day the construction works were supposed to start, 150 police officers entered the floodplain. Protesters were occupying the main entrances to the area, using logged trees to set up barricades. In the afternoon of the same day, the first violent clashes with the police erupted, provoking a huge public outcry. A referendum was initiated and a petition submitted to the Federal President. The Austrian Students’ Union organised busses, carrying students and other people from Vienna to Hainburg at hourly intervals. Nevertheless, the government continued to cling to its plans and had the entire area closed off by the police.

On 19 December 1984, the situation escalated. 2,000 police officers were ordered to clear the crowd. They used their clubs on the protesters, injuring 19 of them. 300 trees were cut down. In the evening of the same day, 40,000 people gathered in Vienna to express their solidarity with the protesters. There was heavy criticism from the press. On 21 December, Federal Chancellor Fred Sinowatz (a politician from the Social Democratic Party) finally announced the “Christmas Peace of Hainburg”.

The following year, the Austrian Supreme Court ruled that all logging in the area was to be suspended for an unlimited period and the hydropower plant was never constructed. In 1996, the floodplain of Hainburg and its wetlands were declared a national park, namely the Donau-Auen National Park.^{15, 16, 17}



Getting active on the internet

Gaming for our climate

The internet offers plenty of ideas, inspiration, information and opportunities for networking. So why not use it as a new tool to exchange ideas with other people?

Inspired by this thought, a group of climate scientists decided to use online gaming to share their knowledge about climate change. While they are playing popular games such as Fortnite, Eco or Civilisation, they casually talk about, for instance, climate models, the Paris Agreement and even the phenomenon of eco-anxiety (fear of the implications of climate change). And people all over the world listen.

The online petition savetheinternet.info is another example of how to get active on the internet. About 5 million people signed the online petition to protest against

article 17 of the EU Copyright Directive, which limits the freedom of expression on the internet. The directive stipulates that in the future, so-called upload filters are to be used to check if user-shared content (images, texts, videos, music) is protected by a copyright.

Despite fierce opposition, the reform was adopted by the European Parliament.

Nevertheless, the internet allows individuals to connect and form a global community. While not every attempt may turn out successful, it has never been so easy to mobilise a great number of people for a worthy cause.



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What do you use the internet for?
- Do you also use it to attract attention for a given topic? If so, how and for which topics?
- What other ways are there on the internet to mobilise others for a worthy cause?
- What kind of message would you like to get across?

SPEAKING UP FOR SUSTAINABILITY ONLINE

Search the internet for initiatives, blogs, podcasts, Instagram accounts, YouTubers, etc. that advocate for environmental and sustainability topics. Examples include: livelifegreen, Zukunftsrezepte, Vanillaholica, Dariadaria... Share your search results with your class mates on a digital pinboard (e.g. Padlet or Pinterest) and point out which pieces of information were new to you.



Teenagers have a say

Teenagers participate in urban planning AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Every year, Boston children and teenagers from 12 years on are given control over a budget of one million dollars to implement technology and infrastructure projects.

The Youth Lead the Change programme is unique all over the world. When planning projects, participants only have to abide by the following criteria:

- Projects must have a positive impact on the city and its property such as parks, community centres, schools, sports facilities and public libraries.
- All residents should benefit from the projects.
- Projects should cover a minimum period of five years.

First, the teenagers collect their ideas. In a next step, they draft and submit project proposals. Finally, residents aged 12 to 25 years can vote for their favourite

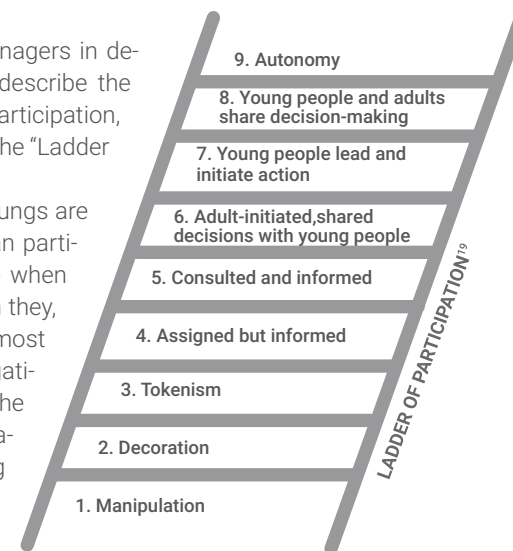
project. The winning projects are then implemented. Successful projects completed in recent years include the following:

- Future Media Center: a space in which teenagers can experiment with state-of-the-art technology which they would otherwise have no chance of using.
- Placing solar panels on City-owned property: tackling climate change while saving money.
- Digital information for homeless people: a digital billboard informs homeless youth about counselling services and job opportunities.¹⁸

DEGREES OF PARTICIPATION

There are many ways of engaging teenagers in decision-making processes. In order to describe the degree of children's and teenagers' participation, Roger Hart developed a model named the "Ladder of Participation".

As the ladder shows, the first three rungs are degrees of non-participation rather than participation. Non-participation is the case when young people are manipulated or when they, at best, fulfil a decorative function. In most cases, a lack of participation has a negative impact on a project. It is not until the fourth rung is reached that real participation takes place. This means that young people are given the opportunity to participate actively in decision-making.



THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION (TEMPLATE M10)

Together, create a poster displaying the Ladder of Participation, including the nine rungs with their respective labels. Then come up with a story in which you or another young person was involved in a decision-making process. In a next step, find a title matching your story and write it on a sheet of paper.

Gather in a circle. Now everyone tells his or her story, describing the decision-making process in detail. After each story has been told, match its title with a rung on the Ladder of Participation.

Then discuss in the group how some of the situations described in the stories can be changed so that they reach a higher rung on the Ladder of Participation. When a story has been matched with a rung on the Ladder, it is the next person's turn to tell his or her story.

5 IDEAS

FOR SHAPING THE WORLD

SEED BOMBS FOR THE (NATURAL) WORLD ★

Make the world a greener and more colourful place with seed bombs! Seed bombs are small balls made of soil, loam or clay and seeds. You can easily make them at home by mixing seeds, loam or clay powder with about the same amount of soil. Add a little bit of water to mould the mixture into smooth balls. Allow the seed bombs one to two days to rest and dry. Then scatter them in your garden, school yard or on derelict sites, providing food for bees, butterflies and other insects and beautifying your surroundings for yourself and the people around you.

USING ALTERNATIVE SEARCH ENGINES ★★

Search the internet by using alternative, environmentally friendly search engines such as Ecosia. Ecosia uses the income generated from searches to plant trees all over the world. Another example is Gexsi, which is a charity search engine supporting projects centred around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

BRINGING A SMILE TO SOMEBODY'S FACE ★★

Smiling is highly contagious, almost always causing others to react. For a whole day, try and smile at strangers you meet. While some of the people you smile at might be confused or irritated, most of them will soon notice that you brought a smile to their face.

POLITICAL AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION ★★★

Increase your knowledge about politics and citizenship. At the age of 16, you are allowed to vote in most elections. It is important that you keep up to date about current political affairs so that you know which party you want to vote for in elections. Contact your local city council or local government office and ask about party manifestos. You can also attend information events or sign up for a political education and citizenship education course if available at your school. Don't forget to read quality newspapers to keep informed about the current political situation and different party positions. You might also want to talk to grown-ups, for instance teachers or parents, and find out what they think about different political parties.

GO PLOGGING ★★★

Organise a plogging event with your friends. Plogging combines physical exercise with environmental protection. People meet up equipped with waste bags, gloves and dressed in sportswear. Their goal is to pick up litter while jogging, thus cleaning up their surroundings for the benefit of both people and animals.



COURAGE (NOT) TO STAND UP FOR SOMETHING

Sometimes courage is about standing up for something that many others do not agree with. Very often, this requires what we call moral courage. Moral courage means speaking up on behalf of others and defending democratic values, such as human dignity, tolerance and freedom, without using violence.

Showing moral courage at school, for example, could mean accepting responsibility by sticking up for outsiders and not excluding them. It means having the courage to speak your mind in spite of any negative consequences.²⁰ There are many ways to show moral courage, for instance by participating in demonstrations or flash mobs, voting in a referendum or signing petitions. You could also write a letter to the editor or poems or songs to draw attention to a specific problem. This chapter will introduce you to a number of different ways of showing moral courage.



BIOGRAPHIES OF INTERESTING PERSONALITIES

Choose a person you would like to find out more about from the following list and write a story about him or her (no longer than one A4 page). Answer the following questions in your story:

- Why did you pick this person?
- Whose rights or what cause does or did this person fight for?
- Why is or was this person invested in this cause?
- Where, when and in which conditions does or did this person live?
- Which things in your story would you do the same and which ones would you do differently?

Edgar Edmund
Tanzania
builds houses from recycled plastic

Aung San Suu Kyi
Myanmar
peace activist

Emmeline Pankhurst
England
suffragist

Emma Gonzales
USA
gun control advocate

Eryn Wise
USA
environmental and sustainability activist

Andrea Bocelli
Italy
blind opera singer

Musaz Nawaz, Daanyaal Ali und Chirag Shah, England, inventors of smart condoms testing for STDs

Wangari Maathai
Kenya
environmental activist

Fatima Al-Fihri
Tunisia
founder of the world's oldest university

Harvey Milk
USA, politician and civil rights advocate for gay rights

Irena Sendler
Poland
saved Jews from German occupying forces

Hans und Sophie Scholl, Germany
resistance fighters in Nazi Germany

Kelvin Doe
Sierra Leone
innovations for the community

Louis Braille
France
inventor of a writing system for the blind

Litia Baleilevuka
Fiji
activist raising awareness for the consequences of climate change

Joshua Wong
China
democracy activist

Virginia Woolf
London
Astorin und Frauenrechtlerin

Sonita Alizadeh
Afghanistan
rap songs against forced marriage

Nelson Mandela
South Africa
anti-apartheid activist

Jazz Jennings
USA LGBT
(lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) activist

Felix Finkbeiner
Germany
plants trees for the world

William Kamkwamba
Malawi
built a wind turbine for his village

Yoko Ono
Japan
artist, peace and human rights activist

The emperor's new clothes

Once upon a time, there was an emperor who was little concerned with his kingdom and responsibilities but very devoted to his wardrobe. One day, two crooks came to the town in which the emperor lived. They claimed to be weavers who produced the most beautiful garments, adorned with unique patterns and light like a spider's web. The most outstanding feature of their cloth, they let it be known, was that it could only be seen by smart people who were worthy of the dignity of their position. The emperor was enthralled by the idea of not only adding beautiful new pieces to his wardrobe but also finding out who was stupid and unfit for his or her office. So he commissioned the supposed weavers to start working on new garments for him, and they quickly set up looms and pretended to weave. They kept ordering mounts of expensive thread and the finest silk, but instead of making them into garments, they stashed them away for themselves.

After some time, the emperor sent a long-serving and honest minister to inquire how the weavers were doing. The crooks praised the brilliant colours and unusual pattern. To his horror, the minister found that he could not see a thing. But as he had heard that the cloth was invisible to stupid people, he pretended to see the garments and praised the exquisite work. The same happened to another honest minister.

Finally, the emperor wanted to see for himself and, in the company of his whole court, he went to see the weavers. 'My lord,' the emperor thought when he set eyes on the empty looms, 'I cannot see a thing! How terrible! Does that mean I am a fool? Am I not fit to be emperor?' Instead of sharing his doubts with the people around him, he praised the uniqueness of the fine garments. His entourage joined him in his praise and the emperor awarded the crooks the title of "Imperial Court Weavers". It was decided that the emperor should wear the fine garments for the first time at an upcoming procession. When the day finally came, the emperor proudly presented his new clothes. His valets pretended to be carrying the gown's train, and everybody who saw the emperor admired his clothes. Nobody wanted to admit that they could not see a thing. But when the emperor paraded down the streets all naked, a small child burst out: 'But he isn't wearing any

clothes!' This sentence spread like a wildfire and soon, all the people were calling out: 'The emperor isn't wearing any clothes!' The emperor realised that they were right, quietly thinking to himself: 'Now I have to get through the procession.'

Hans Christian Andersen (abridged and adapted version)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Why is it so hard for the people to admit that the emperor is not wearing any clothes? Why is it a small child that finally speaks the truth?
- What is truth? Is something true just because many people believe in it or claim it is the truth?
- Are there people to whom you find it especially difficult to admit that you have a different opinion? Why is that the case?
- What kind of secrets should be told? Which ones should not be told? Are there things that are best kept secret?
- Why did nobody warn the emperor?
- What would a good friend have told the emperor?
- Do you know people who dare to speak up in public even if they meet a lot of opposition and resistance?

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Write a sequel to the story! What happened after the procession ended?

- What happened to the child? How did the emperor react?
- Did he learn his lesson from this experience?
- What happened to the weavers and the ministers?

The day Rosa stayed seated

ROSA PARKS, born in 1913

Rosa was born in Michigan, USA, in 1913. She was born into a poor family, but her parents valued education very much. At first, she was homeschooled by her mother. Later on, she went to a school which could only be attended by black girls. At that time, the USA were still racially segregated. This meant that schools and other things such as park benches were fitted with signs saying “whites only” or “colored only”.

Although slavery had been abandoned after the end of the Civil War in 1865, African Americans were still oppressed, particularly in the southern states. Black children were not allowed to take the bus. And adults had to sit separately when they took the bus: the first four rows were reserved for white people. Often, these rows remained empty, but black people were still not allowed to sit there. The back of the bus, which was reserved for black passengers, was often over-crowded. The seats in the middle of the bus were open to black people provided that no white person was sitting there. When Rosa was a child, she watched the bus that she, as a black child, was not allowed to ride drive past her every day. ‘We had no choice but to accept what was the custom,’ she later said. Racism was part of Rosa’s everyday life. Her school was burnt down twice and attacks against African Americans carried out by the Ku Klux Klan (a racist and violent extremist secret society) were frequent at that time. Black people were injured or murdered by the hands of white perpetrators, who were not punished for these crimes.

When she was about 42 years old, Rosa was a seamstress and an activist for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), working to further the economic, political and cultural rights of African Americans. After a long day at work, Rosa was riding the bus home. The bus was already over-crowded when more people got in at a bus stop. Rosa and a few other people were sitting in the middle section of the bus and the bus driver told them to move to the back to make room for the white passengers. The three other peo-

ple did as they were told but Rosa remained seated. So the bus driver called the police. Rosa was arrested for refusing to obey the orders of a bus driver, tried at court and sentenced to pay a fine.

Word of her arrest spread quickly. On the same day she refused to give up her seat, the Montgomery bus boycott started, organised by then little-known Martin Luther King. In the course of the bus boycott, African Americans did not use city buses for overall 381 days, starting on the day of Rosa’s arrest. Some people decided to walk instead, others commuted by car. The non-violent protests led to many arrests and a bomb attack was carried out against Martin Luther King’s home. After months of non-violent protests, the Supreme Court of the United States finally ruled that racial segregation on buses was unlawful.

Rosa became famous for having refused to give up her seat. But as a consequence, she also lost her job and received so many threats that she eventually moved to Detroit. She was not deterred by this and continued her efforts to advance civil rights at her new home. ‘I just wanted to be free like everybody else. I did not want to be continually humiliated over something I had no control over: the color of my skin.’^{21, 22, 23}



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Why do you think it can happen that a person’s skin colour determines how he or she is treated?
- Where does discrimination (unfair treatment due to certain qualities) happen today?
- What could we all do to contribute to a fair society in which nobody is discriminated against?

Organic strawberries from Spain

SIMON: What are you eating? Don't tell me you are eating strawberries from Spain in winter!

JANA: Relax. These are organic. They were grown without the use of pesticides. So there's no harm to people or nature.

S: Yeah, right! They are probably from Huelva in Andalusia. We passed through the region during our trip to Spain last year. One plastic tunnel next to the other and the rest of the landscape is completely dried up. Just so we can eat strawberries in winter...

J: I read that the watering process is completely eco-friendly. The plants are only watered at night when there is less evaporation due to the heat.

S: You probably read that on their website. Environmental organisations discovered that wells are secretly dug to water the plants. As a result, there is a water shortage, rivers dry up and valuable natural habitats are destroyed.

J: You only see the negative sides. Jobs are also created this way...

S: I don't think that "jobs" is the right word. They only hire people from Eastern Europe or Africa. The wages are very low and the working conditions are inhumane.

J: Do you want me to feel guilty? I go everywhere by bike and I don't eat meat. You want me to give up strawberries as well?

S: You have to decide for yourself. I for my part just wait. In a few months, there will be organic strawberries grown in Austria...^{24, 25}



DO SOME RESEARCH

Read the conversation between Simon and Jana and then search the internet to find out where Huelva is located (for instance by using Google Maps). Go together in pairs and search for one article supporting strawberry production in Spain and one critical of it. You can, for instance, use the following search terms: strawberries from Huelva, fruit from Spain, quality of organic strawberries from Spain.

Then use the information provided in the articles to write a conversation between two persons with different views.

TIP: instead of making this a writing task, the conversation can also be produced as a short video clip.



Climate protection first!

Greta Thunberg was born in Sweden in 2003. When she found out about climate change at age eight, she decided to do something about it. She started to save energy at home, no longer took the plane and changed her diet to vegan. When she was eleven, she was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, which is a disorder on the autism spectrum. People who have Asperger's tend to get extremely invested in things they are interested in.

This is a strength Greta uses in her fight for climate protection. On 20 August 2018, she skipped school for the first time to demonstrate, with a banner and flyers, in front of the Parliament building in Stockholm. She demanded that politicians finally start taking climate change seriously. For the following three weeks until elections were held in Sweden, she demonstrated every day. After that, she came back every Friday.

Greta has very clear views and demands: politicians talk a lot but it is time they started acting. Particularly Sweden, one of the richest countries in the world, has the responsibility to increase its efforts to reduce harmful emissions and act faster than other countries, Greta says. By now, thousands of pupils have joined her cause and participate in what has come to be called "Fridays for Future" demonstrations (these peaceful demonstrations are held all over the world to call for more ambitious environmental policies). The demands voiced are being heard by the media and important people such as António Guterres (Secretary General of the United Nations) or Patricia Espinosa (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). In 2019, Greta Thunberg was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.^{26, 27, 28}



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Read about what different people think about "skipping school for climate protection" below. Then think about your own stance and write a short (no more than half of an A4 page) letter to the editor of a newspaper reporting on the topic.

The following (fictitious) article is based on real newspaper articles.^{29, 30}

Skipping school for climate protection?

Inspired by climate activist Greta Thunberg, more than 20,000 school and university students took to the streets on Friday, March 15, 2019, to join the international campaign "Fridays for Future". The demonstrations calling for increased efforts in climate protection prompted different reactions.

'If the pupils were really concerned about the climate, they would demonstrate on weekends and not during school hours. Skipping lessons will have consequences.'

Anna K., headteacher,
47 years old

'Before I study for the future, I have to make sure there is a future. At school, we have been learning about how to protect the climate for years, but politicians still do not take any action.'

Markus F., pupil,
16 years old

'This is about the next generation's foundation of life. If that does not justify skipping school, I don't know what does. I, for one, fully support my children in their protest.'

Georg H., journalist,
29 years old

'Why would I join a demonstration? It would not make a difference anyway. I can just as well stay in school and study for the next exam.'

Anita S., pupil,
14 years old

I have a right to education!

MALALA YOUSAFZAI, BORN IN 1997

Malala is born in Pakistan in 1997. She lives in Mingora in the Swat valley with her parents. That is where she goes to school until the region is invaded by Taliban terrorists.

The Taliban turn Pakistan into a country at war. They demand that men grow long beards and women wear the burka, a garment that covers the entire body. Murders, executions and punishments happen every day. Eventually, the Taliban ban girls from attending school. Malala loves going to school. She dreams of becoming a physician and is not willing to have her right to education taken away by terrorists. When she is eleven, she starts keeping an online diary published as a blog in which she shares what is happening in Pakistan as well as her fears and hopes. The blog soon attracts attention and is also translated into English. And even though the terrorists have forbidden it, Malala continues to go to school.

One day, the school bus she is riding in is stopped. A man fires a gun at her and her school friends. Malala suffers grave wounds to her head. She is operated on at a hospital in Pakistan and is then flown out to the United Kingdom. Even though threats of murder continue, Malala has not stopped her fight for education to this day. In 2013, she speaks at the United Nations. The following year, she is the youngest person in history to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.^{31, 32}

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS HAVE RIGHTS

Regardless of whether they live in Beijing, London, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires or Vienna: all children and teenagers of the world have the same rights. These special human rights protecting all children and teenagers up to 18 years of age are laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights do not need to be obtained, nor can they be lost. They are a birthright for every human being. Austria, along with all other nations in the world, has to make sure these rights are protected.

Of the 193 UN member states, 192 countries have confirmed their intention to ratify these rights as part of their national legislation. The USA is the only nation who has not yet done so. These rights include the right to education, healthcare, protection from violence and abuse as well as rights regarding autonomy and participation, such as respect for children's views and freedom of expression.³³



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Read Malala's story and answer the following questions. If you cannot answer a question, do some online research to find out more about Malala and children's rights laid down by the UN.

- How would you describe Malala? What are her values, wishes, dreams?
- In what areas do you feel you are like Malala and where do you think you differ?
- Which of Malala's rights were infringed upon by the Taliban? (Read the Convention on the Rights of the Child to answer this question.)
- How does Malala stand up against the oppression in her country?
- Is there something in your life that is unfair and that you would like to change? If so, what is it?
- How can children and teenagers in Austria defend themselves against injustice?
- Are there violations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Austria as well?

For the forest

Cornelia Presich, a young singer-songwriter from Vienna, has been living in the countryside since 2013. In her songs, she writes about plants and forests and criticises the destruction of our environment.

Why did you choose “Waldfee” – forest fairy – as your stage name?

The name Waldfee (forest fairy) aptly describes what I want to achieve through my music: make nature’s contribution, particularly forests and other green spaces, to the lives of human beings visible.

Music has a certain magical quality about it and this is precisely what I want people to feel, so that they are enchanted and start sharing my enthusiasm about the forest.

How and why do you speak up for nature and our environment in your songs?

I live in the countryside and have plenty of time to watch nature, which often makes me want to speak up publicly against things moving in a wrong direction.

This is why I also write protest songs, for instance against the construction of the Lobau motorway. Protesting against things you are unhappy about is one

thing, changing them for the better is another. I think it takes both to bring about a significant change in society.

For this reason, I am happy to sing songs not only against but also for something.

What kind of advice would you give young people who want to get active for a worthy cause?

Old but gold: Just do it!

It is important that you take small steps at the beginning and don’t force yourself to act radically right from the start.

Having fun and being happy to be contributing something without expecting a tremendous effect right away is key. And do not believe that everything has to be perfect. For instance, I once lived in a mountainous region, which made it necessary for me to drive a car in order to get to my concerts. When you get involved in actions for positive change in our society you have to accept that it is impossible to get every little detail right.

SONG: FÜR DEN WALD

Menschen Europas, erkennt die Zeichen!
Schon wieder fällen sie unsere Eichen.
Unsere heiligen, uralten Bäume,
Hüter uns’rer Visionen und Träume

Von unsern Wurzeln woll’n sie uns trennen
Bis wir dann – uns selbst nicht mehr kennen
Dann den Boden noch zubetonieren,
bis wir die Umwelt gar nicht mehr spüren

doch halt – da hab’n wir was dagegen
zu viel – liegt uns am Waldesleben
wir trommeln und singen und klatschen, erheben uns
zum Tanzen, und bringen die Erde zum Beben

Refrain:

Für den Wald, für den Wald, für den Wald woll’n wir tanzen,
für die Pflanzen, für die Tiere, für die Steine
Denn der Mensch ist nicht alleine,
wir sind Teil vom großen Ganzen
Für den Wald, für den Wald woll’n wir tanzen!



Video on Youtube



TWO DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON ONE TOPIC

Search the internet for information on the Lobau motorway project. Write down two different opinions on the project you could find on the internet.

5 IDEAS

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

YOUR OPINION MATTERS ★

Have you ever been furious or enthusiastic about an article you read on the internet or in a newspaper? Next time this happens, post your views in an internet forum or write a letter to the editor expressing your opinion. Usually, some of the posts and letters are published, as a result of which your views would be read by many people. Search the internet for tips on how to write a letter to the editor and draw inspiration from sample letters.

YOUR INSTAGRAM STORY ★★

Social media are great tools for spreading a message globally. Every day, several million people use the photo-sharing platform Instagram to post their personal experiences and share content with others. If you are at least 13 years old, you can sign up for an account on Instagram to post stories and share your views on topics which you care about the most. Try to come up with a unique hashtag and use it consistently, so that others will find your posts more easily. People inspired by your posts can then use your hashtag to post about similar topics.

INSPIRING SHORT INTERVIEWS ★★

Another way of raising other people's awareness of an important topic and motivating them to share their views is doing an interview. Work in groups and agree on five questions about a specific topic (e.g. climate-friendly school cafeteria: hot dog or vegan snacks? Gender discrimination: how to fight it?) You can record your interviews using a video camera or you just write the answers down. Then present your results in class. Your interviews may also contain provocative questions.

WRITING A PROTEST SONG ★★★

The following is a simple yet funny method of writing a song to protest against a given situation. First, form a group. Then every one of you writes down three to five words related to your song's topic – each word on a small sheet of paper. Fold the sheets and put them in a box. Then take turns to draw one sheet after another. For every single word that is drawn, try to collectively come up with a line or stanza containing the respective word. Then continue with the next sheet until you have finished your song. If you have no clue what a protest song sounds like, you can listen to examples on YouTube before working on your own song (e.g. protest song contest on the radio channel FM4).

START YOUR OWN SMARTMOB ★★★

Have you ever participated in a flash mob? A flash mob is a short, seemingly spontaneous gathering of a large group of people in a public or semi-public space. Although in most cases, participants don't know each other, they manage to simultaneously perform unusual acts, often prompted by a secret cue.³⁴ Flash mobs with a political, social or ideological message are also called smart mobs. The idea to organise a smart mob is spread in online communities, blogs, newsgroups, e-mail chain letters or via smartphones by one person or a group of people.³⁵ Search the internet to find information on famous flash mobs. Then think of organising a flash mob on your own, raising public awareness of a topic which is important to you. Try to mobilise other people to join you in the flash mob.



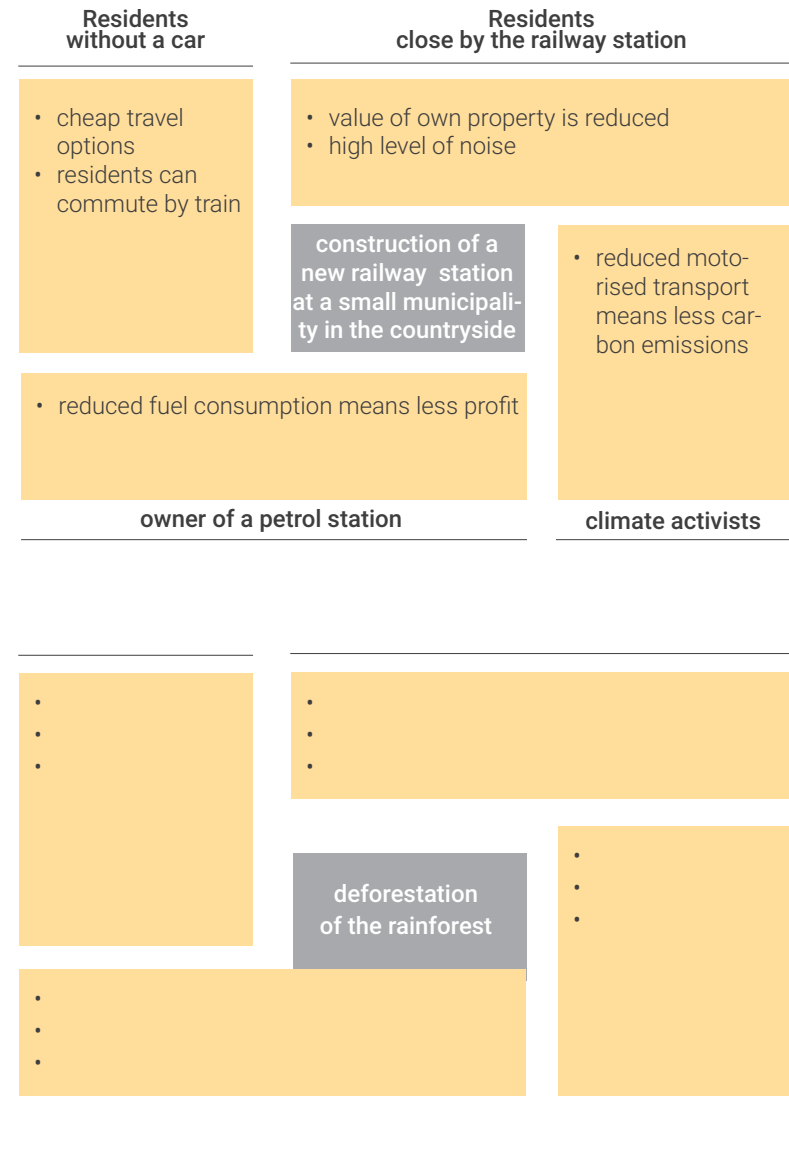
COURAGE FOR THE FUTURE

Climate change, the extinction of species, economic crises – the future seems to hold many problems that have no solution, making it hard to be optimistic about a “good future for everyone” and to fight for it. The following stories and exercises offer a positive perspective of our future and give ideas to get involved in making this vision come true.



FOUR PERSPECTIVES (TEMPLATE M11)

It is often hard for us to understand other people’s views. And yet every one of us has individual needs and different ideas of how to meet them. For instance, when it comes to building a new railway station in the countryside, some of the local residents, especially those who don’t have a car, might be happy with the prospect of a new train station, as they will have a faster commute to the city. Residents living nearby, however, might feel disturbed by the increased level of noise a railway station would likely bring about. Think of four different stakeholders and the stances they might take on the deforestation of rainforests (e.g. a businessperson trading with tropical woods, a member of an indigenous community living in the rainforest, a European buyer of tropical woods, a climate activist, etc.). Try to find arguments supporting each position. Then four of you engage in a role play, adopting one of the four stances mentioned above, in a panel discussion on the topic of rainforest deforestation. Each panelist should describe why the deforestation of the rainforest would have a positive (or negative) effect on his or her life. After the panel discussion, make sure to actively step out of the role you adopted for the role play.



A song to save the planet

Performing a voluntary year in the field of environmental protection gives young people the opportunity to gain professional experience in environmental, conservation, sustainability and development cooperation projects. During their service, they receive support from JUMP, a non-profit organisation aimed at fostering youth participation in environmental and sustainability projects. Nineteen-year-old Lorenz Gruber performed a voluntary year at the Umweltdachverband, an alliance of Austrian environmental and sustainability organisations. For his final project, he and two of his colleagues wrote a song titled “A song to save the planet”.

Why did you decide to perform a voluntary year in the field of environmental protection?

I wanted to make a contribution for a good cause and at the same time perform my civilian service in the most meaningful way. Umweltdachverband in particular attracted my interest as it gave me the opportunity to gain experience in event management, a field I might like to work in one day.

What exactly did you do at Umweltdachverband?

I mostly helped with planning, managing and analysing events. For instance, I searched for event venues and contacted the people in charge. After the events, my job was to analyse feedback forms. At the same time, we had to make sure that our events were planned and managed as sustainably as possible.

At the end of your voluntary environmental year, you had to implement an environmental project of your own. What is the story behind your final project?

At the final workshop of the environmental voluntary training programme, I formed a team with two colleagues who were as fascinated by music as I am. Alex said he would like to compose a song. We were enthusiastic about his idea and gave him feedback on the first versions. Gradually, the song was born. Gundi took charge of the lyrics. She did a lot of research and then wrote down the lines as they came to her. The day before we recorded our song in the studio, we adapted the lyrics to match the melody.

What kind of message do you want to get across with your song?

We want to make young people think about climate change. Particularly, we want to show them examples of positive alternatives. We want to tell them to stop focusing on the negative things because this will make you feel helpless.

Instead, we all should be asking ourselves: what can every one of us do? How can every one of us make the world and our everyday lives a little better, even if it is baby steps we are taking?

A SONG TO SAVE THE PLANET

I was never one to believe,
that we could really make a difference
and prevent climate change
Because all you hear, are bad news
But come away with me on a journey
and I show you some good news
Like a village in India plants trees,
every time a girl's born there.
Many projects try to clear the seas of waste
Scientists found a way to turn CO₂ into Ethanol
Look at Tschernobyl – nature took the place back.

So I give positive thinking a shot,
since focusing on the negative never got us far
Don't get me wrong there is bad stuff too
But come away with me on a journey
and I show you some good stuff.
Like a village in India plants trees,
every time a girl's born there
Many projects try to clear the seas of waste
Scientists found a way to turn CO₂ into Ethanol
Look at Tschernobyl – nature took the place back
Scientists found a way to turn CO₂ into Ethanol
Look at Tschernobyl – nature took the place back.



Video on Youtube

Good news!

How to clean up the plastic waste in our oceans

Imagine a white sandy beach. You can hear the gentle sound of waves. You look up into a cloudless sky ... yet as soon as you take the first steps into the crystal clear water, you feel plastic waste touching your feet.

Has this ever happened to you? If so, you probably have a good grasp of how Boyan Slat felt when he could spot more plastic in the sea than fish during his holiday in Greece. This experience inspired him to come up with his idea of “The Ocean Cleanup”, a technology for cleaning up the plastic waste in our oceans, for which he was awarded the Champions of the Earth prize by the United Nations Environment Programme when he was only 16 years old.

By now, he has started implementing the project. Together with a team, he constructed a 600-metre free-floating tube, which has a special screen below it. This screen is designed to trap pieces of plastic. Support vessels will later collect the plastic waste trapped by the cleanup device

and bring it to shore for recycling. Although the device is not fully operational yet, the project team is working hard to further improve its technology, so that one day, it will collect as much plastic from the Pacific Ocean as possible. There is still a lot to be done, as an estimated 8 million tons of plastic waste end up in the ocean every year. Only a small share of this enormous amount of plastic waste is floating on the ocean surface in so-called garbage patches, which mainly consist of micro plastics rather than plastic bags, bottles, flip-flops or drinking straws. Microplastics pose the biggest problem as fish, crabs and other shellfish mistake them for plankton. By eating them, they not only poison themselves but all other beings that eat seafood.

CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM

Every time you open a newspaper or browse social media channels, you might think we are on the brink of apocalypse. If it bleeds, it leads seems to be the motto of many journalists. Is there no other way of reporting news than to focus on the terrible things and disasters happening in this world? How do the media shape our perception of society, different countries and the world we live in?

What about the many solutions that have been proposed for various problems? Is it not also the task of journalism to deepen our understanding of the world and also report on positive and good news? The good news is that this kind of journalism already exists. One of its names is “constructive journalism”.



Read the article about the Ocean Cleanup project and search the internet to find more projects aimed at tackling the problem of plastic pollution. Then extend the article by adding at least two of these solutions.^{36, 37}

WHERE CAN WE READ ABOUT POSITIVE NEWS?

Find out what constructive journalism is about and search today’s newspapers and/or online media for articles that meet the characteristics of constructive journalism. Then discuss in the group why you think the articles you have chosen are examples of constructive journalism.





Just an ordinary day in 2051



DESCRIBE AN ORDINARY DAY IN THE YEAR 2051 (TEMPLATE M12)

Report about your experiences from the future. Pick at least three of the following topics and include them in your vision of the future: managing money, dealing with other people, treating the environment, approaching different cultures, food and/or leisure time.

Answer the following questions in your story:

- What is special about your surroundings?
- In the year 2051, are people equally poor or rich?
- By taking which decisions did humanity get to where it is right now?

The glaring sunlight makes your tired eyes squint. Usually, your alarm clock would have woken you up in time for school. But today, somehow everything feels completely different. You take a look around you, knowing for sure that this is not your room nor your bed. Everything in here is totally different, as the strange calendar on the wall next to you tells you the date: 25 May 2051...



5 IDEAS

FOR THE FUTURE

SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW ★

Think about what your school might look like in the future and answer the following questions. Then discuss your answers in the group.

- What changes do you wish for?
- What kind of equipment will your future school have?
- Which subjects will be taught and how?
- Who will be teaching?
- What is the impact of these changes?

3 SCENARIOS ★★

What will life be like in the future? For the next task, think of three different scenarios of the future:

- a best-case scenario
- a worst-case scenario and
- a fantastic scenario, which you can describe as creatively as you wish

Then read out your stories of the future to each other and discuss what the majority seems to think about the future.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ★★★

Come up with five things you could do in your everyday life to make the world a better place. Then come up with five things that would make the world a worse place if done every day.

Write down two short stories: in the first one, you write about what would happen if more than half of the world's population put every single one of the five positive things into practice. In the second story, you describe what the world would look like if more than half of the world's population did all of the five negative things.

WRITE A HAIKU FOR THE FUTURE ★★★

A haiku is a Japanese poem. To write a haiku, follow the rules below:

- The first sentence must have 5 syllables,
- the second sentence must have 7 syllables,
- and the last sentence must have 5 syllables.

In a haiku, it is important to express the core message in only a few words. Think about your most pressing wishes concerning the future of our planet and then write them down in a haiku.

AN EDUCATIONAL TRIP TO PLANET EARTH ★★★

Write a science fiction story from the perspective of an extraterrestrial life form who is going on an educational trip to planet Earth in 2019. He or she is particularly interested in the following questions:

- What are human beings particularly good at, compared to extraterrestrials?
- What are they particularly bad at?
What are the most pressing problems on Earth?
- Would planet Earth be a suitable place to live for extraterrestrials for a longer period of time?



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PLEASE NOTE: The pack of cards "Tanz aus der Reihe" including a manual with twelve methods can be ordered at the online shop of FORUM Umweltbildung. For further information, please visit www.umweltbildung.at/empowerment.

COMMISSIONED BY THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

 **Federal Ministry**
Republic of Austria
Climate Action, Environment,
Energy, Mobility,
Innovation and Technology

This book was written for all the people who want to help teenagers grow up to become confident members of our society who actively shape the world we live in.

The texts published in this book are centred around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (UN). They examine strategies to face both big and small problems in a courageous and maybe even joyful way, as every challenge holds the opportunity of learning more about oneself, one's strengths and limits.

This book examines topics and methods particularly suitable for teaching in new secondary schools and in the lower cycle of academic secondary schools. It offers a large variety of methods for motivating pupils to reflect on their values and opinions, improve their reading and writing skills and prepare texts for various media.

