

# UNIT 18 ARE HUMANS SMART?

## UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students will:

- 🎧 Read and listen to the conversation between two aliens.
- Answer fill-in-the-blank comprehension questions to show understanding of the story.
- 🗣️ Consider three alternative opinions about humans and how we are treating the Earth, and express agreement or disagreement with the opinions.
- Study the Opinion Network to learn expressions for “strength or clarity of opinions.”
- Extend the Topic by talking about humans and life on Earth.
- Read a Culture Corner extract about what questions humans would like to ask an alien.
- Share ideas about advice they would give to humans if they were aliens.
- Listen to a follow-up video extract from Mike giving his views about humans and the environmental problems they have caused.
- Take the Unit Test.

### Authors’ Introduction

Go to [impactseries.com/issues](http://impactseries.com/issues) to listen to Junko’s unit introduction.

### The Issue

In this unit, aliens who are searching for intelligent life in the universe discover big problems on Earth. According to a report by an alien who visited the Earth, humans control the Earth but they are not smart. They are destroying the Earth by “boiling” it and polluting it. They are killing each other and other creatures. The aliens decide that they don’t regard humans as intelligent life-forms and leave. In this unit learners can look at the problems on Earth that have been caused by humans from an “outside” perspective. This unit is asking us if we are we smart enough to save our planet and ourselves.

### Questions Raised

- Humans are supposed to be the most intelligent creatures on Earth. Why have we caused so many problems on Earth and have not been able to solve them? Are we really smart?
- Are humans smart enough to solve problems on this planet, or are we stupid and hopeless? Are we able to stop pollution, global warming, and wars? Or are we going to destroy the Earth and die out eventually?
- What should humans do to prove that we are really smart? What should we do immediately? What are some long-term solutions?

### To Keep in Mind

- This is a good unit to make students think “globally.” It is a good chance for them to think about humans and this planet from a unique perspective.
- Your students need to recognize the problems and crisis of this planet in order to really understand this unit. They also need to understand that humans are the cause of the crisis.
- It is important for students to be able to relate the problems mentioned here to their own lives. Younger students may not take the problems seriously because they are not focused on the future. Encourage them to see that they, their children, and their grandchildren have to live in the future. Therefore, they should at least be concerned about these problems, if not take action in finding solutions for them.

## TEACHING GUIDE

### Getting Ready

→ Have students work in pairs. First ask students to answer #1. (The picture is a pretty good hint if students are having trouble.) As a whole class, ask for a volunteer to answer #1. Before students move on to #2, make sure that everyone knows the meaning of “UFO.” Again, you can use the picture as a way to check their understanding. Because many students will be familiar with alien/UFO movies, another way to check understanding and raise students’ interest is to elicit some famous titles of alien movies and write the list on the board.

🗣️ **Teaching tip:** Even if students do know someone who claims to have seen a UFO, they may be reluctant to share their story knowing that some students will think it’s absurd. Therefore, you may want to tell an alien/UFO story of your own (real or made up) to help open up the pair work discussion.

### Situation

→ Have students listen to the CD without looking at the text, imagining two aliens talking. Ask them if they understood the general meaning of their conversation. Have them listen again this time along with the text.

🗣️ **Teaching tip:** Have students work in pairs. One student takes the role of Zeba and the other of Gorko. Tell them they have to sound like aliens. Have them practice the dialogue one or two times. Ask two or three pairs to perform the dialogue in front of the class. Have the class decide which pair sounded most like aliens. Students should be encouraged to have a lot of fun with this!

### Check Your Understanding

#### Answer Key

1. Earth
2. stupid
3. destroying
4. another part of space

### What Do You Think?

→ After you check students’ understanding of the story using the comprehension questions, students discuss their opinions of Iris, Shingo, and Anna. Discussion should be done in pairs. Have students do Activity A individually. Then have them move to Activity B and discuss their responses in pairs.

🗣️ **Teaching tip:** Make sure students fully understand each opinion before they decide to agree or disagree. You could ask the class which two people have hope for the future of our planet (Iris and Shingo) and which person does not (Anna).

📌 **Culture Point:** This unit is a good opportunity for the students to think about the fact that humans will have to work together despite cultural differences or differences in political views in order to save our planet.

### Extending the Topic: Gorko’s opinions

→ Have students work individually when checking which of Gorko’s opinions they agree with, and in pairs (or threes) for the follow-up discussion.

Give students plenty of time to check the opinions. The more they have thought about the opinions, the easier it will be for them to do the following discussion activity. Encourage students to explain their answers during the discussion activity (Section B).

### Culture Corner

Have students work in pairs or groups of three. Students read through the list of questions that humans would ask aliens. Give them an opportunity to ask about unknown words. Then write a few questions on the board for discussion. For example: Which of these questions would you want to ask an alien? Are there any other questions that you’d like to ask? If yes, what? You may have students who will be reluctant to do this

activity because they don't believe in aliens. Ask them to imagine that aliens are real and encourage them to have fun with it!

## Sharing My Ideas: Advice to humans

### → Choose

Begin by having students select, as aliens, a problem from the "Extending the Topic" section. Explain that they are going to give a presentation about how humans can solve this particular problem.

### → Prepare and Rehearse

Your students should use the Speaking notes and Language Hints to prepare their presentation. Be sure that they offer three ideas for ways to solve the problem. Then they can practice telling the story to a partner. Remind them to do the Listener task and give them a chance to add to their notes before presenting again.

### Sample Presentation

*There are many problems on Earth. The worst problem is that humans are making the weather hotter. How can we solve this problem? First, we should make our population smaller. Second, we should stop using oil and should use solar energy. My third idea is that we should stop destroying rain forests and should plant a lot of trees all over the Earth. It's not too late to save Earth. Let's see what we can do today, for tomorrow.*

### → Present

Have students find a new partner, or put them into groups. There is no explicit Listener task in this unit, but at the end of the presentation, the presenter will ask the audience if they have any questions. Therefore, listeners should take notes and prepare one question they would like to ask the presenter about solving problems on Earth.

Draw students' attention to the Presentation Tip. If your class has been having difficulty with making eye contact and looking at the audience, you could do the sample presentation above to demonstrate this aspect of presenting. It can be useful (and sometimes humorous) for students if you give an example presentation that shows poor eye contact.

If you are using the assessment guide below, go over each point with the whole class before students begin their presentations. (This could also be done during the Rehearse step so that students have time to prepare for or practice each assessment point.) Be sure to remind your students that communicating their ideas is more important than using perfect English!

### Assessing the Activity

Have students judge the confidence in the voice of the person speaking. Create a handout showing a checklist such as the one below, or write it on the board:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1 – The presenter was easy to understand.                       | Y N |
| 2 – The beginning of the presentation was clear.                | Y N |
| 3 – The conclusion was clear.                                   | Y N |
| 4 – The presenter talked about three ways to solve the problem. | Y N |
| 5 – The presenter looked at the audience.                       | Y N |

When students are working in pairs, have each student evaluate the other. If a student presents to a group or in front of the class, have each student grade him or her.

### Bonus Activity

If there is time, consider doing the Bonus Activity. Set up the debate by dividing the class into two groups. If you are working with a large class, you may want to create multiple debate groups to ensure student participation. Give the groups time to prepare a list of reasons. Have the first group (Humans will be able to solve our problems) present their reasons. The opposing group (Humans will not be able to solve our problems) should take notes and prepare any questions they might have. Repeat the same method for the second group. You can allow the groups to argue back and forth a number of times until they are finished, or you can set a limit. At the end, ask students to decide which group had the better argument. You also have the option of assigning one judge per group.

## PERSONAL OPINION

→ If you have downloaded the video clip or have access to the Internet in class, play the video clip. The first time, have the students watch with books closed. Ask questions to see if the students have understood the gist of Mike's opinion. Then have them look at the summary. See if they can fill in the missing words. Play the extract once or twice more. Then check the answers.

### Answer Key

#### Mike

It's very interesting to see somebody else's perspective of how we're treating the planet. I guess we're not being very good to ourselves or to the planet. We're killing ourselves slowly but surely.

Each of us needs to do our own little bit. Each individual's action adds up to a whole lot. For example, bring a bag to the store when you go and don't continuously accept new bags. Recycle what you can. There's lots that we can do. There's no point in complaining afterward when everything is ruined. As for me, I've got a small car. It's compact, it's fuel-efficient. It's somewhat friendly to the environment. There's lots of choices these days. We need to make that choice. We have to do what we can.

### Video Script

I think it's nice to see somebody else's perspective of how we're treating the planet. We're not being very good to ourselves or the planet. We're killing ourselves slowly but surely.

Each of us needs to do our own little bit. Each individual adds up to a whole lot. For example, bring a bag to the store when you go. Don't continuously accept new bags. Recycle what you can. There's lots that we can do. There's no point in complaining afterwards when everything's ruined. Personally, I've got a small car. It's compact. It's fuel-efficient. It's somewhat friendly to the environment. There's lots of choices these days. You need to make that choice. Let's do what we can.

## UNIT TEST

→ **Make copies of the Unit Test** for each student. Distribute the copies and allow about 15 minutes for the class to complete the Test. Correct the Test in class.

A. **Understanding the Situation:** The focus is on understanding what Gorko found when he visited Earth and how both aliens feel about humans and the situation on Earth. Students answer five multiple-choice questions.

B. **Vocabulary:** The focus is on understanding three words or phrases from the Situation or the Extending the Topic sections. Students fill in three missing words of a short paragraph that summarizes the Situation.

C. **Expressions:** The focus is on you check students' understanding of expressions or phrases from the What Do You Think? and Opinion Network sections. Students answer two multiple-choice questions.

### Answer Key

- A. 1. a 2. b 3. a 4. c 5. d  
B. intelligent, control, destroying  
C. 1. b 2. a

## LINKS

If you would like the class to do additional research on the intelligence of humans, here are some useful links:

No Signs of Intelligent life on Earth, Says Stephen Hawking:

[http://digg.com/general\\_sciences/No\\_Signs\\_of\\_Intelligent\\_life\\_on\\_Earth,\\_Says\\_Stephen\\_Hawking](http://digg.com/general_sciences/No_Signs_of_Intelligent_life_on_Earth,_Says_Stephen_Hawking)

Lecture 35: Intelligent Life in the Universe:

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/astro101/lectures/lec35.htm>

Universe Today:

<http://www.universetoday.com/2008/04/19/the-odds-of-intelligent-life-in-the-universe/>