

Global Cooling Teacher's Guide

Background

Global Cooling is the second in the Project Earth-Mend Series of junior novels, following on from *The Greenhouse Effect*. As well as being an entertaining read, the novels are intended to inform children about key environmental issues confronting society today. The novels extend the notion of us 'all being in this together' to include animal species as active participants in the way we live our lives. Having many environmental truths be discovered by the animal characters in the book is an undercut of the view of human supremacy over other species. The message is that humans are largely responsible for the mess the Earth is in and that perhaps others are in a better position to find ways to restore a balance, especially those species that have continued to live in harmony with Nature.

A team of extraterrestrial characters play important parts in the novel. Aside from the attractiveness of beings from Outer Space to younger readers, these characters provide an objective view superior to the prevailing human-centric outlook on how we should relate to our environment. This makes it difficult for readers to dismiss the conclusions reached by Tiger and his native companions as just those of animals.

Above all, the Project Earth-Mend Series seeks to *suggest* rather than preach its themes. Readers are invited to participate in the adventures as equals and to discover environmental messages along the way.

Global Cooling takes place after the characters' earlier success with 'Project Earth-Mend' in Canberra, in the previous novel. Tiger the Cat bids farewell to his owner, Alexander, and heads off to the coast with his friend Wanda the Blue-tongue and the frog Tark (who is really an extraterrestrial from the Planet Griffon) to spread the word about how to save the Earth.

They enlist a lot of fellow creatures along the way, including Sam the Crow, who brings important messages from Prince and Eudora of the Sacred Pool. With a lot of help from Tark's magical toe, Tiger and the crew convince others to help out in the quest to cool the Earth, but the ultimate test lies ahead when they have to convince the elusive Yowie and the doubtful King of the Crocs to pitch in, Can they really help shift the Earth away from disaster toward Global Cooling?

Chapter 1 - in which Tiger, Wanda and Tark make tracks for the Coast

1. Chapter 1 introduces you to the characters. Who are the main characters so far? How would you describe them?
2. The main characters are on a journey. What are they trying to do? What is their project?
3. Tiger, Wanda and Tark are different to what we usually think of, when we think about creatures that aren't human. In what ways are they different to our usual ideas? Does this change your opinion of them?
4. Wanda and Tiger have an argument about native and Introduced Species. What do you think the difference is? Why is Tiger so "touchy" about this? Should he be?
5. Tiger had trouble understanding Tark's explanation of his technology, but Alexander didn't have any trouble. Why was this? Is it important to understand these things? Even

important for Tiger to understand? Or did Alexander understand because “he’s human and they’re supposed to know such things”?

6. Why does Wanda, on page 14, call the dogs a “lesser species”? Do you think that this is fair?
7. Should the dogs also help clean up their mess, or should they just keep relying on their human to do it for them? Do you think there are some humans who also don’t help out because they think it is the job of someone who is more important than them? Like only the job for the Prime Minister?
8. What do you think of the idea that animals have always known how to talk? But that humans haven’t known how to *listen*?

Chapter 2 - *In which fairy penguins are spotted and enlisted*

1. Why did Wanda find in favour of the penguins during the court case? Do you think the foxes’ argument was a convincing one? Why/why not?
2. What do you think about the compromise of moving the foxes to an area over-run with rabbits? Does this provide a good solution for both the foxes and the penguins? What do the rabbits think?

Chapter 3 - *Sid the crow applies for membership in the Few*

1. What do you think about the loggers cutting down trees which were there before Captain Cook arrived?
2. Why were there people sleeping in the trees? Is that a brave or a silly thing to do? Could there be other ways to stop the loggers?
3. Sid told Tark that things could get nasty if the press weren’t there. Why would that matter?
4. What does Sid mean when he says that “might makes right”? Do you think this is true?
5. What are some of the insults that the loggers fire at the Greenies? Why would they say these things? Would it be easier for them if environmental worries *were* just “fairy stories”?
6. Was it the loggers’ fault that they had to cut down those trees? Or did having a permit mean that someone else also had responsibility? Is everything okay to do, if you have permission from someone?
7. Wanda urges the loggers to “think outside the square”. What does this saying mean? What did Wanda mean?
8. Tiger and a logger have an argument about what “progress” is. What were the two different ideas that they had? What do you think “progress” means?
9. Was the solution that the loggers and Greenies came to a good compromise for both sides? Did it address the worries of both sides?
10. At the end of the chapter, Eudora is mentioned again and Sid wants to become a member of “the Few”. Do you have any guesses about who Eudora is and what she does? What do you think the club of “the Few” is? What would members do/have to do?
11. Would you expect Tiger to be able to work “paw in claw” with a Crow? Why/why not?

Chapter 4 - *In which Bradley Gower mysteriously reappears*

1. When Tark says that humans want to “have their cake and eat it too”, what does he mean? Is he really talking about cake at all?
2. Was it a smart idea to tell the ducks to leave the pond and stay in a human’s swimming pool until they buy a pool cover? Why does this make sense?
3. Did it surprise you that the Griffons were behind Project Earth-Mend? Can you take a guess at why they would want this type of project?
4. Does Griffon sound like a good place to live? Would you rather live there? Or on earth? Why? Why did Bradley prefer it here?

Chapter 5 - *In which pelicans and others clean up their act*

1. Why does Tark say that electing a new government isn’t the answer?
2. Why did Tark use his powers stop the Director from lighting the figurines? Should he have let them light the fires?
3. Why were the festival-goers supportive during Tark’s early speech, but later got angry about not allowing the fires to be lit? Do you think that people find some things easier to change and other things much harder (for example, if they love them, like the festival-goers)?
4. Are these harder changes more or less important to make?

Chapter 6 - *In which a cane toad sets the record straight*

1. Do you know the story about cane toads coming to Australia?
2. Is population control a good idea?

Chapter 7 - *In which Prince and Eudora get a progress report and the Yowie is mentioned*

1. Why did the Griffons decide to change “Global Warming” to “Global Cooling”? What do they say the difference is? Do you think this was a clever idea?
2. Do you think that it’s true that humans are frightened of the problem, overwhelmed and for this reason often give up?
3. What is a Yowie? Can you guess at why the characters need to find him? And how he will have the key to their quest?

Chapter 8 - *In which everyone, including Tiger, takes to the water to meet a dugong*

1. What do you know about the United Nations? What do they do? Why would the dugongs send them a petition?
2. Do you think this is a good idea? Would it be helpful? Why?

Chapter 9 - *In which Wanda scores a sapphire and wild pigs get a taste for bacon*

1. What do people mean when they talk about the Dreamtime? How is this connected to the land? How might it be connected to the coal mining going on in that particular spot?
2. Why do you think Larry quit?
3. Why do we call bacon 'bacon'? Should we call it 'pig-meat', so that people (and pigs!) know what it really is? Would that put you off eating it?

Chapter 10 - *In which a Wise Old Owl sets them back on the right track*

1. Tark said, "Humans are the only ones who care about money". Do you think this is true? How might this make the way humans interact with the earth different to the way other creatures do?
2. On page 163, the animals are talking about football players, and the Wise Owl says that "football players should wear helmets. And padding. And mouth guards....Otherwise they're just asking for broken bones - and worse!" Is the Owl really talking about football here? Could we think about this strategy in relation to the environment?

Chapter 11 - *In which the Yowie comes clean*

1. Why was Tiger more likely to get sick than the others?
2. Why can the creatures see the Yowie, but the humans can't? Can you think of other things which may be "there" but "can't be seen". Does this make these things less real?

Chapter 12 - *In which the crocodile spits out the tick-tock*

1. Should Wanda have used her Lizard Alert? Was Project Earth-Mend a big enough emergency?

Chapter 13 - *In which almost Everything is forgiven*

1. What do you think about how the story ends?
2. What does the Choir of Last Hope say about the possibility of working together?
3. Are all the new things the characters are doing (for example Sid teaming up with the pigeons) enough?
4. Do you think the team will go to Uluru? Where do you think this adventure might lead?