

# Looking Forward

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we will discuss the future of environmental issues. People need to realize that when it comes to environmental issues, there are no silver bullet solutions; therefore, a host of various approaches and solutions will be needed to address the myriad of environmental challenges humans face. We will discuss how to move forward with addressing environmental issues at the government, business, and individual levels. Specifically, this lesson will cover the following:

## 1. Government

For government policies to work, they will need to be possible to bring to force politically. They need to target key players and decision-makers who can shift behavior and have the necessary impacts on environmental issues. They need to encourage behavioral change through regulation, monitoring, and enforcement. They need to provide education and information through various avenues.

The following table summarizes government capabilities needed to meet environmental challenges.

Government Action	Purpose
Taxes and fees	Discourage substances and actions that can harm humans and the environment
Subsidies and grants	Encourage efforts beneficial to the environment
Facilitation	Facilitate collaboration between stakeholder groups
Policies on population control	Pass and enforce policies that limit childbirth
Energy policies	Implement and enforce policies to reduce energy consumption in industry as well as homes
Government energy use	Reduce energy consumption in government facilities
Green politics	Improve energy sources and promote green politics

## 2. Private Business

Private businesses can improve their agricultural practices for longevity, productivity, equity, and health. They

can also decrease their energy consumption and improve their energy sources.

There are some companies that market themselves as green companies but do not actually follow sustainable or green principles. When companies do this, it is called greenwashing.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Monsanto, a large genetic engineering seed company, has been accused of greenwashing. However, there are strong viewpoints both supporting and negating such accusations.

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### 3. Individual

Individuals can also take action by encouraging and practicing social norms and attitudes which support sustainable lifestyles. This could have widespread impacts in behavior change over time.

The original campaign to reduce, reuse, and recycle was such an effort. It improved people's awareness about managing their waste and protecting the environment through better waste disposal.



The following table summarizes a variety of tools that individuals can use to address environmental issues.

Actions for Individuals	Description
Population control	Family size can also be determined by individuals. Decisions to have fewer children can reduce human population growth.
Environmental literacy	People can become more environmentally literate and conscious by educating themselves on important topics and issues, both in their communities and abroad. As technology improves, it is becoming easier to be environmentally literate about global issues, which might have an impact on the lives of individuals.
Green Products	People can also choose to purchase greener products, such as organic foods, and use services from companies that adopt sustainable practices. People can also choose to build homes that are more ecologically friendly.
Collective Action	People can take collective action by joining or supporting nonprofit environmental organizations.

➞ **EXAMPLE** The restaurant chain Chipotle focuses on creating food from organic and ethically acquired ingredients.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, we learned about ways in which people can address environmental issues in the future. We explored options at the **government**, **private business**, and **individual** levels.

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