

13 Tágabb környezetünk, a természet világa

Hungary is in the temperate zone and has a continental climate. Summers are hot with little rain. Winters are mildly cold and snowy. There are big differences between the weather in the four seasons. Hungary is in the Carpathian Basin, which makes its weather more complicated to predict. There are many oak, pine and beech trees in Hungary. In the woods there are a lot of deer, wild boars, pheasants, wild ducks, hare, wild geese and foxes.

The most common domestic animals in Hungary are cows, chickens, pigs, horses, dogs and cats. The most common are dogs and cats. I have cats and dogs, too.

My favourite seasons are spring and summer. I like warm and sunny weather and I don't like the rain.

Now it is summer and the weather is hot and dry. It hasn't rained for more than a week.

In spring nature wakes up after the long sleep in winter. Flowers blossom and the forests and meadows are full of flowers. The weather is changeable, especially in April.

In summer the weather is often very hot. Sometimes it is so hot that I can't sleep well at night. There is little rain. You must be careful not to spend too much time in the sun because you can get sunburnt. You can even get skin cancer. You need to use sun cream to protect your skin from the power of the sun. In summer thunderstorms may come suddenly and unexpectedly. Thunderstorms come with heavy rain and lightning. Lightning can strike trees and even houses. It is good if you have a lightning conductor on your house. Sometimes lightning strikes people but fortunately it is rare. Sometimes there is hail in summer, too. In summer there are many fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, apricots, cherries and melons. In summer people wear light clothes. People swim in lakes and seas and swimming pools to cool themselves down.

In autumn the weather is cooler than in summer. The beginning of autumn is called Indian summer. It is quite warm, like summer. I love it. In autumn there are more fruits than in summer, for example apples, pears, plums, peaches, nuts, almonds, and grapes. In autumn grapes are harvested and wine is made. Hungarian people like wine. In autumn there is more rain. If it rains you need an umbrella or a raincoat. Or a car. In autumn the leaves change colour; they become yellow, red and brown, then they fall from the trees. In October the weather is also changeable.

After autumn winter comes. In winter the weather is very cold. It often snows and the temperature often falls below zero. Water freezes so lakes and rivers can freeze. Sometimes there are blizzards, too. When the roads are icy or snowy, there are more accidents because the roads are slippery and it is more difficult to control cars. If a lot of snow falls, you may get stuck in the snow. In winter you must wear warm clothes, such as a pullover and a winter coat. In winter there is often fog, too.

England has a maritime climate, which means it is next to a sea. The sea does not let the temperature fall too low in winter and rise too high in summer. So winter is mild and summer is cool. There is also a lot of rain. English weather is a bit unpredictable and people just love talking about it.

We need to protect the environment because we live in it. Unfortunately, there is a lot of pollution. We can divide pollution into soil, water and air pollution.

Soil pollution is when people dump toxic waste on the ground. It poisons animals and plants and can seep into the ground and contaminate groundwater. In the end it can find its way to wells and rivers and poison drinking water, so it is very dangerous.

Unfortunately, criminals also dump toxic substances in seas and rivers. In most countries there are very strict laws against polluting waters. In spite of this, some companies try to dump toxic waste in rivers and seas illegally.

The best-known form of pollution is air pollution. Vehicles and factories pollute the air with their emissions. There are very strict laws in the EU which regulate the emissions of cars. Some people say the regulations are unreasonably strict and manufacturers are forced to do tricks to comply. Factories and power plants are responsible for a substantial percentage of air pollution. In some places, like some Chinese cities, smog is so dense that people hardly ever see the sun. I certainly wouldn't like to live in a city like that!

Apart from pollution, people also damage the environment in other ways. For example, overfishing is a problem. People catch more fish than are hatched.

Plants produce oxygen from carbon dioxide, so forests can be called the "lungs" of Earth. Unfortunately, many trees are cut down. Many of them are in the Amazon rainforests. People are cutting down rainforests at an alarming rate. This is called deforestation.

The average temperature of the Earth is rising. The polar ice caps are melting. It is called global warming. Many people say it is because some gases, for example carbon dioxide and methane in the air reflect back heat from the Earth's surface. This is called the greenhouse effect. Methane is much more dangerous as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. When cows break wind, they produce methane so they also contribute to the greenhouse effect. Unfortunately, sometimes oil tankers have an accident and cause an oil spill on the ocean. In an oil spill hundreds of thousands of litres of oil are spilled and kill a lot of animals. It takes an awful lot of time and money to clean up an oil spill.

Due to some gases that were used earlier, the ozone layer became thinner. These gases were used in aerosols and refrigerators. They are banned now. The ozone layer filters out much of the UV radiation from the Sun. Now that the ozone layer is thinner, you must be more careful in the sun and use stronger sun cream.

Unfortunately, sometimes nuclear power plants have serious accidents, like in Chernobyl and Fukushima. In a nuclear accident a lot of radioactive material is released into the air and these radioactive materials contaminate a large area and kill many people.

We can do a lot to help the environment. For example, you should collect rubbish selectively, minimize the use of water, gas and electricity (you can use LED lights) and you shouldn't throw litter away.

Companies can recycle waste, which means they use waste again to make products.