

# Smelling, hearing, seeing



When you step out of your house in the morning: What do you smell? Fresh air? More likely you smell something people have made: car exhaust, factory stinks or smoke from someone's cigarette. Perhaps you've never smelt real fresh air: the sweet smell of damp earth, the scent of pine trees or of the sea. These are the breath of



What do you hear? Birdsong? Nothing? More Likely.....

You hear the roar of traffic on a nearby road, an airliner overhead, someone's TV or radio. Perhaps You've never been lucky enough to hear the gentle Sounds of wild places: grasshoppers chirping, birds Singing, the wind sighing gently in the trees, the Burble of a little stream. Or just the deep stillness of a night when there's no wind to make any sound. Everyone should be able to hear these sounds. They are the voice of our planet

what do you see? More houses, factories, apartment blocks, streets, cars, buses and stuff. Perhaps you've never been to a place where everything you can see is natural with no sign of anything people have made: mountains, forests, coasts, rivers, lakes, wilderness. These are the real world; they are what remains of our natural planet and they belong to all of us. And if you live in a big city with lights everywhere at night, you've probably never seen the myriads of stars and the Milky Way which make the wonder of the night sky.



# Food and drink



'You are what you eat', some people say. I don't quite agree with that. I eat fish but I'm not a fish. I'm a penguin. Anyway, you get the general idea I'm sure. And if you eat rubbishy food, you can't really expect to grow up strong and healthy. But if you eat good-quality food, you've a good chance of doing so. That's just commonsense really.

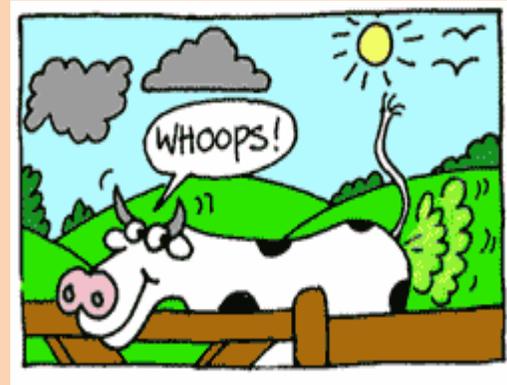
So how do know what food is good-quality? Unfortunately a lot of food that looks good really isn't good because it contains pollution. Pollution from what? This is all to do with how people make food: growing it on the farm, processing it in factories, storing it and making it ready for you to eat.



Most farmers spray poisonous chemicals on their crops to kill off pests or diseases. Many of these poisons remain in small quantities in the food you eat. Some people believe that this may cause cancer and other illnesses. The poisons also pollute both water and air and can kill lots of animals by accident. They also kill a lot of humans by accident every year.



Some farmers grow genetically engineered crops (see my guide about this). Some people regard GE crops as a form of pollution because once it's released, nothing can bring it back again. You can clean up oil spills but you can't clean up genetics spills. Genes are part of life and make living copies of themselves, sometimes millions of them. But, to be fair, there's no evidence that GE foods are toxic or dangerous because people have been eating them without problem since the 1990s

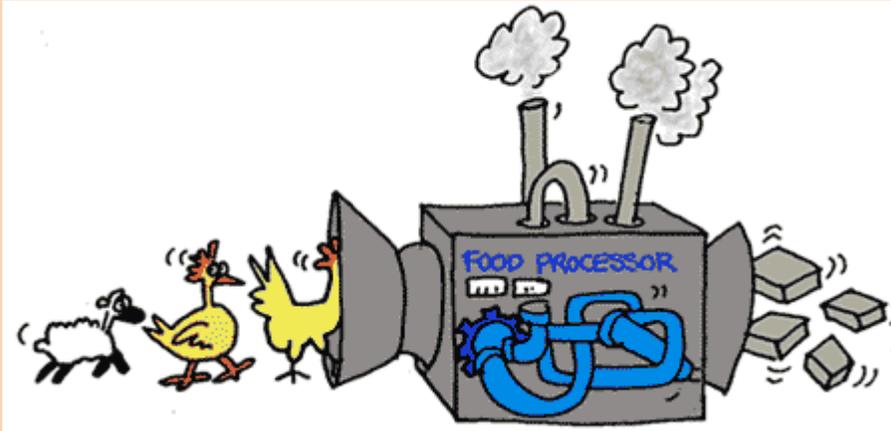


Farm animals make lots of pollution from their waste. Some of this gets into water supplies and, because animals like cows belch and fart (whoops sorry- rude word!) a lot of gas called methane, they can actually add to global warming. Methane is a very strong greenhouse gas, much stronger than  $CO_2$



Trucks and aero planes used by people to move food and drink around make a lot of smoke and gas (like  $CO_2$  and nitrogen oxides) pollution

Much of what you eat and drink gets messed around with in big factories to make what is called 'processed food'.



Often things are put into food to make it look good but which might be harmful to people: additives, colour and other yukky stuff. Some food like meat often gets contaminated with

nasty bugs called bacteria which can make people very sick or kill them.

Most things that you drink -- you know, things like soda -- are really just flavoured water. Every drink you gulp down comes in a can or plastic bottles which you then throw away meaning waste and more transport. Sugary drinks make you fat and spoil your teeth. Some of the flavourings and sugar substitutes may be harmful. Nobody really knows for sure.

**Don't worry though.** You and your friends and parents really can help to cut this pollution. I've got some great ideas for you at the end of my guide.

