

# Carbon cycle: where is this crucial carbon? (for pupils)

## Introduction

Carbon is the fundamental building block of life. It is contained by everything from fossil fuels to DNA. Despite being very important, carbon is in fact not the most abundant element on Earth. (The prize for abundance goes to silicon, which has a similar atomic structure and key chemical properties to carbon.) Carbon is cycled and re-cycled through the carbon cycle. Both animals and plants need it although they obtain it in different ways.

Note the answers to the questions below as the lesson progresses.

- Q 1. What do living things need in order to grow?
- Q 2. Where do plants get their food from?
- Q 3. Which plant matter did you see being burned? What was left over after each one was burned?
- Q 4. Where do animals get their food from?
- Q 5. Which animal matter did you see being burned? What was left over after each one burned?
- Q 6. What happens to food in the body?
- Q 7. Where did the carbon in all the objects you have seen burned come from originally?
- Q 8. What happens to carbon (in the carbon cycle)?