**What is air pollution?**

**Air pollution (say: po-loo-shun) occurs when gases, dust particles, fumes (or smoke) or odor are introduced into the atmosphere in a way that makes it harmful to humans, animals and plant**. This is because the air becomes dirty (contaminated or unclean).   The Earth is surrounded by a blanket of air (made up of various gases) called the atmosphere. The atmosphere helps protect the Earth and allow life to exist. Without it, we would be burned by the intense heat of the sun during the day or frozen by the very low temperatures at night.

Any additional gas, particles or odors that are introduced into the air (either by nature or human activity) to distort this natural balance and cause harm to living things can be called air pollution.

|  |
| --- |
| **What is Noise Pollution?**  Sound is essential to our daily lives, but **noise** is not. Noise is generally used as an unwanted sound, or sound which produces unpleasant effects and discomfort on the ears.  Sound becomes unwanted when it either interferes with normal activities such as sleeping, conversation, or disrupts or diminishes one’s quality of life. Not all noise can be called noise pollution. If it does not happen reqularly, it may be termed as ['Nuisance'](http://eschooltoday.com/pollution/noise-pollution/what-is-nuisance.html)  Scientists also believe that its not only humans who are affected. For example, water animals are subjected to noise by submarines and big ships on the ocean, and chain-saw operations by timber companies also create extreme noise to animals in the forests.  Generally, noise is produced by household gadgets, big trucks, vehicles and motorbikes on the road, jet planes and helicopters hovering over cites, loud speakers etc.  Noise (or sound) is measured in the units of decibels and is denoted by the dB.  Noise which is more than 115 dB is tolerant. The industrial limit of sound in the industries must be 75 dB according to the World Health Organization.  Noise is considered as environmental pollution, even though it is thought to have less damage on humans than water, air or land pollution. But people who are affected by severe noise pollution know that it is a massive issue that needs attention. |

**Light pollution. Is it a big deal?**

  It is very easy for anyone to see light pollution as not a big deal, because the effects are usually not the kind that is frightening to hear, such as those of water and air pollution. More so, it is the kind that people in the cities appreciate more, because light pollution, which is a fairly new concern, occurs more in cities than in very rural areas.   *"Light pollution is an increasing problem threatening astronomical facilities, ecologically sensitive habitats, all wildlife, our energy use as well as our human heritage"* —International Dark-Sky Association    Until the last few decades, humans could sit out at night and gaze into the sky's amazing glittering stars and lights from objects in outer space.  It is not so today. Now, the cities are covered with lights, from buildings, streets, commercial light displays, many of which direct the lights up into the sky and into many unwanted places. In England, for example, it is known that only about 10% of the geographical area enjoy truly dark skies. Humans are missing out on the fascinating night-sky view that used to offer us cultural and historical values.  This is not to suggest that lights are bad. People feel safer when dark areas are lit. In fact, people even travel from rural areas to big cities to enjoy light in the night.   The real issue is that we have become very wasteful, and apply lights to almost everything at night. Many of the lights we use are needless and cause more harm than good. In the next few pages, we will see the various kinds of light pollution and the real problems they bring, so that the subject of light pollution will be better appreciated.

|  |
| --- |
| **Types of land pollution.**  T  here are different types of land pollution. Many publications group them differently. Let us see these four main types:  **Solid Waste** These include all the various kinds of rubbish we make at home, school, hospitals, market and work places. Things like paper, plastic containers, bottles, cans, food and even used cars and broken electronic goods, broken furniture and hospital waste are all examples of solid waste. Some of these are biodegradable (meaning they easily rot or decay into organic matter). Examples include food droppings, paper products as well as vegetation (like grass and twigs). Others are not biodegradable, and they include plastics, metals and aluminum cans, broken computer and car parts.   Because these do not easily decay, they pile up in landfills (a place where all the city’s rubbish are sent), where they stay for thousands of years. These bring great harm to the land and people around it. [*See the complete lesson on WASTE here.*](http://www.eschooltoday.com/waste-recycling/waste-management-tips-for-kids.html)  **Pesticides and Fertilizers** Many farming activities engage in the application of fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides for higher crop yield. This is good because we get more food, but can you think of what happens to the chemicals that end up on the crops and soils? Sometimes, insects and small animals are killed and bigger animals that eat tiny animals (as in food chains) are also harmed. Finally, the chemicals may be washed down as it rains and over time, they end up in the water table below ([causes water pollution](http://eschooltoday.com/pollution/water-pollution/causes-of-water-pollution.html)).  **Chemicals** Chemical and nuclear power plants produce waste materials that have to be stored somewhere. Fertilizer, insecticides, pesticides, pharmaceuticals manufacturers also produce lots of solid and liquid waste. In many cases they are stored in an environmentally safe way, but there are some that find their way into landfills and other less safe storage facilities. Sometimes they also find their way into leaking pipes and gutters. They end up polluting soils and making crops harmful to our health.  **Deforestation** Humans depend on trees for many things including life. Trees absorb carbon dioxide ([a green house gas](http://www.eschooltoday.com/climate-change/climate-change-terminology.html)) from the air and enrich the air with Oxygen, which is needed for life. Trees provide wood for humans and a habitat to many land animals, insects and birds. Trees also, help replenish soils and help retain nutrients being washed away. Unfortunately, we have cut down millions of acres of tree for wood, construction, farming and mining purposes, and never planted new trees back. This is a type of land pollution. |