

**1** Read the text and match the headings to the paragraphs.

- 1 The History of Earth Day
- 2 Empowering and Educating
- 3 Earth Day: What's it All About?
- 4 Activities

# EARTH Day

APRIL 22



**A** In countries all around the globe, people celebrate Earth Day on 22nd April. But what is the purpose of this holiday? It's not just a day to appreciate the planet and its natural resources. It's also a chance to learn about the environmental issues our planet faces, and do what we can to put an end to them.

**B** You may think Earth Day has been celebrated for a very long time, but actually, the first Earth Day took place in 1970. Back then, it wasn't celebrated all over the world, either. It began in the USA when an American politician named Gaylord Nelson wanted to find a way to inform people about alarming levels of pollution in the USA. Around 60% of lakes and rivers were polluted at that time. He hoped that having a day to encourage people to protect the planet would make a difference, and he was right. Over 20 million people made a commitment to help the environment on the first Earth Day, and by 1990, 200 million people from 141 countries had joined the movement. By the year 2000, 500 million people in 184 countries had joined in, and today Earth Day is a truly global event.

**C** There are lots of things people do on Earth Day each year to make a difference. Some businesses and organisations work to spread awareness about pollution through fundraising events, advertisements and renewable resource programmes, so that people will change their habits. Many schools and universities encourage students to take part in Earth Day activities like tree planting, clean-up days and recycling programmes, too. But you don't need a group to do your part to protect the planet; each and every one of us can make small changes that make a difference.

**D** So, what better time to start sustainable practices than on Earth Day? In the words of environmental activist Wangari Maathai, "You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them." That's what Earth Day is all about!

**2** **ICT** Fact Hunt! In pairs, find the answers to the questions below.

## FACT HUNT

- 1 What are 'natural resources'? What are some examples?
- 2 Find examples of environmental problems the Earth faces. What are the solutions to these problems?
- 3 What are 'sustainable practices'? What are some examples?
- 4 Find an example of a 'green' company or organisation that has taken part in Earth Day programmes or events. What did they do?

## Did you know...?

The reason 22nd April was selected to be Earth Day was to encourage university students to participate. This is because it fell between the end of classes and the beginning of exams for most American universities.

**3** **ICT** In groups, collect information about Earth Day events in your country or another country. Present your findings to the class.