

Pollution



Air contains many gases, but two important ones are oxygen and carbon dioxide.



Animals use the oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. So plants and animals help each other to live and grow.



Plants take air into their leaves. They use the carbon in the carbon dioxide for food – the oxygen goes back into the air.



The fires did not burn cleanly; they produced a lot of smoke and soot.

People built factories, which burned coal or oil. New towns grew up around the factories, with shops, schools and houses for the workers. Everybody burned coal.



The soot from the smoke blackened the buildings in the towns, and many trees died



Hundreds of chimneys with dirty grey smoke coming out.

The sooty air made people cough. Every winter, many old people and children died from breathing problems. Every year were terrible fogs.



In the 1950s, new Clean Air laws in Britain said that people must not burn wood, or ordinary, “dirty” coal in their houses, but special, “clean” coal. And factories must have tall chimneys to send the smoke, gases and soot up into the sky and away from the town.





People cleaned the soot off their buildings – and they stayed clean. We can clean the smoke from factories and power stations, but it is very expensive.