£2-a-day cash boosts Amazon protection

LEVEL B2


Photo: Stephanie Morcinek / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. What would you do with an extra £2 a day?
2. How can money change how people use land or resources?
3. What schemes to protect forests do you know?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

pilot
a small test project to try an idea before using it widely

unconditional
given without rules or requirements attached

transfer
an amount of money moved from a payer to a person or account

reforestation
planting trees again in an area that lost its forest

migration
movement of people from one place to another to live or work

stewardship
care and responsible management of something valuable

biodiversity
the variety of plant and animal life in an area

deforestation
the cutting down or loss of forests

III. READING

A study by the University of Bath says a two-year pilot in Peru's Amazon helped protect forests. Run by UK charity Cool Earth, it gave an unconditional basic income to 211 people in three Asháninka communities.

Each participant received six cash transfers of 1,032 soles, roughly equal to £2 a day, and could spend the money as they wished. Researchers said almost 90% adopted greener practices: collective reforestation, restoring water sources, and less forest burning.

Food insecurity fell, with the share of households unable to afford nutritious food dropping from 73% to 26%. Migration also declined: the share forced to leave home for work fell from 43% to 18%. A voluntary "cash plus" strand added community-led education on finance, conservation and climate change.

Designed with local women's groups, the project is described as the first unconditional basic income for an Indigenous Amazon community. It highlights Indigenous stewardship of biomes that store carbon and shelter biodiversity.

Other academics warn that cash transfers can drive deforestation if they fund farm expansion or vehicles. The authors say wider research is needed.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Giving £2 a day to people in the Amazon...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who managed the pilot and which university analysed it?
2. How many people took part, and where were the communities?
3. How much did each participant receive and how often?
4. What practices did participants adopt to help the environment?
5. What cautions do other academics raise about cash transfers?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should conservation payments be unconditional or have conditions? Why?
2. Is £2 a day enough to change behaviour where you live? Explain.
3. What risks must programmes manage to avoid more deforestation?
4. Who should fund such schemes: governments, charities or companies?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Mixed conditionals

We use mixed conditionals to connect different times. If + had + past participle → present result: would + base (use “now”). If + past simple → past result: would have + past participle (use “last year/earlier”).

> *“If the pilot had failed, communities* **would struggle** *now.”*
>
> *“If cash were misused, some forests* **would have suffered** *earlier.”*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence using "would".

1. If the transfers had stopped, families (face) ___ hunger now. _____
2. If incomes were lower, many (leave) ___ home last year. _____
3. If farms had expanded, rivers (be) ___ at risk now. _____
4. If there were no training, few (adopt) ___ new habits last year. _____
5. If payments had been lower, households (buy) ___ less food now. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Stephanie Morcinek / Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension together, 8–10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: pilot, unconditional, transfer, reforestation, stewardship, deforestation, migration, biodiversity; show Peru/Amazon/Asháninka on a map.
- Run the reading as jigsaw pairs: A reads paragraph 1, B paragraph 2, then teach-back; sensitivity: the story involves Indigenous communities and poverty, so start discussion in pairs and invite answers about the news rather than personal finances.
- Differentiation: ask stronger students to compare the two percentage drops (73%→26%, 43%→18%) and explain their significance; support others with a prompt list of practices from the text.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Set up a quick vote, then pair students from different sides to justify their choice with one concrete reason.
2. Ask for a local example of daily costs, then compare £2 to that item; push for a short reasoned answer.
3. Board two risks from the text, then elicit one practical way to reduce each risk from pairs.
4. Split the room into three groups by funder; have each list one benefit and one drawback before sharing.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In two teams, write and deliver 2-minute statements for or against unconditional payments.

Writing: In pairs, draft a 70-word briefing summarising the pilot's results for a city newspaper.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Mixed conditionals

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

TEACHERS ONLY

These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.



Photo: Stephanie Morcinek / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who managed the pilot and which university analysed it?
   The charity Cool Earth managed it, and the University of Bath analysed it.
2. How many people took part, and where were the communities?
   Two hundred and eleven people in three Asháninka communities in Peru's Amazon.
3. How much did each participant receive and how often?
   Six transfers of 1,032 soles each, about £2 a day.
4. What practices did participants adopt to help the environment?
   Collective reforestation, restoring water sources and reducing forest burning.
5. What cautions do other academics raise about cash transfers?
   They may increase deforestation by funding farm expansion or vehicles.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence using "would".

1. If the transfers had stopped, families ___ hunger now. **would face**
2. If incomes were lower, many ___ home last year. **would have left**
3. If farms had expanded, rivers ___ at risk now. **would be**
4. If there were no training, few ___ new habits last year. **would have adopted**
5. If payments had been lower, households ___ less food now. **would buy**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: We use mixed conditionals to connect different times. If + had + past participle → present result: would + base (use "now"). If + past simple → past result: would have + past participle (use "last year/earlier"). (Examples constructed.)

> *"If the pilot had failed, communities* **would struggle** *now."*
>
> *"If cash were misused, some forests* **would have suffered** *earlier."*