Windermere plan for long sewage tunnel

LEVEL A2/B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. Have you ever visited a lake? What was it like?
2. What problems can water pollution cause for people?
3. How can local people help protect nature in their area?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

sewage
waste water from homes and businesses that must be treated

tunnel
a long passage built under the ground

pollution
dirty or harmful substances in the air, water or land

campaigner
a person who works publicly for a cause or change

rainfall
the amount of rain that falls in a place

permission
official agreement to do something

engineer
a person who designs or builds machines or structures

bill
a request for money you must pay for a service

III. READING

A major plan aims to protect Windermere, England's largest lake, from sewage. United Utilities, the Environment Agency and local campaigners support a new 12-mile (19km) tunnel to move sewage away from the lake.

Windermere has faced pollution from discharges, and people have been advised not to swim during toxic blue-green algal blooms. Heavier rainfall linked to the climate crisis can put more pressure on pipes. The £3.6bn project would carry treated waste to the River Leven or the Irish Sea at Ulverston.

The company says tunnelling will reduce disruption for local communities. If the government gives permission to raise charges, the work could finish within seven years, and engineers plan a detailed design phase first. United Utilities says the change could add about £3.17 a month to a water bill in 2035.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Giant tunnel proposed to tackle Windermere...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who supports the plan for the new tunnel?
2. Why have people been told not to swim in Windermere at times?
3. Where would the treated waste be released under the plan?
4. How much might the project add to a monthly water bill in 2035?
5. When could the project be finished if permission is given?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Is a tunnel a good way to cut lake pollution? Why or why not?
2. Should customers pay higher bills to fund big projects?
3. What problems happen if heavy rainfall hits old pipes?
4. How could campaigners raise awareness in your town?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Zero conditional

Use the zero conditional for general facts: If + present simple, present simple. It shows what always happens when something is true.

"If rainfall is heavy, the pipes **come under pressure**.*"*
"If algal blooms appear, officials **advise people not to swim**.*"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence in the zero conditional with the present simple.

1. If storms hit the area, pipes (leak) ___ more often. _____
2. If the water looks green, swimmers (stay) ___ on shore. _____
3. If charges rise, the water bill (go) ___ up. _____
4. If waste is treated, systems (carry) ___ it away. _____
5. If tunnelling cuts noise, locals (support) ___ plans. _____

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.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 8 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach place names (Windermere, Ulverston) and check students understand sewage, tunnel, and bill; use a photo of a lake to set the scene.
- Run a first reading for gist, then a second for details and numbers. The topic involves water quality and health; allow students to speak about the news rather than personal swimming experiences if they prefer.
- For differentiation, stronger students summarise the plan's steps in three sentences; others match numbers (12 miles, £3.6bn, £3.17, seven years) to their meanings.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. List quick pros and cons, then ask pairs to choose the best option and explain why.
2. Take a show of hands first, then pair students from opposite sides to justify their view.
3. Elicit local examples of heavy rain; guide answers to focus on pipes, drains and services.
4. Have groups plan one action and one message; push for a target audience and a channel.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In two teams, argue for or against raising bills to fund the tunnel; 8 minutes prep, 4-minute debate.

Writing: In pairs, write a 60-word public notice advising swimmers what to do during algal blooms.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Zero conditional

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

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who supports the plan for the new tunnel?
   United Utilities, the Environment Agency and local campaigners.
2. Why have people been told not to swim in Windermere at times?
   Because toxic blue-green algal blooms have made the water unsafe.
3. Where would the treated waste be released under the plan?
   Into the River Leven or the Irish Sea at Ulverston.
4. How much might the project add to a monthly water bill in 2035?
   About £3.17 a month.
5. When could the project be finished if permission is given?
   Within seven years.

V. DISCUSSION

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

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use the zero conditional for general facts: If + present simple, present simple. It shows what always happens when something is true. (Examples constructed.)

> *"If rainfall is heavy, the pipes* **come under pressure***."*
> *"If algal blooms appear, officials* **advise people not to swim***."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence in the zero conditional with the present simple.

1. If storms hit the area, pipes ___ more often. **leak**
2. If the water looks green, swimmers ___ on shore. **stay**
3. If charges rise, the water bill ___ up. **goes**
4. If waste is treated, systems ___ it away. **carry**
5. If tunnelling cuts noise, locals ___ plans. **support**