



Sustainability in business

Age range: 14-19

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Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
25 mins	By the end of this lesson students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand what it means to be a sustainable business.Know some key terms around sustainability.Identify the importance of net zero to a business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustainability in business student slides.Sustainability in business student worksheet (located at the end of this lesson plan).Sustainability in business case study.

This lesson has been created in collaboration with Barclays Eagle Labs, funded by the UK Government, as part of the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) Digital Growth Grant (DGG). The DGG aims to spur sustained and diverse growth within the UK tech sector. This lesson can be used as part of the [Enterprise project challenge](#) or separately, to approach the topics of entrepreneurship, using technology to be innovative and incorporating sustainability into business.



This lesson will introduce the topic of sustainability in business, and some of the things which businesses could consider when trying to be more sustainable. There is a particular focus on net zero. The below timings are a guide and can be extended if you have additional time available in your timetable.

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Activities	Time	Page
Activity one: Exploring sustainable terms	5 mins	3
Activity two: Being a sustainable business case study	10 mins	5
Activity three: What it means to be net zero	10 mins	5


Activity one

Exploring sustainable terms

1. Exploring sustainable terms

Definition of sustainability

Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present population without compromising future generation's ability to meet their needs.



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- To start the lesson and as a quick fire activity ask students to say in turn a word or term that they think relates to sustainability. Now show the definition of sustainability on **slide 2** 'sustainability is meeting the needs of the present population without compromising future generation's ability to meet their needs'.
- Highlight that when businesses are looking to be sustainable that they consider the impact on people's social wellbeing, the planet and caring for the environment as well as profit to ensure they can still be financially successful. It is about making choices that benefit the Earth, communities, and businesses for a better future.
- Explain to students that there are certain things that a business should understand and implement if they want to be more sustainable. Show **slides 3** with some key terms related to sustainability in business, give students a few minutes in small groups to match the definitions with the key terms of emissions, carbon neutral, net zero, CSR, goals etc, so they can understand what each one is, using the worksheet if preferable.
- Once students have decided which definition goes with which key term show **slide 4** with the correctly matched definitions on it.

Key terms

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Key term	Definition
Greenhouse gas emissions	A global to-do list created agreed upon by almost all countries worldwide to make the planet a better and more equal place by 2050. They cover goals like ending hunger, universal primary education, and protecting the environment for a brighter future.
Carbon neutral	Atmospheric gases including carbon dioxide, and methane. They trap more of the energy from the sun in the Earth's atmosphere causing it to warm.
Net zero	Is when a company integrates environment and social concerns into its business operations and interactions.
CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)	The way in which businesses respond to their stakeholders. All businesses are different and without a single net zero plan, things which affect a business's net zero plan can include to meet regulation, if their customers expect them to do it, if their competitors have already done it, if it helps motivate their workforce, and if they attract new customers by implementing it.
UN SDG (Sustainable Development Goals)	A term used to describe a situation where organisations have 'offset' or balanced out the amount of carbon they emit into the atmosphere through an equivalent amount of carbon reduction and/or savings elsewhere.
Net emissions	Means adding no more greenhouse gas emissions to the Earth's atmosphere than the amount taken out. Net zero is intended to help lessen climate-changing effects and limit global warming levels.

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Activity one

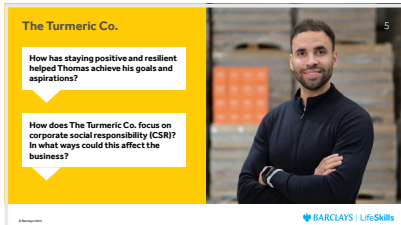
Exploring sustainable terms (cont'd)

Key terms	Definition
Greenhouse gas emissions	Atmospheric gases including carbon dioxide, and methane. They trap more of the energy from the sun in the Earth's atmosphere causing it to warm.
Carbon neutral	A term used to describe a situation where organisations have 'offset' or balanced out the amount of carbon they emit into the atmosphere through an equivalent amount of carbon reduction and/or savings elsewhere.
Net zero	Means adding no more greenhouse gas emissions to the Earth's atmosphere than the amount taken out. Net zero is intended to help lessen climate-changing effects and limit global warming levels.
CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)	Is when a company integrates environment and social concerns into its business operations and interactions.
UN 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)	A global to-do list created agreed upon by almost all countries worldwide to make the planet a better and more equal place by 2030. They cover goals like ending hunger, universal primary education, and protecting the environment for a brighter future.
Net zero plan	The way in which a business approaches moving towards net zero. All businesses are different and will have unique net zero plans, things which affect a business's net zero plan can include to meet regulation, if their customers expect them to do it, if their competitors have already done it, if will it help motivate their workforce, and if they attract new customers by implementing it.

Activity two

Being a sustainable business case study

1. The Turmeric Co.



- Either as a class or dividing students into groups ask them to read through the case study centred on The Turmeric Co. showing a founder whose business considers sustainability as part of its business model.
- Next, show **slide 5** showing the following questions and ask students to discuss. Come back as a class and ask if anyone would like to share their reflections.

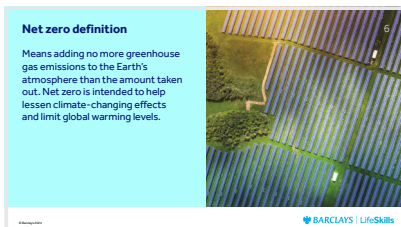
How has staying positive and resilient helped Thomas achieve his goals and aspirations?

How does The Turmeric Co. focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR)? In what ways could this affect the business?

Activity three

What it means to be net zero

1. Exploring emissions

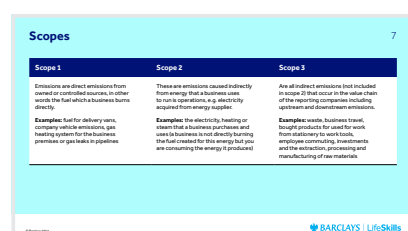


- Recap that there are different areas (social wellbeing, the environment, profit) to sustainability in business. Looking at considerations around the environment in particular businesses can do things such as recycling, investing in renewable energy sources and/ or introducing water saving measures. Explain that you are going to now explore a policy which falls into the planet pillar called 'net zero'. Let students know that the UK Government has made a commitment to achieving net zero but what does this mean for businesses?
- Show **slide 6** which recaps the definition of net zero. Explain that to help businesses understand emissions they can be split into three categories (known as scopes). Show **slide 7**, then go through the list of scopes (below) and ask students for an example activity of each one. If the students need a prompt then you can provide an example below or get them to think back and relate to The Turmeric Co.

Activity three

What it means to be net zero (cont'd)

Scope	Definition
Scope 1	<p>Emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources, in other words the fuel which a business burns directly.</p> <p>Examples: fuel for delivery vans, company vehicle emissions, gas heating system for the business premises or gas leaks in pipelines.</p>
Scope 2	<p>These are emissions caused indirectly from energy that a business uses to run its operations, e.g. electricity acquired from energy supplier.</p> <p>Examples: the electricity, heating or steam that a business purchases and uses (a business is not directly burning the fuel created for this energy but you are consuming the energy it produces).</p>
Scope 3	<p>All indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting companies including upstream and downstream emissions.</p> <p>Examples: waste, business travel, bought products for used for work from stationery to work tools, employee commuting, investments and the extraction, processing and manufacturing of raw materials.</p>



- Show **slide 7**. Emphasise that for scope 3 this covers everything from buying products from suppliers to how a customer uses its product. Because of this, scope 3 could be a large proportion of the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions a company generates, its carbon footprint, as it's every emission related to the business not just what it directly emits.
- Next, show **slide 8**. Explain to students that businesses can go through different stages on their journey which often starts with:
 - Identifying sources of emissions
 - Gathering data and calculating a carbon footprint

Summary

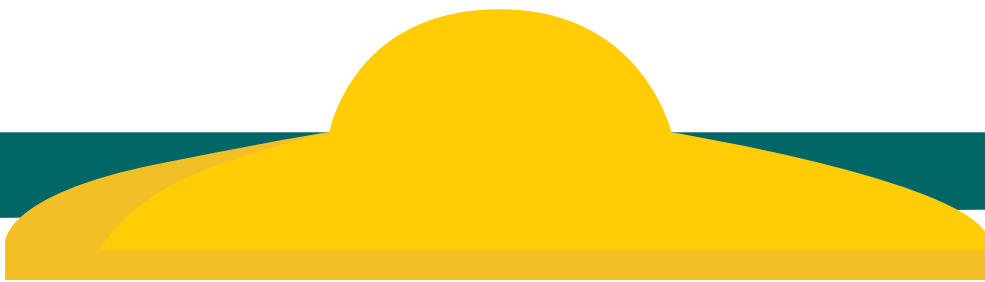
- To summarise, highlight that there are various ways that businesses can work towards being more sustainable and in lesson two students will explore why that can be important for customers. Ask the group if there is anything new that they have learnt from the session.
- Outline that there are different ways businesses can achieve their net zero targets, and while some can be achieved quickly, others will take much longer. Each business is different, they might do things in a different order and have different motivations around what to do first.



Sustainability in business

Exploring sustainable terms

Match the definitions with the key terms of emissions.

A yellow paper with a yellow paperclip is shown at the top of the table, as if it's holding the table in place.

Key terms	Definition
Greenhouse gas emissions	A global to-do list created agreed upon by almost all countries worldwide to make the planet a better and more equal place by 2030. They cover goals like ending hunger, universal primary education, and protecting the environment for a brighter future.
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Entrepreneur: Thomas Robson-Kanu

Business: [The Turmeric Co.](#)



What problem does this business solve?

Thomas suffered injury problems during his career as a professional footballer and struggled to find ways to manage his condition and play at the highest level without pain.

After a severe knee injury, he was keen to try something new to help his recovery. Thomas and his family did some research, and created their own blend of ingredients that they hoped would make a difference – including turmeric.

Six weeks after beginning his daily shots he reported his first days without pain, which he believed the shots had contributed to. Recovering from his injuries allowed him to go on to have a successful career including a famous goal for Wales at the European Championships.

Why was this business founded?

Thomas was passionate about the difference that his home-made turmeric blend had made in his career following his knee injury. Teammates, family and friends had soon started using his shots, and he wanted to make the benefits he had experienced available to help more people.

Thomas struggled to find a turmeric shot in the shops that worked for him. When he experienced that many off-the-shelf turmeric products didn't match the taste of his home-made recipe, he realised there was a **gap in the market** so decided to launch his own turmeric shots.

The Turmeric Co was his way of scaling up his home remedy (which he had been making with his family) and taking it to more consumers.

Why is corporate social responsibility and sustainability important to The Turmeric Co.?

"At The Turmeric Co., corporate social responsibility and a focus on sustainability aren't mere buzzwords; they're core principles informing the decisions they make. They believe in creating a positive impact beyond profit, ensuring each step they take contributes to better outcomes through more responsible sourcing and a focus on environmental stewardship, and social progress."

Entrepreneur: Thomas Robson-Kanu

Business: [The Turmeric Co.](#)

How does the The Turmeric Co. have a sustainability focus?

- Having a focus on being more sustainable is at the heart of the Turmeric Co's business and decision making.
- Their *Recycling Returns* initiative gives customers 3 easy, environmentally-conscious ways to return all their packaging back to the company for recycling.
- Technology enables them to generate returns labels with ease so that customers can return all delivery components for less fuss recycling.
- The process they use to preserve their natural ingredients means they need to use plastic bottles – but in keeping with their focus on sustainability, they consider the environment with the packaging used.
- They are 75% made from recycled plastic, and 25% from a fully recyclable, biodegradable plastic made from sugar cane. This avoids using fossil fuels to make the plastic, and also means even if a bottle is not recycled properly, it will still partially biodegrade.
- They are carbon neutral, offsetting their emissions with a project which uses renewable materials to help generate cleaner energy.
- They also partner with ambassadors who are passionate about sustainability, like British Windsurfing Champion Saskia Sills who has campaigned to reduce single-use plastics in the drinks industry.

What skills has Thomas used in his journey?

- **Aiming high (proactivity):** when you're setting an ambitious goal for your company's sustainability approach, Thomas needed to aim high and show **leadership** to set a vision and get everyone working towards it.
- **Adaptability:** it is important for entrepreneurs to be able to adapt in response to their customers. They have done this by selling direct to consumers online, which led to huge growth during the pandemic (with sales up 600%!) - but also adapting to the increased demand and growing their team from 11 to 45 people.
- **Staying positive (resilience):** As an entrepreneur, you must be resilient in the face of setbacks – just like Thomas was when he was overcoming injuries. When he wanted to bring his home-made blend to market, no manufacturer he found could match the fresh quality that they were achieving from his family kitchen. After being turned away by numerous production sites, Thomas decided to open a production line himself because he was determined to bring his product to market to share the benefits.

What is your advice for future entrepreneurs?

"The road to success is paved with resilience. There will be setbacks, but it's how you bounce back that defines you and your success. Embrace the challenges, learn from your mistakes, and never give up."