

# Plus or Minus 30

Roots & Shoots was founded by Dr Jane Goodall in 1991, so in 2021 we're celebrating our 30th birthday! We invite you to help us celebrate by looking back at how the world has changed for the better since 1991 and predicting what 2051 will bring.

## In this activity you and your students will:

- ▶ Research good news stories from the last 30 years.
- ▶ Make a newspaper with some of the good news stories.
- ▶ Make predictions about good news stories that will happen between now and 2051.
- ▶ Make a short video in the style of a news programme featuring your favourite predictions.

## Objectives

Students will learn about scientific breakthroughs, environmental wins and improvements in living conditions that have happened rela-

tively recently, fostering a sense of hope that good things can and are being achieved despite what they may see promoted around them in newspapers and on TV.

## What do I need to make it work?

For this activity, you'll need:

- ▶ Access to the internet to do research.
- ▶ Access to a computer to use a newspaper template (or you can print out a newspaper template and use it to work on paper).
- ▶ A smartphone or video camera to record their news programme.

## Step 1: Stepping Back in Time

Sometimes it feels like the newspapers and TV only bring us bad news, but there is a lot of good out there too! Let's step back in time and find some good news stories from the past 30 years...

In many ways the world was very different back in 1991. There were no smartphones, only 4 television stations in the UK and the very first web browser only put in an appearance in August of that year, making the world wide web and Roots & Shoots pretty much the same age.

Depending on the age of your students you can either set this task as a pure research task and see what they come back with or you can provide them with some good news stories and get them talking about what they mean for the world. Regardless of who is doing the research, thirty years worth of news is too much to sift through, so we recommend that you concentrate on the following topics when looking for your good news stories. We've included some examples to help you along:



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- ▶ **Science and technology discoveries.** Smithsonian Magazine has a good article here: [bit.ly/3mUWwOJ](https://bit.ly/3mUWwOJ) (gene editing and ebola treatments really caught our eye), but what about LED lightbulbs (see [bit.ly/33VsPpf](https://bit.ly/33VsPpf)), electric cars and affordable solar panels?
- ▶ **Environmental improvements.** Did you know that sulphur dioxide emissions in the US have decreased by over 88% in the last 30 years, and China's by 75% since 2007, massively reducing acid rain ([on.natgeo.com/3lTWK7h](https://on.natgeo.com/3lTWK7h))? Or that the city of Adelaide in Australia planted 3 million native trees and shrubs between 2003 and 2014?
- ▶ **Biodiversity improvements.** Wolves have been successfully reintroduced to Yellowstone in the US since 1996 with amazing improvements to biodiversity (there are some great video segments here: [bit.ly/39T7EaT](https://bit.ly/39T7EaT)) and recently reintroduced beavers built their first dam in Somerset in more than 400 years ([bit.ly/33VwZNT](https://bit.ly/33VwZNT))
- ▶ **Humanitarian good news.** There is a long way to go, but the number of people classified as living in extreme poverty has decreased from 36% of the world's population in 1990 to 9.9% in 2015 ([bit.ly/36SKD64](https://bit.ly/36SKD64)).

Your good news stories don't need to all be on the global scale, it would be great to look for some local good news stories too. For example, here is a good news story about improving the stream in a local park in Solihull by 'unstraightening' it and removing concrete slabs: [bit.ly/33VSMoq](https://bit.ly/33VSMoq)

## Step 2: Make a Newspaper

Now you've found your good news we need to tell people about it! Make a newspaper featuring your favourite good news stories.

There are lots of ways that you can create your newspaper, here are a few possibilities:

- **Online using flipsnack.** You can find lots of newspaper templates here: <https://www.flipsnack.com/templates/newspapers> and a basic account is free. The finished newspaper can be embedded in your school website or in a story on Roots & Shoots UK ([rootsnshoots.org.uk](https://rootsnshoots.org.uk)).
- **If you use Microsoft PowerPoint,** you can use one of the great free templates provided by Presentation Magazine here: [bit.ly/33Tz1hq](https://bit.ly/33Tz1hq)
- **Free Microsoft Word and PDF templates** to print out can be found courtesy of user oldham30 on TES here (free registration required): [bit.ly/37HXBD3](https://bit.ly/37HXBD3)

You'll probably want to include some pictures in your newspaper. Here are some good sources of free to use images:

- [pexels.com](https://pexels.com) is a great source of well photographed stock images that you can use
- [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org) has all sorts of images and may be a better source for an obscure picture
- [Search.creativecommons.org](https://search.creativecommons.org) helps you search images licensed under Creative Commons, similar to wikimedia



Photo by Masha Raymers from Pexels

If you are going to distribute your newspaper (e.g. on the school website or via [rootsnshoots.org.uk](https://rootsnshoots.org.uk)) please make sure that you include any required licence information for the images that you use.

## Step 3: Predicting the Future (no crystal ball required)

Hopefully all this good news has fired up your imagination! Time to think about some of the good news you think could happen in the next 30 years.

Here you could let your students' imaginations run totally wild or for a more structured approach you could split them into four groups and assign each group one of the topics 'Science and Technology', 'Environment', 'Biodiversity' and 'Humanitarian'.



Photo by Bogdan Dirică from Pexels

**Here are some prompts to help your students come up with ideas:**

- **Science and technology.** What developments might be driven by goals that we already have in 2021? For example, what does a future of solely electric cars look like? Will we master the art of clean fusion power? What about food technology - will we be able to convert most of the planet to meat substitutes?
- **Environment.** Can we succeed in reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Will the batteries we rely on become more eco-friendly, resulting in less pollution and less mining? Might we perfect a way to reduce plastic pollution in our oceans?
- **Biodiversity.** Can we reduce our land use and return more of the planet to the wild? How might that happen? Closer to home, what animals might we see reintroduced to the UK? Will there be lynx in Kielder Forest ([bit.ly/2VUqbM6](https://bit.ly/2VUqbM6))?
- **Humanitarian.** What projects might happen to improve people's lives around the globe? Could we see an expansion of fair trade goods? How might something like access to technology and microfinance ([bit.ly/3oAiFIO](https://bit.ly/3oAiFIO)) impact people currently living in poverty?

# Step 4: Record your Future News!

Now you've made your predictions you should record them to look back on in the future to see which ones came true! Let's make a short video news programme with one or two of your favourite predictions to share with friends and family.



Making a short video news programme is hard work but fun, and, unlike back in 1991, nowadays most people carry a smartphone in their pocket to record on.

The BBC's 'School Report' website has a whole host of resources on how to make a great news video and can be found at [https://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/teacher\\_resources](https://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/teacher_resources) (short link: [bbc.in/3qHkM9o](https://bbc.in/3qHkM9o)) - lessons 3 and 4 are particularly useful here.

"showtime! tv news for fifth graders" by woodleywonderworks is licensed under CC BY 2.0

## Want to help improve this activity?

This activity is a living document! Help us by editing this activity to make it as good as possible, just use this short link (just type it into your web browser's address bar): [bit.ly/3aFaQEX](https://bit.ly/3aFaQEX) – full instructions are provided. Any edits that can make this resource easier to use in the classroom or more applicable to life in the UK are very welcome, so please follow the link and make your contribution!

## Why not enter the Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots Awards?

This resource was provided by Roots & Shoots UK, a not for profit charity run by the Jane Goodall Institute (UK). One of the aims of Roots & Shoots is to inspire young people to care for people, animals and the environment, and one of the ways that we like to do this is by running annual awards.

Every school that uploads a story about their activities to the Roots & Shoots website [www.rootsnshoots.org.uk](http://www.rootsnshoots.org.uk) automatically wins a bronze award

certificate to display at school, and the best stories win the chance for you and your children to meet Dr Jane Goodall herself along with a host of other prizes.

See [www.rootsnshoots.org.uk/awards](http://www.rootsnshoots.org.uk/awards) for details about the awards and information on how to upload your 'mission update' story and win!

## Keep up to date with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots UK

You can find us on Facebook at [fb.com/RootsnShoots.org.uk](https://fb.com/RootsnShoots.org.uk), on Twitter (@JaneGoodallUK, direct link: [goo.gl/xTQnVm](https://goo.gl/xTQnVm)) and on Instagram (@janegoodalluk, direct link: [bit.ly/jgi-insta](https://bit.ly/jgi-insta)). Or why not sign up for our weekly email newsletter full of inspiring stories from our Roots & Shoots members in the UK at [rootsnshoots.org.uk/sign-me-up](http://rootsnshoots.org.uk/sign-me-up).

