
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Touring bands and climate change



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Rob

And I'm Rob.

Neil

I've been reading about ways to protect the environment, Rob, and I've decided to eat less meat. And maybe drive my car less too.

Rob

Good for you, Neil! And flying less can also help reduce air pollution.

Neil

Right. Flying and driving less are two good ways to combat climate change because they reduce your **carbon footprint** – that's the amount of carbon dioxide or CO2 released into the atmosphere as a result of your everyday activities.

Rob

The idea of reducing carbon emissions is catching on in the music industry too. Bands and artists who go on tour around the world generate large carbon footprints.

Neil

So recently some music groups like Massive Attack and Green Day started thinking about ways to reduce the impact their tours are having on the environment.

Rob

Ha! Green Day – what a good name for a band trying to be environmentally friendly!

Neil

Today we'll be finding out about bands and musicians who want to continue going on tour but do it in ways which reduce their environmental impact. And of course we'll be learning some related vocabulary on the way.

Rob

So, it seems like the days of rock and roll stars flying around the world in private jets may soon be a thing of the past.

Neil

Indeed, Rob, and that brings me neatly to my quiz question. One British band recently announced they would stop going on tour until they were 100% carbon neutral, but which band? Was it:

- a) The 1975
- b) The Rolling Stones, or
- c) Coldplay

Rob

Well, Coldplay had a hit with their song The Scientist, and we are talking about carbon dioxide and the climate, so I'll say c) Coldplay.

Neil

Good thinking, Rob! We'll find out the answer later. But first let's hear from another artist concerned about her carbon impact. Fay Milton is the drummer of the band Savages and co-founder of the climate pressure group Music Declares Emergency. She spoke to BBC Radio 4's programme You & Yours:

Fay Milton

This year I have actually **turned down** a tour. My income comes from touring so it has put me in a bit of a **precarious situation** but I actually feel quite good about it – it feels like **the right thing to do** in this moment.

Neil

Even though Fay earns a living as a drummer by going on tour, she has started to **turn them down** – meaning to reject or refuse the offer of touring.

Rob

Losing the income she usually gets from touring puts Fay in a **precarious situation** – a situation where things could become difficult, in this case financially difficult, because she isn't making money from playing the drums.

Neil

But she still wants to **do the right thing** – in other words, do what is most fair, ethical and just. For Fay, fighting climate change is even more important than doing what she loves – going on tour with the band.

Rob

Well, good for her! I'm not sure if I'd be so committed as Fay. But if bands stopped touring altogether, fans wouldn't get to see **gigs** – or live concerts and hear the music *they* love.

Neil

Well, that's an interesting point because it might be possible for bands to carry on touring and also reduce their environmental impact at the same time. Bristol band, Massive Attack, want to do exactly that. Their singer Robert Del Naja explains:

Robert Del Naja

We're working with an electric bus company. We're going to look at all the energy being renewable and obviously the power we can create will go back to **the grid**, so we're hoping we can actually create legacy green infrastructure which can then power future gigs. We plan to travel to Europe solely by train, with the band, the crew and all the gear.

Rob

Swapping tour planes for trains and encouraging fans to travel to gigs by bus are two good ways to reduce the total carbon footprint of the concert.

Neil

And by using renewable energy, the gig can create power. This can then be put back into the national grid, called **the grid** for short – the network supplying electrical power across the UK.

Rob

Well, Massive Attack are certainly ticking all the green boxes, Neil, but who else is doing a good job? Remember your quiz question earlier?

Neil

Ah, yes. I asked which band has decided to stop touring until their tours were carbon neutral and you said?

Rob

I said c) Coldplay.

Neil

And you were right! Are you a Coldplay fan, Rob? Just remember to leave your car at home the next time you go to their gig!

Rob

Right! Today, we've been looking at some of the ways music bands and artists are trying to fight climate change. They want to reduce their **carbon footprint** – the amount of carbon they release into the air.

Neil

Some musicians are starting to **turn down** – or refuse, long world tour dates because flying from country to country playing **gigs** – or live musical concerts, generates so much carbon dioxide.

Rob

Bands like Savages, Green Day and Massive Attack are trying to **do the right thing** – taking the most fair and ethical course of action, even though for some artists, the income lost from not touring puts them in a **precarious** – or difficult situation.

Neil

But when they get it right, bands can be carbon neutral or even generate power which can be put back into **the national grid** – the network supplying electrical power across a country.

Rob

All of which means we can 'keep on rocking' into the next century without increasing carbon emissions and adding to climate change.

Neil

So, Rob, you could say you were 'born to run'... on renewable energy!

Rob

Ha-ha! Very funny, Neil. That's all for today but remember to join us again soon for more topical discussions and vocabulary from 6 Minute English, here at BBC Learning English.

Neil

Thanks for listening and bye!

Rob

Bye.

VOCABULARY

carbon footprint

the amount of carbon dioxide or CO₂ released into the atmosphere as a result of your everyday activities.

turn down

reject or refuse an offer of something

a precarious situation

a situation where things could become difficult or dangerous

do the right thing

do what is most fair, ethical or just.

gig

live concert played by a music band

the (national) grid

the network supplying electrical power across a country