

Did you witness any of the events of Earth hour this year? There was a lot more participation this year from around the globe, than last year. 125 countries signed up to turn out some major (our) lights, and out of those countries, 56 national capitals were to turn off lights on buildings that have great significance. I saw some of the 'turning off' on my laptop the next day, and I was impressed at the scale of this organized event. It is a statement that people want action, and that we can become an organized group and do something good for the planet. Last year in December, there was a meeting in Copenhagen about climate change. Politicians joined in discussions, trying to agree about what can be done to reduce global warming and its effects. There were a lot of hopes that strong action could be taken in every country to reduce CO2 emissions, and to develop clean sources of energy. It's never that easy, is it. The U.S. and Europe have been the biggest polluters, and now China has caught up, and other developing nations like India. Development has to happen. Economies have to grow, and people's standards of living have to go up. It's only fair. The trick would be finding a cleaner way to do it all. So far, the political meetings, like the ones in Copenhagen and Kyoto, have been the first steps. But actions like Earth Hour show a public awareness, and a hope that we can all learn about what we can do as individuals. Watching the great monuments and symbols of nations turn their lights out was an inspiration. Yes, it saved energy as well. But more than that, it was a symbol of greater things that we can do in the future.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: participation, the scale, standard of living, public awareness.

1. There was a lot of participation in the local tree planting day.
2. The scale of the new buildings is enormous.
3. Since we are both working, our standard of living has gone up.
4. There should be more awareness about the pollution in the rivers.