CLASSROOM WORKSHEET

COP31 Draft Drops Fossil Fuel Wording as Talks Go Overtime

Environment · Nov 21, 2026 · 3 min read

NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____ SCORE _____ / 17



Europäische Kommission - Audiovisueller Dienst, Lukasz Kobus, Yügen, CE - Servic / Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 4.0)

1 Read

The number beside each paragraph helps you talk about it.

1 A new draft agreement at COP31 in Antalya, Turkey left out all language on phasing out coal, oil and gas. Diplomats from nearly 200 countries gathered for the summit but failed to reach a final deal on its scheduled closing night. Negotiations were expected to continue into the weekend after Friday evening passed without consensus. The US government did not send an official delegation. Instead, a group of American lawmakers, mayors and governors made the trip to represent US climate action. Germany and other nations pressed for an explicit commitment to ending fossil fuels. Developing countries called for clearer financial support to deal with climate impacts. Murat Kurum, Turkey's environment minister, told delegates that the world was waiting for good news from the negotiation room. A protester at the late-night plenary session shouted objections in English. He said 'you are killing the future' and drew applause from within the chamber. Ethiopia confirmed it will host COP32. Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos compared the COP process to a marathon and pledged to carry the baton into 2027. The IPCC's next round of multi-year climate assessments is on hold after countries including Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iran objected to the process.

Listen to this story
Scan the code or open the link for UK and US audio.
Open this story on newstoenglish.com

2 Key words

consensus /kən'sensəs/ *noun*
a general agreement reached by a group of people after discussion
The team reached a consensus on which project to prioritise next.

delegation /ˌdelɪ'geɪʃən/ *noun*
a group of people chosen to represent a country or organisation at a formal meeting
The delegation from Brazil arrived late because of flight delays.

explicit /ɪk'splɪsɪt/ *adjective*
stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion
The contract contains an explicit clause about data privacy.

pledge /pledʒ/ *verb*
to make a serious public promise to do something
Several donors pledged to increase their contributions before the deadline.

on hold /ɒn 'həʊld/ *idiom*
stopped or delayed, with no decision made yet
The hiring process is on hold until the budget is approved.

3 Grammar focus

Reporting what people said

said (that) + a statement, usually one tense back

Reported speech passes on someone's words without quoting them. The tense often shifts back (is becomes was, will becomes would), and pronouns and time words change to fit the new point of view.

1. Murat Kurum, Turkey's environment minister, told delegates that the world was waiting for good news from the negotiation room.
2. Ethiopia confirmed it will host COP32.

Who is speaking in each sentence, and what did they say?

4 Reading comprehension

EXERCISE 1 Understanding the Draft and the Talks

3 points

Read the passage and choose the best answer for each question.

1 What can be inferred about the draft agreement released during COP31?

(a) It included a clear timeline for ending fossil fuel use.
(b) It removed all references to phasing out coal, oil and gas.
(c) It focused exclusively on financial support for developing nations.
(d) It was widely supported by all delegates present.

2 Why is the US situation at COP31 notable compared to other countries?

(a) The US opposed all climate measures during the talks.
(b) The US sent a larger delegation than Germany.
(c) The US government did not send an official delegation; informal representatives attended instead.
(d) The US hosted a parallel event during the summit.

3 What does the comparison of the COP process to a marathon suggest?

(a) The talks are expected to last exactly 42 kilometres of discussion.
(b) The process is long, demanding and requires sustained effort.
(c) The host country decides the route of negotiations.
(d) Only one country wins the summit.

EXERCISE 2 Key Details from the Text

Answer each question in a short sentence using information from the text.

1 What did the draft agreement at COP31 remove from its text?

2 Who attended on behalf of the United States, and why is that unusual?

3 Why is the IPCC's next round of assessments on hold?

5 Vocabulary and grammar practice

EXERCISE 3 Passive Voice and Reporting in News Language

4 points

Complete each sentence with the correct verb form based on the information in the text. Pay attention to tense and voice.

1 A new draft agreement at COP31 _____ (leave out) all language on phasing out coal, oil and gas.

2 Negotiations _____ (expect) to continue into the weekend after Friday evening passed without consensus.

3 Murat Kurum told delegates that the world _____ (wait) for good news from the negotiation room.

4 The IPCC's next round of multi-year climate assessments _____ (put) on hold after countries objected to the process.

EXERCISE 4 Match the Words to Their Meanings

6 points

Match each vocabulary term from the lesson with its correct definition.

1 phase out _____

2 consensus _____

3 delegation _____

4 explicit _____

5 pledge _____

6 on hold _____

A to gradually stop using or supplying something over a period of time

B stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion

C a general agreement reached by a group after discussion

D a group of people chosen to represent a country or organisation at a formal meeting

E stopped or delayed, with no decision made yet

F to make a serious public promise to do something

EXERCISE 5 Put the sentences in order

4 points

These sentences are from the story. Put them in the order they appear.

A Negotiations were expected to continue into the weekend after Friday evening passed without consensus.

B Diplomats from nearly 200 countries gathered for the summit but failed to reach a final deal on its scheduled closing night.

C Instead, a group of American lawmakers, mayors and governors made the trip to represent US climate action.

D The US government did not send an official delegation.

Correct order: ____ ____ ____ ____

Answer key

For the teacher

Keep this page for yourself and copy only the pages before it. Short-answer and writing tasks list one possible answer.

Exercise 1 Understanding the Draft and the Talks

1. B. It removed all references to phasing out coal, oil and gas. The text states the draft 'left out all language on phasing out coal, oil and gas,' which directly supports option B.
2. C. The US government did not send an official delegation; informal representatives attended instead. The text explains that the US government 'did not send an official delegation' but a group of lawmakers, mayors and governors came instead.
3. B. The process is long, demanding and requires sustained effort. A marathon is associated with endurance and a long, difficult journey, implying the COP process requires patience and sustained effort over time.

Exercise 2 Key Details from the Text

1. The draft agreement removed all language on phasing out coal, oil and gas. The text states directly that the draft 'left out all language on phasing out coal, oil and gas.'
2. A group of American lawmakers, mayors and governors made the trip instead of an official government delegation. The text says 'The US government did not send an official delegation' and that informal representatives came instead.
3. It is on hold after countries including Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iran objected to the process. The text states the IPCC's next round is on hold 'after countries including Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iran objected to the process.'

Exercise 3 Passive Voice and Reporting in News Language

1. was left out The passive form is needed here because the draft agreement is the receiver of the action. 'Was left out' (past simple passive) or 'has been left out' (present perfect passive) are both acceptable in news reporting.
2. were expected Passive voice is required because 'negotiations' receive the action of being expected. The past simple passive 'were expected' matches the reported past situation.
3. was waiting This is reported speech. The original direct speech 'the world is waiting' becomes past continuous 'was waiting' after the reporting verb 'told' in the past.
4. is put Present simple passive 'is put' or 'is currently put' works for a present state reported in news. The text uses 'is on hold' which functions similarly as a passive-like state.

Exercise 4 Match the Words to Their Meanings

1. A. to gradually stop using or supplying something over a period of time
2. C. a general agreement reached by a group after discussion
3. D. a group of people chosen to represent a country or organisation at a formal meeting
4. B. stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion
5. F. to make a serious public promise to do something
6. E. stopped or delayed, with no decision made yet

Exercise 5 Put the sentences in order

B, A, D, C Diplomats from nearly 200 countries gathered for the summit but failed to reach a final deal on its scheduled closing night. Negotiations were expected to continue into the weekend after Friday evening passed without consensus. The US government did not send an official delegation. Instead, a group of American lawmakers, mayors and governors made the trip to represent US climate action.