

6.1

What's Happening?

Background Information

The 1970s were called the "Environmental Decade." Many people were very concerned about environmental issues ranging from air pollution to overpopulation. The concern of the people resulted in legislation intended to address the multitude of environmental problems facing us. Some of the legislation included:

- The National Environmental Policy Act
- The Clean Air Act
- The Endangered Species Act
- The Safe Drinking and Water Act
- The Toxic Substances Control Act



States established various environmental agencies and offices. The federal government established the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy. The Atomic Energy Commission was reorganized into the Nuclear Regulation Commission and the Energy Research and Development Administration within the Department of Energy.

In the 1980s, many people, both in and out of government, turned their attention away from environmental issues. Some thought that the measures taken in the 1970s had taken care of the problems. Some became involved in other issues. Others became frustrated because the solutions were not simple or the results didn't come about fast enough. Still others became disenchanted when they found that some measures taken to protect the environment resulted in problems of their own, such as increased costs, less convenience, and even the loss of some jobs.

Now we find that the environmental problems of the 1970s are still unsolved. In fact, many problems, such as overpopulation, are even greater than before. As we have learned about environmental issues, we have found that there are few easy solutions to the problems. Every issue has more than one side. We cannot, however, ignore the problems or leave them to the "experts."

It is imperative that every one of us learn about what is happening in our environment now. Why? Because we are directly affected by our environment. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the energy we use are all affected by environmental influences. We, in turn, affect our environment, sometimes in harmful ways and sometimes in helpful ways. Only by becoming informed of environmental issues can we make wise choices in our daily lives.

By becoming more informed, most of us also become more concerned about environmental issues. When we become more concerned, many of us want to become involved in working toward improving our environment. As we work toward a better environment, we become even more informed. Thus, learning about environmental issues gives us the exciting opportunity and ability to work toward solutions.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

6.2

Your teacher will tell you how many articles you are to do current events reports about, how frequently they are to be done, and what is expected in the report.

Record the details of your assignment below. Be sure to ask questions if anything is not clear.

1. Due date(s): _____

2. What I am to do: _____

Type(s) of articles: _____

Number: _____

How to do the reports: _____

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Article Cover Sheet

Article title: _____ Topic: _____

Attach this cover sheet to a copy of the article or to the article itself if the publication belongs to you and you want to cut it out. (Don't damage library publications!) If it is about a television or radio program, give the title, channel, network, time, and date of broadcast. If it is from the Internet, print it and be sure to include the URL.

Publication: _____
Name Date Page or URL

Source: ☐ Home ☐ School library ☐ _____ Library ☐ Internet ☐ Other _____

Summary of the article (who, what, when, where, why, and so on): _____

My opinions and reaction to the article: _____

How this affects me; what I can do: _____

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Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Article Cover Sheet

Article title: _____ Topic: _____

Attach this cover sheet to a copy of the article or to the article itself if the publication belongs to you and you want to cut it out. (Don't damage library publications!) If it is about a television or radio program, give the title, channel, network, time, and date of broadcast. If it is from the Internet, print it and be sure to include the URL.

Publication: _____
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Source: ☐ Home ☐ School library ☐ _____ Library ☐ Internet ☐ Other _____

Summary of the article (who, what, when, where, why, and so on): _____

My opinions and reaction to the article: _____

How this affects me; what I can do: _____

6.3

What's Happening? Questions

1. Are general news publications unbiased in their reporting? Should they be? Discuss.

2. Are environmental organizations' publications unbiased? Should they be? Discuss.

3. Do most of the articles about environmental problems suggest solutions? Should they? Discuss.

4. Even "experts" frequently disagree. If opposite sides of an environmental issue both seem to have good arguments and believable "experts" supporting them, how would you decide on which side to base your actions?

5. Do the general news publications and broadcast media seem to go into depth, or do they just do superficial coverage of environmental issues? If they do superficial coverage, what can one do to find out more?

6. Discuss the idea that understanding leads to concern, which leads to involvement, which leads to more understanding, which leads to more concern, and so on.

7. There is a story that when ostriches see predators approaching, they hide their heads in the sand because they think that if they don't see the predator it won't hurt them. Some people seem to take the attitude that "What I don't know won't hurt me" with regard to environmental issues. What do you think of this?

8. Discuss the idea of "Think globally, act locally."
