

## 22. “Protecting the Environment Part II”

by Core Knowledge Staff

Protecting the environment means efficiently using resources and doing our best not to waste them. How can you help do that? Let’s first think about renewable resources like water and air. Both water and air are renewable, having been cycled through Earth’s atmosphere again and again for many, many years. But pollution makes even these renewable resources more difficult to use. You can help keep our air and water clean by making sure you work hard not to pollute them.

Let’s start with water. You know that Earth is covered mostly by water, so it is hard to imagine that we could ever run out of it. But most of that water is salty, and we can’t drink it, nor can our crops. However, humans have found ways of tapping into the aquifers. Aquifers are natural underground areas containing fresh water. These aquifers help satisfy the needs of Earth’s growing number of people. Even with these aquifers, however, it is possible that we could run out of usable water. Here are a few easy ways that you can help conserve water: Take shorter showers. Turn the faucet off when you are brushing your teeth. Make sure you have a full load of laundry when you wash clothes. Place a brick in the toilet tank so that it uses less water to flush. Recycle water by collecting rainwater in a garden barrel.

Litter is another pollutant. Litter is not only unattractive, but it can also be dangerous. For example, to sea turtles and other animals, plastic bags bobbing on the surface of the water look a lot like jellyfish that they want to eat. Once eaten, the plastic bags cannot be digested, and animals often die. Cigarette butts thrown on the ground can leach dangerous chemicals into the soil. So, what can you do to prevent litter? The easiest step is not to litter! You can also organize a litter brigade, collecting litter along the streets and waterways of your community.

Chemicals pollute our rivers and streams. Sometimes people pour grease down the drain. Other times, people flush medicines or pesticides down their toilets. Both of these things can pollute our drinking water. Where does your family dispose of old paints, car oil, weed killers, and leftover cleaning products? Your city might provide you with important information about where you can get rid of these products in a safe way. Find out and encourage your parents to find safer ways to dispose of dangerous waste. None of these substances should end up in our water. You can also use cleaners and products that are not harmful to the environment.

**Word Count: 436**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Questions

### “Protecting the Environment Part II”

*Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:*

1. **Literal** How can you conserve water?
  - » take shorter showers; turn the faucet off when you are brushing your teeth; make sure you have a full load of laundry when you wash clothes; place a brick in the toilet tank so that it uses less water to flush; recycle water by collecting rainwater in a garden barrel
2. **Literal** How can litter be dangerous?
  - » animals can eat it and die; litter like cigarette butts can leach dangerous chemicals into the soil
3. **Inferential** How can you keep chemicals out of rivers and streams?
  - » dispose of dangerous waste in safe ways; use cleaners and products that are not harmful to the environment