

# Human Impact on Earth

By Patti Hutchison

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<sup>1</sup> Land, water, air. Our lives depend upon them. The Earth has generously given us these resources for millions of years. Since humans evolved, our population has grown rapidly. We have used and abused our Earth.



<sup>2</sup> Humans have had a serious impact on the land. We use it to grow crops to feed our growing population. We also use it to provide energy. Each year one person in North America uses resources equal to over 12 acres of land!

<sup>3</sup> One of the largest impacts humans have had on the earth is the mining of mineral resources. Almost everything we use is made of metals and other land resources. We use copper to make wires that carry our electricity. We use sand and gravel to pave our roads. Many of our appliances are made of aluminum and other metals.

<sup>4</sup> The extraction of all these resources takes a toll on the Earth. Large amounts of soil and rock need to be moved. The landscape is completely changed. Topsoil is lost. Ecosystems are disturbed.

<sup>5</sup> Farming disrupts the natural ecosystems that exist on earth. Chemicals are used to kill pests such as insects and weeds. These chemicals can harm plants and animals that are good for the environment. When fields are plowed, topsoil is lost. It can take thousands of years for it to form again.

<sup>6</sup> Forests are often cut down. They provide wood for building and heat. Forests are also cleared to make more land for farming. This also causes loss of precious topsoil. Many species of animals are left homeless. Many forests have been cleared to build cities. Another negative impact from this is a huge amount of solid waste. This waste pollutes more of our precious land.

<sup>7</sup> Humans also depend on water. We drink it. We bathe in it. We cook with it. We irrigate crops with it. Industries use it to cool heavy machines. We couldn't live without water. However, we take it for granted.

<sup>8</sup> Human activities pollute our precious water supplies. Toxins leak from landfills, septic systems, and other sources. They can seep into the groundwater. Road salts and fertilizers cause pollution. Once the groundwater is polluted, it is very hard to clean up. It can become unusable.

<sup>9</sup> Even though the ocean is huge, it can still become polluted. Coastal areas are often harmed. Sewage water is a major source of pollution in these areas. It causes too much bacteria to be produced. The bacteria use up all the oxygen in the water, killing fish and other marine animals.

<sup>10</sup> Humans and other animals depend on the air we breathe. Yet human activities pollute the air we need to survive. Exhaust from automobiles produces smog. The smoke coming from industrial smoke stacks puts particle matter into the air. These pollutants cause breathing difficulties and lung diseases.

<sup>11</sup> Human activities are also causing the ozone layer to become thinner. This layer absorbs a lot of the harmful rays of the sun. This thinning will lead to eye damage and cancer in humans. Crop yields will be reduced.

<sup>12</sup> Coal burning power plants produce electricity we have come to depend on. These power plants put harmful chemicals into the air. They cause acid precipitation. This has a negative effect on plants and soil.

<sup>13</sup> Air pollution is not a problem of just one country. It is a global problem. The air above us does not stay in one place. Winds carry air all over the Earth. Air pollution is a growing concern.

<sup>14</sup> The Earth has taken care of us for many years. It has given us the land, water, and air we need to live, work, and play. It is time we started taking care of our Earth. One person can make a difference. Find out what you can do to help reduce pollution.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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<p>1. Each year, one person in North America uses resources equal to how much land?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A 12 acres</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B 120 acres</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C 12 miles</p>	<p>2. Groundwater that is polluted is easily cleaned up.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>
<p>3. A major source of pollution in the coastal areas of the ocean is:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Sewage water</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Loss of topsoil</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Coal</p>	<p>4. Many lung diseases are caused by:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Cutting down forests</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Water pollution</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Air pollution</p>
<p>5. Chemicals put in the air by coal burning power plants cause:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Acid precipitation</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Loss of topsoil</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Sewage water</p>	
<p>6. Name two ways farming has a negative impact on the land.</p>	