Name _____ Date _____

CHAPTER 24

Section 4

GUIDED READING *Environmental Activism*

A. As you read about the nation's efforts to address environmental problems, take notes to describe how American attitudes were affected by each event or how the event affected the environment itself.

Events	Effects on Attitudes or Environment
1. Publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* →	
2. Celebration of Earth Day →	
3. Creation of the Environmental Protection Agency →	
4. Passage of the new Clean Air Act →	
5. Passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act →	
6. Nuclear accident at Three Mile Island →	

B. On the back of this paper, define **environmentalist.**

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SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE # *Analyzing Assumptions and Biases*

Time magazine declared the environment the "Issue of the Year" for 1970. Read this excerpt from Time's article on the environment. Then fill out the form to help you analyze the article's underlying assumptions. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. R15.)

The astonishing achievement of the year," says Ecologist Lamont Cole of Cornell, "is that people are finally aware of the size of the problem." They can hardly avoid it. In 1970, the cause that once concerned lonely crusaders like Rachel Carson became a national issue that at times verged on a national obsession: it appealed even to people normally enraged by attacks on the status quo. With remarkable rapidity it became a tenet in the American credo, at least partially uniting disparate public figures ranging from Cesar Chavez to Barry Goldwater and New York's conservative Senator-elect James Buckley.

At the root of this phenomenon were the dire warnings of ecologists that man's heedless outpouring of noxious wastes is overwhelming the biosphere's ability to cleanse itself. . . .

For its part, the U.S. faced hard choices between ecology and economics. President Nixon set the pattern for official action: a zigzag between environmental reforms and worries about the [economic] recession. He supported the SST [a supersonic aircraft that many felt would harm the environment], partly to help save 20,000 aerospace jobs, and he ordered more timbering in national forests despite objections of environmentalists and Congressmen. To soothe oil producers, he opened up 543,897 acres in the oil-polluted Gulf of Mexico for oil exploration and drilling.

Conservationists winced when Nixon fired Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel for his abrasive style and disagreement with Administration policies. Hickel had become the unexpected hero of episodes like the battle to halt a jetport that endangered Florida's Everglades National Park. . . .

In firing Hickel, though, Nixon replaced him with a potentially tougher law enforcer: the new Environmental Protection Agency under William Ruckelshaus. Nixon also named Russell Train, a respected conservationist, to head the Council on Environmental Quality. He proposed an international treaty to control development of the ocean floors, and signed a bill making oil polluters liable for damage.

from *Time* (January 4, 1971), p. 21.

Assumption about pollution:	
This assumption is **directly stated** or **implied** (circle one).	It is based on **evidence** or **bias** (circle one).

Assumption about Nixon's policies:	
This assumption is **directly stated** or **implied** (circle one).	It is based on **evidence** or **bias** (circle one).

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RETEACHING ACTIVITY *Environmental Activism*

Matching

A. Match the description in the second column with term in the first column. Write the appropriate letter next to the word.

_____ 1. Rachel Carson	a. yearly celebration of the environment
_____ 2. environmentalist	b. site of nuclear disaster 1979
_____ 3. DDT	c. wrote Silent Spring
_____ 4. Three Mile Island	d. site of significant oil discovery in 1968
_____ 5. Earth Day	e. controversial pesticide outlawed in 1972
_____ 6. Alaska	f. one who works to protect the environment

Evaluating

B. Write *T* in the blank if the statement is true. If the statement is false, write *F* in the blank and then write the corrected statement on the line below.

_____ 1. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act gave Alaska's native tribes millions of dollars in return their land to be used for oil drilling.

_____

_____ 2. During the entire crisis at Three Mile Island, radiation never actually leaked from the reactor.

_____

_____ 3. As a result of the accident at Three Mile Island, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission strengthened its safety standards and improved its inspection procedures.

_____

_____ 4. Americans still celebrate Earth Day each year on September 22.

_____

_____ 5. The publication of Silent Spring in 1962 prompted the Kennedy administration to establish a committee to investigate the use of pesticides.

_____

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PRIMARY SOURCE *from* ***Love Canal: My Story***
by Lois Gibbs

After discovering that her son's elementary school was built over a toxic waste dump, Lois Gibbs went door-to-door with a petition to see if other parents felt as angry as she did. Read this excerpt to find out about Gibbs's gradual awareness of the environmental crisis brewing in her own backyard.

As I proceeded down 99th Street, I developed a set speech. I would tell people what I wanted. But the speech wasn't all that necessary. It seemed as though every home on 99th Street had someone with an illness. One family had a young daughter with arthritis. They couldn't understand why she had it at her age. Another daughter had had a miscarriage. The father, still a fairly young man, had had a heart attack. I went to the next house, and there, people would tell me their troubles. People were reaching out; they were telling me their troubles in hopes I would do something. But I didn't know anything to do. I was also confused. I just wanted to stop children from going to that school. Now look at all those other health problems! Maybe they were related to the canal. But even if they were, what could I do?

As I continued going door-to-door, I heard more. The more I heard, the more frightened I became. This problem involved much more than the 99th Street School. The entire community seemed to be sick! Then I remembered my own neighbors. One who lived on the left of my husband and me was suffering from severe migraines and had been hospitalized three or four times that year. Her daughter had kidney problems and bleeding. A woman on the other side of us had gastrointestinal problems. A man in the next house down was dying of lung cancer and he didn't even work in industry. The man across the street had just had lung surgery. I thought about Michael; maybe there was more to it than just the school. I didn't understand how chemicals could get all the way over to 101st Street from 99th; but the more I thought about it, the more frightened I became—for my family and for the whole neighborhood. . . .

I continued to go door-to-door. I was becoming more worried because of the many families with children who had birth defects. Then I learned something even more frightening: there had been five crib deaths within a few short blocks.

I was still getting people's cooperation and interest, but I was soon to learn that not everyone felt the same way I did. The woman on 97th Street who had done some organizing never provided any help. We never argued; in fact, she never said anything. One day, while I was knocking on doors, I noticed her riding on her bicycle. She seemed to be watching me. I was both puzzled and intimidated mainly because my self-confidence wasn't yet all that high. I thought we had a common problem, that we should be working together. But she had tried to organize the neighborhood; therefore, it was her neighborhood, her territory. Maybe she felt I was stepping on her toes.

I finally got up my courage and walked over. "Hi," I said. She was in front of her house. A tree in the front yard was wilted. It looked sick, as though it were dying. We stood in the yard and talked. She told me she couldn't use her backyard, that everything there was dead. She asked what I was doing, and I told her. Her voice suddenly turned cold. She warned me about rocking the boat, telling me not to make waves. She had already taken care of the problem. She had been working hard, talking to a number of politicians, and she didn't want me to undo what she had done.

I was taken aback. I explained that I didn't want to "undo" anything, that I wanted to work *with* her. It was a very hot day. . . . There we were, standing in the hot sun, with the only shade coming from a dying tree, and she was telling me how everything was all right. I didn't know what to think. I had to go home and figure this out. I went home, but not because I was frightened. I just needed time to think, to figure out what was happening.

from Lois Marie Gibbs, *Love Canal: My Story* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 15–17.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Gibbs's neighbors respond to her when she went door-to-door with a petition?
2. What different health problems did Gibbs's neighbors experience?

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PRIMARY SOURCE *from* ***Silent Spring***
by Rachel Carson

Biologist Rachel Carson spent four and a half years gathering data. In* Silent Spring, *she explained how pesticides affect the delicate balance of nature.

The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been molded by the environment. Considering the whole span of earthly time, the opposite effect, in which life actually modifies its surroundings, has been relatively slight. Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species—man—acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world.

During the past quarter century this power has not only increased to one of disturbing magnitude but it has changed in character. The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. In this now universal contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister and little-recognized partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world—the very nature of its life. . . . Chemicals sprayed on croplands or forests or gardens lie long in soil, entering into living organisms, passing from one to another in a chain of poisoning and death. Or they pass mysteriously by underground streams until they emerge and, through the alchemy of air and sunlight, combine into new forms that kill vegetation, sicken cattle, and work unknown harm on those who drink from once pure wells. As Albert Schweitzer has said, "Man can hardly even recognize the devils of his own creation."

It took hundreds of millions of years to produce the life that now inhabits the earth—eons of time in which that developing and evolving and diversifying life reached a state of adjustment and balance with its surroundings. The environment, rigorously shaping and directing the life it supported, contained elements that were hostile as well as supporting. Certain rocks gave out dangerous radiation; even within the light of the sun, from which all life draws its energy, there were short-wave radiations with power to injure. Given time—time not in years but in millennia—life adjusts, and a balance has been reached. For time is the essential ingredient; but in the modern world there is no time.

The rapidity of change and the speed with which new situations are created follow the impetuous and heedless pace of man rather than the deliberate pace of nature. . . . The chemicals to which life is asked to make its adjustment are no longer merely the calcium and silica and copper and all the rest of the minerals washed out of the rocks and carried in rivers to the sea; they are the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature.

To adjust to these chemicals would require time on the scale that is nature's; it would require not merely the years of a man's life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream; almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. . . .

These sprays, dusts, and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests, and homes—nonselective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the "good" and the "bad," to still the song of birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film, and to linger on in soil—all this though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects. Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called "insecticides," but "biocides."

from Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 5–8.

Research Options

1. Find out about pesticides that are currently in use in the United States.
2. Find out about alternatives to pesticide use in controlling insects and rodents.