

Environmental Issues CLOZE Notes I

WATER POLLUTION & UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION

Africa & Water

- Water has always been vital to Africa.
- The oceans, rivers, & seas that surround and run through Africa have allowed Africans to engage in trade and to have access to the outside world.
- The interactions around these bodies of water have enabled certain cities to become thriving centers of commerce.

Limited Supply

- Countries with large river systems have enough water for farming and for people in villages, towns, and cities.
- Unfortunately, the majority of Africa has trouble getting enough water for people to survive.
- Most African countries have very little clean water for drinking and washing.

Walk to Water

- People who live in rural areas of Africa typically don't have running water or plumbing in their homes.
- Women and children must walk several miles to gather it from a water source.
- This has caused serious economic problems for many African countries.

Poverty

- Because fetching water is so time-consuming, women are unable to work and children don't have time to go to school.
- Lack of education and employment leads to a low GDP and slow economic growth.
- Many Africans cannot escape the circle of poverty.

Drought

- Droughts (long periods of very little rainfall) have hurt many parts of Africa.
- When the rains do not come, crops wither away and livestock die.
- People who live in areas affected by drought often face famine and begin to die of starvation.

Environmental Issues CLOZE Notes 2

Pollution

- Many countries in Africa do not have enough clean water, even the ones that have large rivers.
- African countries have the problem of increasing pollution from factories and contamination from animals & human waste.
- Industries also contribute to the problem by dumping toxic mining chemicals and industrial wastes into the waters.

Diseases

- Clean water is needed for basic health and sanitation.
- Lack of clean water to wash with increases the frequency of skin and eye infections.
- People who are not able to have access to clean water are at risk for many water-borne diseases that spread by parasites living in standing water.
- Millions of Africans are hospitalized yearly from ingesting unsafe water.
- Sick people are unable to work, with negatively impacts the economy.
- Also, unclean drinking water is a leading cause of death for thousands of children in Africa.

Industries

- Local industries that depend on water sources for their livelihood have been devastated by water pollution.
- Water pollution either kills fish or makes them unsafe to eat.
- It can also kill livestock, which destroys the livelihood of herders and traders.

Clean Up

- Overpopulation and poor sanitation regulations have made life along Africa's water sources difficult.
- Some countries in Africa have tried to improve their economies by building factories.
- Unfortunately, government officials often ignore the industrial wastes that are being flushed into rivers and streams as long as the factories are profitable.

Environmental Issues CLOZE Notes 3

DEFORESTATION

- As Africa's population increases and nations try to develop economically, deforestation has become a growing concern.
- Deforestation is the process of forests being destroyed to make way for human development.
- Deforestation is a major issue in many African nations.

Logging

- A main cause of deforestation in Africa today is commercial logging.
- The timber is exported all over the world and helps boost the economy of many African countries.
- Unfortunately, the environment is destroyed as a result.

Population

- Another reason Africans are cutting down so many trees is population growth.
- In the last 50 years, Africa's population has tripled to over 1.2 billion people.
- Cities have grown and have cleared large areas of forests for housing.

Rainforest

- Many of the rainforests that once ran from Guinea to Cameroon are already gone.
- Nigeria is losing its rainforests at the fastest rate.
- The United Nations estimates that Nigeria has now lost about 55 percent of its original forests to logging, clearing land for farming, and cutting trees to use as fuel.

Effects

- As the number of trees shrinks, so does the amount of oxygen produced.
- Meanwhile, the amount of harmful carbon dioxide in the air increases.
- Less rainforests could also mean fewer medicines.
- About one-fourth of all medicines people use come from rainforest plants.
- Deforestation also leads to extinction of species of both plants and animals.
- Crops grow best in topsoil, a nutrient-rich layer of dirt.
- When trees are cut down, there is nothing to hold the topsoil in place.
- The wind and rain carry away the important nutrients, and the land eventually loses the nutrients necessary for growing crops.
- The sun bakes the exposed soil into hard clay, which leads to desertification.

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DESERTIFICATION

- The Sahel is one part of Africa that is experiencing severe problems with desertification, the process of the desert expanding into areas that had formerly been farmland.
- As the land is overused, the soil becomes poor and powdery.
- The winds coming from the Sahara gradually blow the dry topsoil away, leaving a barren and rocky land that loses its ability to hold water.

Growing Desert

- A majority of the desertification is the result of the actions of people rather than climate.
- Desertification in Africa is caused by:
 - Poor farming practices.
 - People cutting down the trees that help hold the soil in place.
 - Animals being allowed to graze too heavily in an area and stripping all of the vegetation from the soil.
 - Draining the surface & underground water for industrial & home use.

Effects

- The survival needs of the people living there are clear, but they are destroying major parts of their environment in the process.
- Africans who have lived for generations by farming and raising grazing animals are finding they have less and less land available to them.
- The people who live in these areas often face starvation and poverty.
- Many move into urban areas hoping to find work, but most find only more poverty.

Solution?

- Some Africans work hard to try to replant trees, to build windbreaks to keep out the sand, and to push the desert back whenever they can.
- In many parts of Africa, this has become a losing battle, as the desert claims more land each year.
- In recent years, the United Nations and the World Food Bank have come to the aid of those living in parts of the Sahel.
- They have worked to find solutions to help the people survive and live a better life.