

Improving Lives with Trees

With the planting of one tree, Dr. Wangari Maathai started a campaign that touched countless lives.

(1) Her efforts have helped people across Africa improve air, water, and soil quality, not to mention protect plant and animal species from *extinction*.

(2) Scientists warn about the *deterioration* of our natural world. On the continent of Africa, human activity has harmed much of the environment and the people who live in it. Air quality has gotten worse.

(3) Pollution has sped the *corrosion* of metal in buildings. Polluted air is increasing lung disease, heart disease, and cancer. (4) Many of us identify unhealthy air with *rancid* smells, but air does not have to smell bad to be harmful.

One of Africa's most important environmental problems is deforestation, the loss of trees and forest plants. As Africa's population expands, more and more people are cutting down trees for firewood, construction materials, and farming space. But cutting down forests without replanting them leads to long-term problems. In addition to producing oxygen, living trees and plants remove carbon dioxide—a gas that causes global warming—from the air. (5) They also prevent the *depletion* of soil by anchoring it in place. Forested land acts as a sponge, absorbing water, filtering out pollutants, and then releasing the water slowly and steadily. But soil with no roots to anchor it can be blown away or washed away in fast-moving floods. (6) This results in the spreading of *contaminants* and the clogging of streams. The land that remains often cannot be used to grow crops. (7) Finally, since many plants and animals live in forests, deforestation has led to the *annihilation* of many species.



(8) Dr. Wangari Maathai has worked to *curtail* these trends. (9) She saw her home country of Kenya increasingly *squandering* its rich environment through deforestation. She decided to plant native trees in her own backyard; then she encouraged other women to plant them. By these simple actions, she founded what is now known as the Green Belt Movement.

The results of her efforts have been dramatic. Women in countries across Africa have planted more than 30 million trees! (10) They have begun to *negate* some of the harm done by deforestation. By paying women to plant these trees, the Green Belt Movement has provided communities with both a healthier environment and needed income.

Besides intelligence, Dr. Maathai has shown incredible courage. In the past, she has been beaten and jailed for protesting deforestation. More recently, however, her efforts have been rewarded. She was named Deputy Environmental Minister of Kenya. She has also received international recognition. In 2004, she was the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Each sentence below refers to a numbered sentence in the passage. Write the letter of the choice that gives the sentence a meaning that is closest to the original sentence.

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|---|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 1. Her efforts have helped protect plant and animal species from _____. | a. reversal | b. pollution | c. disappearance | d. rotting |
| _____ 2. Scientists warn about the _____ of our natural world. | a. revolution | b. protection | c. smell | d. worsening |
| _____ 3. Pollution has sped the _____ of metal in buildings. | a. gradual destruction | b. slow removal | c. emptying out | d. rapid development |
| _____ 4. Many of us identify unhealthy air with _____ smells. | a. fresh, clean | b. rotten, foul | c. impure | d. gone forever |

- _____ 5. They also prevent the _____ of soil by anchoring it in place.
a. emptying out b. oxidation c. reversal d. cutting short
- _____ 6. This results in the spreading of _____.
a. leaves b. impurities c. spoiled fats d. rust
- _____ 7. Deforestation has led to the _____ of many species.
a. spread b. spoilage c. complete destruction d. cleaning up
- _____ 8. Dr. Wangari Maathai has worked to _____ these trends.
a. destroy b. boost c. drive d. lessen
- _____ 9. She saw Kenya increasingly _____ its environment.
a. supporting b. rusting c. benefiting d. wasting
- _____ 10. They have begun to _____ some of the harm done by deforestation.
a. rot b. pollute c. reverse d. increase

Indicate whether the statements below are TRUE or FALSE according to the passage.

- _____ 1. Humans rely on plants for food, oxygen, and clean water.
- _____ 2. Dr. Wangari Maathai has received nothing but praise for her efforts to fight deforestation.
- _____ 3. Dr. Maathai was the first African woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize.

WRITE THE DERIVATIVE

Complete the sentence by writing the correct form of the word shown in parentheses. You may not need to change the form that is given.

- _____ 1. His _____ of the bank account soon caused checks to bounce. (*deplete*)
- _____ 2. Mercury from landfills and from the burning of coal has already _____ many of the fish we eat. (*contaminate*)
- _____ 3. The _____ on the ship's hull made it look speckled. (*corrode*)
- _____ 4. The _____ of a species means the loss of valuable plants or animals. (*annihilate*)
- _____ 5. The knee injury _____ the skater's career. (*curtail*)
- _____ 6. Mental _____ is a symptom of many different diseases. (*deteriorate*)
- _____ 7. His natural speed was _____ by his lack of endurance. (*negate*)
- _____ 8. Breeding animals in a zoo has saved some species from _____. (*extinct*)
- _____ 9. The trash smelled so _____ that I wished I'd been born without a nose. (*rancid*)
- _____ 10. Do you think that watching television _____ your time? (*squander*)