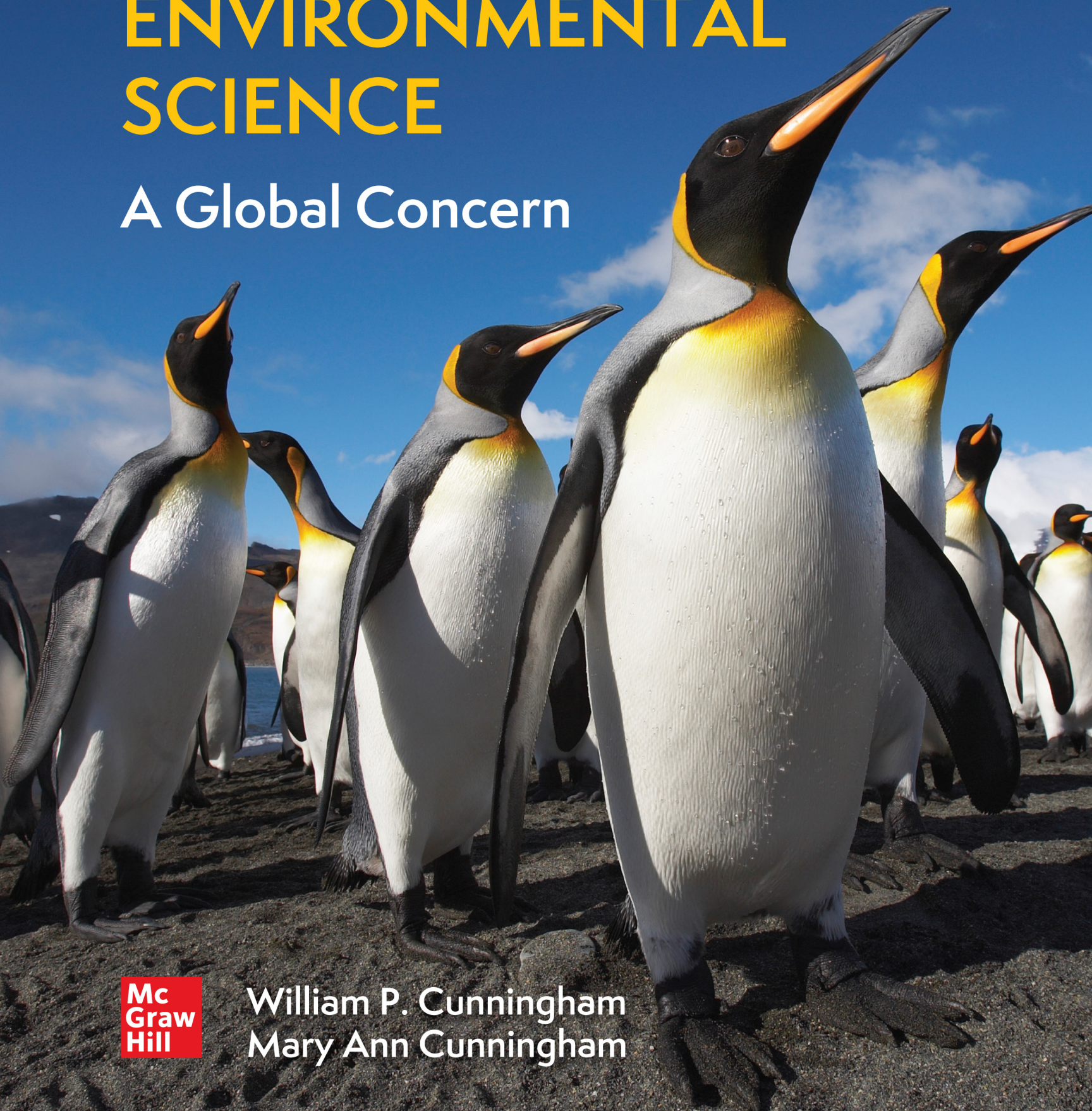


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*Fifteenth Edition*

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

A Global Concern



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William P. Cunningham  
Mary Ann Cunningham



FIFTEENTH EDITION

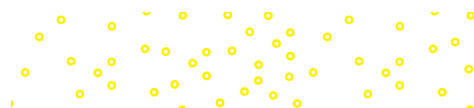
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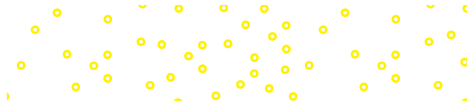
*A Global Concern*

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

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# About the Authors



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## William P. Cunningham

William P. Cunningham is an emeritus professor at the University of Minnesota. In his 38-year career at the university, he taught a variety of biology courses, including Environmental Science, Conservation Biology, Environmental Health, Environmental Ethics, Plant Physiology, and Cell Biology. He is a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, the highest teaching award granted at

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Professor Cunningham has participated in a number of governmental and nongovernmental organizations over the past 40 years. He was chair of the Minnesota chapter of the Sierra Club, a member of the Sierra Club national committee on energy policy, vice president of the Friends of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, chair of the Minnesota governor's task force on energy policy, and a citizen member of the Minnesota Legislative Commission on Energy.

In addition to environmental science textbooks, he edited three editions of the *Environmental Encyclopedia*, published by Thompson-Gale Press. He has also authored or coauthored about 50 scientific articles, mostly in the fields of cell biology and conservation biology, as well as several invited chapters or reports in the areas of energy policy and environmental health. His Ph.D. from the University of Texas was in botany.

Professor Cunningham's hobbies include photography, birding, hiking, gardening, and traveling. He lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, with his wife, Mary. He has three children (one of whom is coauthor of this book) and seven grandchildren.

Both authors have a long-standing interest in the topics in this book. Nearly half the photos in the book were taken on trips to the places they discuss.

## Mary Ann Cunningham

Mary Ann Cunningham is a professor of geography at Vassar College. A biogeographer with interests in landscape ecology, geographic information systems (GIS), and climate impacts on biodiversity and food production, she teaches environmental science, natural resource conservation, land-use planning, and GIS. Field research methods, statistical methods, and data analysis and visualization

are regular components of her teaching. Every aspect of this book is woven into, and informed by, her courses and her students' work. As a scientist and an educator, Mary Ann enjoys teaching and conducting research with both science students and non-science liberal arts students. As a geographer, she likes to engage students with the ways their physical surroundings and social context shape their world experience. In addition to teaching at a liberal arts college, she has taught at community colleges and research universities.

Professor Cunningham has been writing in environmental science for nearly two decades, and she has been coauthor of this book since its seventh edition. She is also coauthor of *Principles of Environmental Science* and an editor of the *Environmental Encyclopedia* (third edition, Thompson-Gale Press). She has published work on pedagogy in cartography, as well as instructional and testing materials in environmental science, and a GIS lab manual that introduces students to spatial and environmental analysis. She has also been a leader in sustainability programs and climate action planning at Vassar.

In addition to environmental science, Professor Cunningham's primary research activities focus on land-cover change, habitat fragmentation, and distributions of bird populations. This work allows her to conduct field studies in the grasslands of the Great Plains, as well as in the woodlands of the Hudson Valley. In her spare time she loves to travel, hike, and watch birds. Professor Cunningham holds a bachelor's degree from Carleton College, a master's degree from the University of Oregon, and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.



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# Brief Contents

## Introduction 1

- |           |  |           |   |
|-----------|--|-----------|---|
| <b>1</b>  | Understanding Our Environment 8                                | <b>13</b> | Restoration Ecology 275                     |
| <b>2</b>  | Principles of Science and Systems 33                           | <b>14</b> | Geology and Earth Resources 302             |
| <b>3</b>  | Matter, Energy, and Life 48                                    | <b>15</b> | Climate Systems and Climate Change 324      |
| <b>4</b>  | Evolution, Biological Communities, and Species Interactions 71 | <b>16</b> | Air Pollution 353                           |
| <b>5</b>  | Biomes: Global Patterns of Life 97                             | <b>17</b> | Water Use and Management 380                |
| <b>6</b>  | Population Biology 116   | <b>18</b> | Water Pollution 404                         |
| <b>7</b>  | Human Populations 131  | <b>19</b> | Conventional Energy 429                     |
| <b>8</b>  | Environmental Health and Toxicology 152                        | <b>20</b> | Sustainable Energy 452                      |
| <b>9</b>  | Food and Hunger 177  | <b>21</b> | Solid, Toxic, and Hazardous Waste 478       |
| <b>10</b> | Farming: Conventional and Sustainable Practices 197            | <b>22</b> | Urbanization and Sustainable Cities 499     |
| <b>11</b> | Biodiversity: Preserving Species 226                           | <b>23</b> | Ecological Economics 518                    |
| <b>12</b> | Biodiversity: Preserving Landscapes 250                        | <b>24</b> | Environmental Policy, Law, and Planning 544 |
|           |  | <b>25</b> | What Then Shall We Do? 565                  |

# Contents



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## Preface xiv

## Introduction: Learning to Learn 1

### Case Study How Can I Do Well in Environmental Science? 2

- L.1 HOW CAN I GET AN A IN THIS CLASS? 3
  - What are good study habits? 3
  - How can you use this textbook effectively? 4
  - Will this be on the test? 5
- L.2 THINKING ABOUT THINKING 5
  - How do you tell the news from the noise? 5
  - Applying critical thinking 6

## 1 Understanding Our Environment 8

### Case Study Sustainable Development Goals for Kibera 9

- 1.1 WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE? 10
  - Environmental science is about understanding where we live 10
  - Major themes in environmental science 11

### What Do You Think? Calculating Your Ecological Footprint 15

- 1.2 WHERE DO OUR IDEAS ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENT COME FROM? 16
  - Current ideas have followed industrialization 16
  - Stage 1. Resource waste inspired pragmatic, utilitarian conservation 16
  - Stage 2. Ethical and aesthetic concerns inspired the preservation movement 17
  - Stage 3. Rising pollution levels led to the modern environmental movement 18
  - Stage 4. Environmental quality is tied to social progress 18
- 1.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 19
  - Affluence is a goal and a liability 20
  - Is sustainable development possible? 22
  - The UN has identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals 23
  - The Millennium Development Goals were largely successful 24
  - Development depends on how wealthy countries allocate spending 24
- 1.4 CORE CONCEPTS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 25
  - How do we describe resource use? 25

Planetary boundaries define broad limits 26  
Indigenous peoples often protect biodiversity 27

- 1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, FAITH, AND JUSTICE 27
  - We can extend moral value to people and things 28
  - Many faiths promote conservation and justice 28
  - Environmental justice integrates civil rights and environmental protection 29

### Data Analysis Working with Graphs 32

## 2 Principles of Science and Systems 33

### Case Study Snapshot Serengeti 34

- 2.1 WHAT IS SCIENCE? 35
  - Science depends on skepticism and accuracy 35
  - Deductive and inductive reasoning are both useful 36
  - Testable hypotheses and theories are essential tools 36
  - Understanding probability helps reduce uncertainty 37

### Exploring Science Why Do Scientists Answer Questions with a Number? 38

Statistics can indicate the probability that your results were random 39  
Experimental design can reduce bias 39  
Models are an important experimental strategy 40

- 2.2 SYSTEMS INVOLVE INTERACTIONS 41
  - Systems can be described in terms of their characteristics 41
  - Systems may exhibit stability 43
- 2.3 SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS AND CONFLICT 43
  - Detecting pseudoscience relies on independent, critical thinking 44

### Data Analysis 47

## 3 Matter, Energy, and Life 48

### Case Study Death by Fertilizer: Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico 49

- 3.1 ELEMENTS OF LIFE 50
  - Atoms, elements, and compounds 50
  - Chemical bonds hold molecules together 51
  - Unique properties of water 52
  - Ions react and bond to form compounds 52
  - Organic compounds have a carbon backbone 53
  - Cells are the fundamental units of life 54

### Exploring Science Gene Editing 55



3.2 ENERGY FOR LIFE	56
Energy varies in intensity	56
Thermodynamics regulates energy transfers	56
Ecosystems run on energy	57
Photosynthesis captures energy; respiration releases that energy	58
3.3 FROM SPECIES TO ECOSYSTEMS	60
Ecosystems include living and nonliving parts	60
Food webs link species of different trophic levels	60
Ecological pyramids describe trophic levels	62
3.4 MATERIAL CYCLES	64
The hydrologic cycle redistributes water	64
Carbon cycles through earth, air, water, and life	65
Nitrogen occurs in many forms	66
Phosphorus follows a one-way path	67

**Data Analysis** Inspect the Chesapeake’s Report Card 70

## 4 Evolution, Biological Communities, and Species Interactions 71

**Case Study** Seagrass Meadows, the Planet’s Hidden Productivity Powerhouse 72

4.1 EVOLUTION PRODUCES SPECIES DIVERSITY	73
Evolution occurs through reproduction, variation, and natural selection	74
All species live within limits	74
An ecological niche is a species’ environment and its ecological role	75
Resource partitioning can reduce competition	77
Speciation, the process of creating new species, maintains natural diversity	78
Evolutionary change is typically slow	78
Taxonomy describes relationships among species	79
4.2 SPECIES INTERACTIONS AND THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS	80
Predator-prey dynamics assert selective pressure	80
Competition occurs between and within species	82
Symbiosis involves long-term interaction between species	83

**Exploring Science** Say Hello to Your 90 Trillion Little Friends 85  
Keystone species have disproportionate influence 86

4.3 COMMUNITY PROPERTIES AFFECT SPECIES, POPULATIONS, AND PRODUCTIVITY	87
Community dynamics involves diversity, abundance, and distribution of species	87
Complexity and connectedness are important ecological indicators	88
Biological communities vary in productivity	89

**What Can You Do?** Working Locally for Ecological Diversity 90

4.4 SYSTEM CHANGE AND RESILIENCE	90
Ecological succession involves changes in community composition	90
Biological communities may be adapted to disturbance	91
The adaptive cycle explains a system’s response to disturbance	92
Systems can shift abruptly	93
Resilience is the ability of a system to absorb disturbance and maintain its historic identity	94

**Data Analysis** SeagrassSpotter 96

## 5 Biomes: Global Patterns of Life 97

**Case Study** Shifting Biomes, Shifting Ways of Life? 98

5.1 TERRESTRIAL BIOMES	99
Tropical moist forests have rain year-round	100

**Exploring Science** How Do We Describe Climate Regions? 101

Tropical seasonal forests have yearly dry seasons	102
Tropical savannas and grasslands support few trees	102
Deserts can be hot or cold, but all are dry	102
Temperate grasslands have rich soils	103
Temperate shrublands have summer drought	104
Temperate forests can be evergreen or deciduous	104
Boreal forests occur at high latitudes	105
Tundra can freeze in any month	105

5.2 MARINE ECOSYSTEMS	106
Depth controls light penetration and temperature	107
Coastal zones support rich, diverse communities	108

5.3 FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS	110
Temperature and light vary with depth in lakes	111
Wetlands are shallow and productive	111

5.4 HUMAN DISTURBANCE	112
Agriculture is responsible for most land conversion	112
Small systems are most at risk	113

**Data Analysis** Reading Climate Graphs 115

## 6 Population Biology 116

**Case Study** Flying Fish 117

6.1 DYNAMICS OF POPULATION GROWTH	118
We can describe growth symbolically	118
Exponential growth involves continuous change	119
Doubling times and the rule of 70	119
Exponential growth leads to crashes	119
Logistic growth slows with population increase	119
These values help predict sustainable yield	120
Species respond to limits differently:	
<i>r</i> - and <i>K</i> -selected species	121

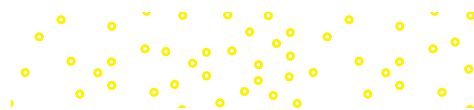
**What Do You Think?** Too Many Deer? 122

6.2 FACTORS THAT REGULATE POPULATION GROWTH	123
Survivorship curves show life histories	123
Intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect births and deaths	123
Interspecific interactions are between species; intraspecific interactions are within a species	124
Stress and crowding can affect reproduction	125
Density-dependent effects can be dramatic	125

**Exploring Science** How Do You Measure Populations? 126

6.3 POPULATION SIZE AND CONSERVATION	126
Small, isolated populations are vulnerable	126
Genetic diversity may help a population survive	127
Population viability can depend on population size	128

**Data Analysis** Experimenting with Population Growth 130



## 7 Human Populations 131

### Case Study China Is Aging 132

- 7.2 PERSPECTIVES ON POPULATION 133
  - How many of us are there? 133
  - Human populations grew slowly until relatively recently 134
  - Do large families cause poverty, or does poverty cause large families? 135
  - Different theories imply different solutions 135
  - Technology can change carrying capacity 136
  - Environmental Impact (I) = PAT 136
  - Population growth can power innovation 137

- 7.2 WAYS WE DESCRIBE GROWTH 137
  - We describe growth rates in several ways 137
  - Fertility rate is the number of children per woman 138
  - Fertility rates are falling globally 139

- 7.3 WHAT FACTORS AFFECT POPULATION GROWTH? 140
  - Development promotes a demographic transition 140
  - Long life expectancy increases populations 141
  - Age distributions determine future growth 142
  - Pronatalist factors encourage fertility 142
  - Girls' education and child health affect fertility rates 144
  - Major events influence birth rates 144
  - Family planning gives us choices 145
  - Could we have a birth dearth? 145

### What Do You Think? China's One-Child Policy 146

- 7.4 WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF GROWTH? 147
  - Development is seen as the main path to slower growth 147
  - Migration is a growing concern 147
  - The demographic trap and lifeboat ethics describe challenges of poverty 148
  - Social justice is an important consideration 148
  - Our choices now determine our future 149

### Data Analysis Population Change over Time 151

## 8 Environmental Health and Toxicology 152

### Case Study PFCs: Miracle or Menace? 153

- 8.1 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 154
  - The global disease burden is changing 154
  - Infectious and emergent diseases still kill millions of people 156
  - Conservation medicine combines ecology and health care 158
  - Resistance to antibiotics and pesticides is increasing 159
  - What would better health cost? 160

- 8.2 TOXICOLOGY 161
  - How do toxic substances affect us? 161

### What Can You Do? Tips for Staying Healthy 163

- How does diet influence health? 164

- 8.3 THE MOVEMENT, DISTRIBUTION, AND FATE OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES 164
  - Compounds dissolve either in water or in fat 165
  - Bioaccumulation and biomagnification increase concentrations of chemicals 166
  - Persistence makes some materials a greater threat 166
  - POPs are an especially serious problem 167
  - Synergistic interactions can increase toxicity 168
  - Our bodies degrade and excrete toxic substances 168

- 8.4 TOXICITY AND RISK ASSESSMENT 169
  - We usually test toxic effects on lab animals 169
  - There can be a wide range of toxicity 170
  - Acute and chronic doses and effects differ 170
  - Detectable levels aren't always dangerous 170

### What Do You Think? What's Acceptable Risk? 171

- Some symptoms can be erroneous 171
- Risk perception isn't always rational 171
- Risk acceptance depends on many factors 172

- 8.5 ESTABLISHING HEALTH POLICY 173

### Data Analysis How Do We Evaluate Risk and Fear? 176

## 9 Food and Hunger 177

### Case Study Food Security in the Sahel 178

- 9.1 WORLD FOOD AND NUTRITION 179
  - Millions of people are still chronically hungry 180
  - Famines usually have political and social causes 181
  - Overeating is a growing world problem 181
  - We need the right kinds of food 182
  - Global factors can cause price spikes 183

- 9.2 KEY FOOD SOURCES 184
  - Rising meat production has costs and benefits 185

### What Do You Think? Diet for a Small Planet? 186

- Seafood is our only commercial wild-caught protein source 186
- Most commercial fishing operates on an industrial scale 187
- Aquaculture produces over half our seafood 188
- Antibiotics are overused in intensive production 189
- Food systems are vulnerable to climate change 189

- 9.3 THE GREEN REVOLUTION AND GENETIC ENGINEERING 190
  - Green revolution crops are high responders 191
  - Genetic engineering moves DNA among species 191
  - Most GMOs have been engineered for pest resistance or herbicide tolerance 192
  - Safety of GMOs is widely debated 193

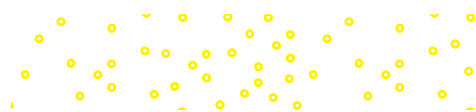
- 9.4 FOOD PRODUCTION POLICIES 193
  - Is genetic engineering about food production? 194
  - Farm policies can also protect the land 195

### Data Analysis Exploring Global Food Data 196

## 10 Farming: Conventional and Sustainable Practices 197

### Case Study Farming the Cerrado 198

- 10.1 WHAT IS SOIL? 199
  - Soils are complex ecosystems 199
  - Healthy soil fauna can determine soil fertility 200
  - Your food comes mostly from the A horizon 201
- 10.2 HOW DO WE USE, ABUSE, AND CONSERVE SOILS? 202
  - Arable land is unevenly distributed 203
  - Soil losses threaten farm productivity 203
  - Wind and water cause widespread erosion 204
  - Desertification affects arid-land soils 206
  - Irrigation is needed but can be inefficient 206
  - Plants need nutrients, but not too much 206





Conventional farming uses abundant fossil fuels	207
Contours and ground cover reduce runoff	207
Erosion control measures protect, or even build, soils	208
<b>Exploring Science</b> Ancient <i>Terra Preta</i> Shows How to Build Soils	209
Carbon farming could be a key climate action	209
<b>10.3 PESTS AND PESTICIDES</b>	210
Modern pesticides provide benefits but also create health risks	211
Organophosphates and chlorinated hydrocarbons are dominant pesticides	212
<b>What Do You Think?</b> Shade-Grown Coffee and Cocoa	212
Pesticides have profound environmental effects	215
POPs accumulate in remote places	216
Pesticides often impair human health	217
<b>10.4 ORGANIC AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE</b>	217
Can sustainable practices feed the world's growing population?	218
What does "organic" mean?	218
Strategic management can reduce pests	219
<b>What Can You Do?</b> Controlling Pests	219
Useful organisms can help us control pests	220
IPM uses a combination of techniques	221
Low-input agriculture aids farmers and their land	221
Consumers' choices play an important role	222
<b>What Do You Think?</b> Organic Farming in the City	223
<b>Data Analysis</b> Graphing Changes in Pesticide Use	225

## 11 Biodiversity: Preserving Species 226

<b>Case Study</b> How Wolves Can Change Rivers	227
<b>11.1 BIODIVERSITY AND THE SPECIES CONCEPT</b>	228
What is biodiversity?	228
Species are defined in different ways	228
Molecular techniques are rewriting taxonomy	229
How many species are there?	229
Hot spots have exceptionally high biodiversity	230
We benefit from biodiversity in many ways	231
Biodiversity provides ecological services and aesthetic and cultural benefits	232
<b>11.2 WHAT THREATENS BIODIVERSITY?</b>	233
Mass extinctions appear in the fossil record	233
Are we entering a sixth extinction?	234
Habitat destruction is the principal HIPPO factor	234
Invasive species displace resident species	235
Pollution and population are direct human impacts	236
Climate change transforms ecosystems	237
Overharvesting results when there is a market for wild species	238
<b>Exploring Science</b> Where Are All the Insects?	239
<b>What Can You Do?</b> Don't Buy Endangered Species Products	240
Overharvesting is often illegal and involves endangered species	240
Island ecosystems are especially vulnerable to invasive species	241
<b>11.3 ENDANGERED SPECIES MANAGEMENT</b>	241
Hunting and fishing laws have been effective	241
The Endangered Species Act is a powerful tool for biodiversity protection	242

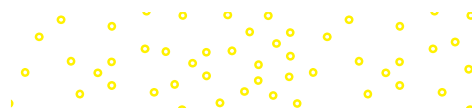
Recovery plans rebuild populations of endangered species	243
Private land is vital for species protection	244
Endangered species protection is controversial	244
<b>What Can You Do?</b> You Can Help Preserve Biodiversity	245
Gap analysis promotes regional planning	245
International treaties improve protection	246
<b>11.4 CAPTIVE BREEDING AND SPECIES SURVIVAL PLANS</b>	246
Zoos can help preserve wildlife	246
We need to save rare species in the wild	247
<b>Data Analysis</b> Confidence Limits in the Breeding Bird Survey	249

## 12 Biodiversity: Preserving Landscapes 250

<b>Case Study</b> Ecosystems in Transition	251
<b>12.1 WORLD FORESTS</b>	252
Boreal and tropical forests are most abundant	252
Forests provide valuable products	254
Tropical forests are especially threatened	255
Local and global demand drive deforestation	256
Indigenous groups often lead forest protection efforts	257
<b>Exploring Science</b> Palm Oil and Endangered Species	258
Debt-for-nature swaps and REDD use finance for protection	259
Logging threatens temperate forests	259
Global warming and fire are growing threats	260
Ecosystem management seeks resilience	261
<b>What Can You Do?</b> Lowering Your Forest Impacts	261
<b>12.2 GRASSLANDS</b>	262
Grazing can be sustainable or damaging	262
Overgrazing threatens U.S. rangelands	262
Ranchers are experimenting with new methods	263
Rotational grazing can mimic natural regimes	264
<b>12.3 PARKS AND PRESERVES</b>	265
Levels of protection vary in preserves	265
"Paper parks" are not really protected	267
Marine ecosystems need greater protection	268
Conservation and economic development can work together	269
Many preserves support traditional resource uses	269
<b>What Do You Think?</b> Monuments Under Attack	270
<b>What Can You Do?</b> Being a Responsible Ecotourist	271
Species survival can depend on preserve size	272
<b>Data Analysis</b> Detecting Edge Effects	274

## 13 Restoration Ecology 275

<b>Case Study</b> Restoring Coral Reefs	276
<b>13.1 HELPING NATURE HEAL</b>	277
Restoration projects range from modest to ambitious	278
Restore to what?	278
All restoration projects involve some common components	279
Origins of restoration	280



Sometimes we can simply let nature heal itself 281  
 Native species often need help to become reestablished 282

13.2 RESTORATION IS GOOD FOR HUMAN ECONOMIES AND CULTURES 283  
 Tree planting can improve our quality of life 284

**What Can You Do?** Ecological Restoration in Your Own Neighborhood 285  
 Fire is often an important restoration tool 285

13.3 RESTORING PRAIRIES 287  
 Fire is also crucial for prairie restoration 287  
 Huge areas of shortgrass prairie are being preserved 288

**Exploring Science** The Monarch Highway 289  
 Bison help maintain prairies 291

13.4 RESTORING WETLANDS AND STREAMS 292  
 Restoring river flow helps wetlands heal 293  
 Replumbing the Everglades is one of the costliest restoration efforts ever 294  
 Wetland mitigation is challenging 295  
 Wetland and stream restoration provide multiple benefits 296  
 Severely degraded or polluted sites can be repaired or reconstructed 298

**Data Analysis** Concept Maps 301

## 14 Geology and Earth Resources 302

**Case Study** Salmon or Copper? 303

14.1 EARTH PROCESSES AND MINERALS 304  
 Earth is a dynamic planet 304  
 Tectonic processes move continents 305  
 Rocks are composed of minerals 306  
 Rocks and minerals are recycled constantly 307  
 Weathering breaks down rocks 308

14.2 EARTH RESOURCES 308  
 Metals are especially valuable resources 309  
 Fossil fuels originated as peat and plankton 309

**Exploring Science** Rare Earth Minerals 310  
 Conserving resources saves energy and materials 311  
 Resource substitution reduces demand 312

14.3 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION 313  
 Different mining techniques pose different risks to water and air 313  
 Ore processing emits acids and metals 314  
 High-value minerals can support corruption 314

**What Do You Think?** Should We Revise Mining Laws? 316

14.4 GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS 317  
 Earthquakes usually occur on plate margins 317  
 Human-induced earthquakes are becoming more common 318  
 Tsunamis can be more damaging than the earthquakes that trigger them 319  
 Volcanoes eject gas and ash, as well as lava 319  
 Landslides and mass wasting can bury villages 320  
 Floods are the greatest geological hazard 320  
 Beaches erode easily, especially in storms 321

**Data Analysis** Mapping Geological Hazards 323

## 15 Climate Systems and Climate Change 324

**Case Study** Climate Action in California: No Longer Just Talking About the Weather 325

15.1 WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE? 326  
 The land surface absorbs solar energy to warm our world 328  
 Greenhouse gases capture energy selectively 329  
 Atmospheric circulation redistributes energy 329

15.2 REGIONAL PATTERNS OF WEATHER 330  
 The Coriolis effect explains why winds seem to curve on a weather map 330  
 Jet streams deflect weather systems 331  
 Ocean currents redistribute heat 332  
 Seasonal rain supports billions of people 333  
 Frontal systems occur where warm and cold air meet 333  
 Cyclonic storms can cause extensive damage 334

15.3 NATURAL CLIMATE VARIABILITY 335  
 Ice cores tell us about climate history 335  
 El Niño is an ocean-atmosphere cycle 336

15.4 ANTHROPOGENIC CLIMATE CHANGE 338  
 The IPCC assesses climate data for policymakers 338  
 Major greenhouse gases include CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O 339

**Exploring Science** Black Carbon 340  
 Melting ice accelerates change 341  
 How do we know that recent change is caused by humans? 342

15.5 WHAT EFFECTS ARE WE SEEING? 343  
 Warming affects crops, health, and ecosystems 343  
 Climate change costs far more than prevention 344  
 Rising sea levels will flood many cities 345  
 Why do we still debate climate evidence? 345

15.6 CLIMATE ACTION 346

**What Do You Think?** Unburnable Carbon 347  
 The Paris Climate Agreement establishes new goals 347  
 Drawdown strategies abound 348  
 Carbon capture is needed 348  
 Economic solutions make progress possible 349

**What Can You Do?** Climate Action 350  
 Wind, water, and solar could meet all our needs 350

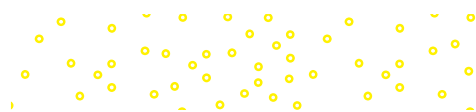
**Data Analysis** The U.S. National Climate Assessment 352

## 16 Air Pollution 353

**Case Study** Beijing Looks for Answers to Air Pollution 354

16.1 MAJOR POLLUTANTS IN OUR AIR 355  
 The Clean Air Act designates standard limits 356  
 Conventional pollutants are most abundant 356  
 Mercury, from coal, is particularly dangerous 361

**What Do You Think?** Politics, Public Health, and the Minamata Convention 362  
 Carbon dioxide, methane, and halogens are key greenhouse gases 363  
 Hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) can cause cancer and nerve damage 364  
 Indoor air can be worse than outdoor air 364





16.2	ATMOSPHERIC PROCESSES	365
	Temperature inversions trap pollutants	365
	Wind currents carry pollutants worldwide	366
<b>Exploring Science</b>	The Great London Smog and Pollution Monitoring	367
	Chlorine destroys ozone in the stratosphere	368
	The Montreal Protocol was a resounding success	369
16.3	EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION	370
	How does pollution make us sick?	371
	Sulfur and nitrogen emissions produce acid rain	371
	Acid deposition damages ecosystems and infrastructure	372
16.4	POLLUTION CONTROL	373
	Pollutants can be captured after combustion	373
<b>What Can You Do?</b>	Reducing Pollution and Saving Energy	373
	Clean air legislation is controversial but effective	374
	Clean air protections help the economy and public health	375
	In developing areas, rapid growth can outpace pollution controls	376
	Air quality improves where controls are implemented	377
<b>Data Analysis</b>	How Is the Air Quality in Your Town?	379

## 17 Water Use and Management 380

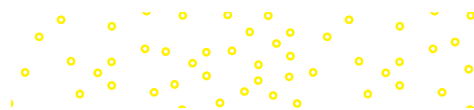
<b>Case Study</b>	When Will Lake Mead Go Dry?	381
17.1	WATER RESOURCES	382
	The hydrologic cycle constantly redistributes water	382
	Water supplies are unevenly distributed	382
	Oceans hold 97 percent of all water on earth	384
	Glaciers, ice, and snow contain most surface fresh water	384
	Groundwater stores large resources	385
	Rivers, lakes, and wetlands cycle quickly	386
17.2	WATER AVAILABILITY AND USE	387
	Many countries suffer water scarcity or water stress	387
	The West has always had droughts	388
	Water use is increasing	388
	Agriculture dominates water use	389
	Industry and households withdraw less but often contaminate water	389
17.3	FRESHWATER SHORTAGES	390
	Groundwater is an essential but declining resource	391
	Groundwater overdrafts have long-term impacts	392
	Diversion projects redistribute water	393
<b>Exploring Science</b>	Measuring Invisible Water	394
	Dams have diverse environmental and social impacts	395
	Dams have a limited lifespan	396
	Climate change threatens water supplies	397
	Water is a growing cause of conflict	397
17.4	WATER CONSERVATION	398
	Desalination is expensive but needed	398
<b>Exploring Science</b>	How Does Desalination Work?	399
	Domestic conservation has important impacts	399
<b>What Can You Do?</b>	Saving Water and Preventing Pollution	400
	Recycling can reduce consumption	400
	Prices and policies have often discouraged conservation	401
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Graphing Global Water Stress and Scarcity	403

## 18 Water Pollution 404

<b>Case Study</b>	India's Holy River	405
18.1	WATER POLLUTION	406
	Water pollution is anything that degrades water quality	406
	Infectious agents, or pathogens, cause diseases	407
	Low oxygen levels indicate nutrient contamination	408
	Nutrient enrichment leads to cultural eutrophication	409
	Eutrophication can cause toxic tides and "dead zones"	410
	Heavy metals cause nerve damage	410
	Acidic runoff can destroy aquatic ecosystems	411
	Organic pollutants include drugs, pesticides, and industrial products	411
	Oil spills are common and often intentional	412
	Sediment also degrades water quality	413
	Thermal pollution threatens sensitive organisms	413
18.2	WATER QUALITY TODAY	414
	The Clean Water Act protects our water	414
	Nonpoint sources are difficult to control	415
	Water pollution is especially serious in developing countries	415
	Water treatment improves safety	416
	Is bottled water safer?	417
	Groundwater is hard to monitor and clean	417
	There are few controls on ocean pollution	418
18.3	WATER POLLUTION CONTROL	419
	Controlling nonpoint sources requires land management	419
	Combined sewer overflows pollute surface waters	420
	Human waste disposal occurs naturally when concentrations are low	420
	Septic systems work in low densities	420
	Municipal treatment plants remove pathogens	421
	Low-cost systems use natural processes	422
<b>Exploring Science</b>	Inexpensive Water Purification	423
	Water remediation may involve containment, extraction, or phytoremediation	423
	"Living machines" use plants to capture contaminants	424
<b>What Can You Do?</b>	Steps You Can Take to Improve Water Quality	425
18.4	WATER LEGISLATION	425
	The Clean Water Act was ambitious, bipartisan, and largely successful	425
	Clean water reauthorization remains contentious	426
	A variety of rules protect water quality	427
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Examining Pollution Sources	428

## 19 Conventional Energy 429

<b>Case Study</b>	The End of Coal?	430
19.1	ENERGY RESOURCES AND USES	431
	The future of energy is not the past	431
	How do we describe energy?	431
	Fossil fuels still supply most of the world's energy	432
	How much energy do we use?	432
19.2	COAL	433
	Coal resources are greater than we can use	434
	Coal use is declining in the United States and Europe	434
	Is clean coal technology an option?	436
19.3	OIL	436



Extreme oil has extended our supplies 437  
Oil is a boom and bust industry 438

**What Do You Think?** Water Protectors at Standing Rock 439  
Indigenous groups have challenged pipelines 440  
Refineries produce useful products and hazardous pollutants 440

19.4 NATURAL GAS 441  
Most of the world's currently known natural gas is in a few countries 441  
Getting gas to market is a challenge 443

**What Do You Think?** The Fracking Debate 444  
Methane hydrates occur in deep ocean sediment 444

19.5 NUCLEAR POWER 445  
How do nuclear reactors work? 445  
Reactor designs vary in safety 446  
Breeder reactors could extend the life of our nuclear fuel 447  
We lack safe storage for radioactive wastes 448  
Decommissioning nuclear plants is costly 449  
Opinions about nuclear futures vary 449

**Data Analysis** Comparing Energy Use and Standards of Living 451

## 20 Sustainable Energy 452

**Case Study** A Renewable Energy Transition 453

20.1 ENERGY EFFICIENCY 454  
Energy conservation is the first step 454  
Green buildings cut energy costs 455  
Transportation could be far more efficient 456

**Exploring Science** Greening Gotham: Can New York Reach Its 80 by 50 Goal? 457  
Transportation is electrifying 458

**What Can You Do?** Steps You Can Take to Save Energy 459

20.2 SOLAR ENERGY 459  
Solar heat collectors can be passive or active 460  
Photovoltaic cells generate electricity directly 461  
Solar works at household or community scales 462

20.3 WIND 463  
Capacity and efficiency are important questions in power production 464  
Wind could meet all our energy needs 465  
Wind is a source of rural income 465  
Energy production has environmental impacts 466

20.4 HYDROPOWER, BIOMASS, AND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY 466  
Most hydroelectricity comes from large dams 467  
Tides and waves contain significant energy 468  
Biomass is an ancient and modern energy source 468  
Methane from biomass can be clean and efficient 468  
U.S. policy supports ethanol and biodiesel 469  
Could algae be an efficient energy source? 471  
High-temperature geothermal produces electricity 471

20.5 WHAT DOES AN ENERGY TRANSITION LOOK LIKE? 471  
The grid will need improvement 472  
Storage options are changing rapidly 472  
Fuel cells release electricity from chemical bonds 472  
Heat pumps provide efficient, electric-powered cooling and heating 473  
Wind, water, and solar are good answers 475

**Data Analysis** Energy Calculations 477

## 21 Solid, Toxic, and Hazardous Waste 478

**Case Study** Plastic Seas 479

21.1 WHAT DO WE DO WITH WASTE? 480  
The waste stream is everything we throw away 480  
Open dumps pollute air and water 481  
Ocean dumping is mostly uncontrolled 481  
Landfills receive most U.S. waste 482  
We often export waste to countries ill-equipped to handle it 483  
Incineration produces energy from trash 483

**What Do You Think?** Who Will Take Our Waste? 484

21.2 SHRINKING THE WASTE STREAM 486  
Recycling has multiple benefits 486  
Plastic recycling rates are low 487  
Recycling has financial obstacles 488  
Compost and biogas are useful products 488  
Appliances and e-waste must be demanufactured 488  
Reuse is more efficient than recycling 489  
Reducing waste is the best option 489

**What Can You Do?** Reducing Waste 489

21.3 HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC WASTES 490  
Hazardous waste must be recycled, contained, or detoxified 491  
Federal legislation requires waste management 491  
Superfund sites are listed for federal cleanup 492  
Brownfields present both liability and opportunity 493

**What Can You Do?** Alternatives to Hazardous Household Chemicals 494  
Hazardous waste can be recycled or contained 494  
Substances can be converted to safer forms 494  
Permanent storage is often needed 495

**Exploring Science** Phytoremediation: Cleaning Up Toxic Waste with Plants 496

**Data Analysis** How Much Do You Know about Recycling? 498

## 22 Urbanization and Sustainable Cities 499

**Case Study** Cities Show the Way in Climate Policy 500

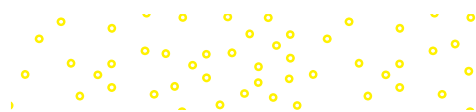
22.1 URBANIZATION 501  
Cities have specialized functions 501  
Large cities are expanding rapidly 502  
Developing areas have urbanized rapidly 503  
Push and pull factors motivate people to move to cities 504

22.2 URBAN CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD 505  
Pollution and water shortages affect developing cities 505

**Exploring Science** Sinking Cities Amid Rising Seas 506  
Many cities lack adequate housing 507

22.3 URBAN CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD 508  
Urban sprawl consumes land and resources 508  
Transportation is crucial in city development 510  
Public transit can make cities more livable 511

22.4 SUSTAINABLE URBANISM AND SMART GROWTH 512  
Garden cities and new towns were early examples of smart growth 512



Mixed uses make cities more livable 512  
Open-space design preserves landscapes 514

**What Do You Think?** Vauban: A Car-Free Neighborhood 515

**Data Analysis** Plotting Urban and Economic Indicators 517

## 23 Ecological Economics 518

**Case Study** Using Economics to Fight Climate Change 519

23.1 PERSPECTIVES ON THE ECONOMY 520

Can development be sustainable? 520

Resources can be renewable or nonrenewable 520

Classical economics examines supply and demand 522

Neoclassical economics emphasizes growth 523

23.2 ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS 524

Ecological economics accounts for the value of ecosystems 524

Ecosystem services include provisioning, regulating, and aesthetic values 525

**Exploring Science** What's the Value of Nature? 526

23.3 POPULATION, SCARCITY, AND TECHNOLOGY 527

Are we about to run out of fossil fuels? 527

Common property resources are a classic problem in ecological economics 528

Scarcity can lead to innovation 529

Carrying capacity is not necessarily fixed 529

Economic models compare growth scenarios 530

23.4 MEASURING GROWTH 531

GNP is our dominant growth measure 531

Alternate measures account for well-being 531

Cost-benefit analysis aims to optimize benefits 532

23.5 CAN MARKETS REDUCE POLLUTION? 533

Sulfur trading offers a good model 534

Emissions trading rewards efficiency 534

**Exploring Science** Green Jobs Versus Fossil Fuels 535

Are carbon taxes a better answer? 536

23.6 GREEN DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS 536

International trade brings benefits but also intensifies inequities 536

Microlending helps the poorest of the poor 537

Green business involves efficiency and creative solutions 537

New business models adopt concepts of ecology 538

Efficiency starts with product design 538

Green consumerism gives the public a voice 539

**What Can You Do?** Personally Responsible Economy 540

Environmental protection creates jobs 540

**What Do You Think?** Could We Have a Green New Deal? 541

**Data Analysis** Evaluating the Limits to Growth 543

## 24 Environmental Policy, Law, and Planning 544

**Case Study** Turtles Return to Archie Carr 545

24.1 BASIC CONCEPTS IN POLICY 546

Basic principles guide environmental policy 546

Money influences policy 547

Public awareness and action shape policy 547

24.2 MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS 548

NEPA (1969) establishes public oversight 549

The Clean Air Act (1970) regulates air emissions 550

The Clean Water Act (1972) protects surface water 551

The Endangered Species Act (1973) protects both plants and animals 551

The Superfund Act (1980) lists hazardous sites 552

24.3 HOW ARE POLICIES MADE? 552

Congress and legislatures vote on statutory laws 552

Legislative riders sidestep public debate 553

Lobbying influences government 553

Judges decide case law 554

Landmark cases have vast impacts 555

Law suits require legal standing 555

Criminal law prosecutes lawbreakers 556

Executive agencies make rules and enforce laws 556

Regulatory agencies oversee policies 557

Regulatory capture undermines agency work 557

How much government do we want? 558

24.4 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS 558

Major international agreements 559

Enforcement often depends on national pride 560

24.5 NEW APPROACHES TO POLICY 560

Community-based planning uses local knowledge 561

Green plans outline goals for sustainability 562

**Data Analysis** Examine Your Environmental Laws 564

## 25 What Then Shall We Do? 565

**Case Study** The Dawn of a New Era 566

25.1 MAKING A DIFFERENCE 567

Environmental literacy has lasting importance 567

**Exploring Science** Doing Citizen Science with eBird 569

Citizen science lets everyone participate 569

Environmental careers range from engineering to education 570

Green business and technology are growing fast 570

25.2 WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS DO? 570

All choices are environmental choices 571

**What Can You Do?** Reducing Your Impact 571

Green consumerism encourages corporations to have an environmental conscience 572

You are a citizen, as well as a consumer 572

You can learn leadership 573

You can own this class 573

25.3 HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER? 573

National organizations influence policy 574

New players bring energy to policy making 575

International NGOs mobilize many people 575

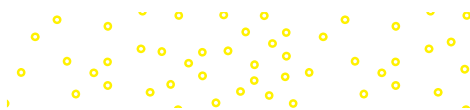
25.4 CAMPUS GREENING 576

Schools provide environmental leadership 577

**What Do You Think?** Fossil Fuel Divestment 578

A green campus is an educational opportunity 578

25.5 SUSTAINABILITY IS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE 579





Sustainable development means social, environmental, and economic goals 580

**Data Analysis** Campus Environmental Audit 582

**Glossary** 583

**Index** 593

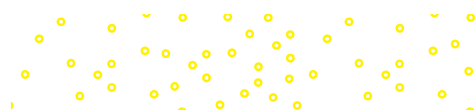
## List of Case Studies

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INTRODUCTION	How Can I Do Well in Environmental Science?	2
CHAPTER 1	Sustainable Development Goals for Kibera	9
CHAPTER 2	Snapshot Serengeti	34
CHAPTER 3	Death by Fertilizer: Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico	49
CHAPTER 4	Seagrass Meadows, the Planet's Hidden Productivity Powerhouse	72
CHAPTER 5	Shifting Biomes, Shifting Ways of Life?	98
CHAPTER 6	Flying Fish	117
CHAPTER 7	China Is Aging	132
CHAPTER 8	PFCs: Miracle or Menace?	153
CHAPTER 9	Food Security in the Sahel	178
CHAPTER 10	Farming the Cerrado	198
CHAPTER 11	How Wolves Can Change Rivers	227
CHAPTER 12	Ecosystems in Transition	251
CHAPTER 13	Restoring Coral Reefs	276
CHAPTER 14	Salmon or Copper?	303
CHAPTER 15	Climate Action in California: No Longer Just Talking About the Weather	325
CHAPTER 16	Beijing Looks for Answers to Air Pollution	354
CHAPTER 17	When Will Lake Mead Go Dry?	381
CHAPTER 18	India's Holy River	405
CHAPTER 19	The End of Coal?	430
CHAPTER 20	A Renewable Energy Transition	453
CHAPTER 21	Plastic Seas	479
CHAPTER 22	Cities Show the Way in Climate Policy	500
CHAPTER 23	Using Economics to Fight Climate Change	519
CHAPTER 24	Turtles Return to Archie Carr	545
CHAPTER 25	The Dawn of a New Era	566

## About the Cover

King penguins are one of the astonishing and exquisitely adapted species that inhabit our world. They are also among the many species urgently threatened by human activities. Climate change is expected to shift critical feeding areas far from breeding colonies, and rising seas will flood nesting areas; commercial fisheries capture a rising share of the marine food web to support fish farms far away; plastic pollution is growing in the world's marine environments. At the same time, hope for these and other species can be found in global policies and growing cooperation to protect marine reserves, to monitor fisheries, and to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Understanding interconnections in environmental systems is critical to protecting the extraordinary diversity of life around us, and to protecting the ecosystem services on which we also depend. Environmental science helps you explore these interconnections and make sense of this amazing complexity, and the ways survival of these living systems is tied to the well-being of our own communities. Enjoy the journey.



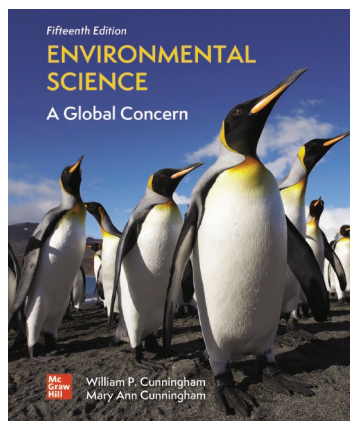


# Preface

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## Environmental Science: A Search for Solutions

Environmental science focuses on understanding challenges that affect our lives, and on finding solutions to those challenges. Your decision to study environmental science is an important step. This field can help you find answers to some of the most important



problems facing us today. Environmental science is an integrative field. It draws on diverse knowledge bases and skills to address issues: For example, preserving healthy ecosystems depends on strategies such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, developing renewable energy systems, reducing pollution, improving social and environmental justice, improving sustainable farming systems, and reducing resource consumption.

In many ways, environmental science is also an optimistic field. Although you will examine serious environmental challenges in this book, you will also explore many ways you can contribute to finding solutions. Understanding the nature of environmental problems is a first step to fixing them. Learning about new approaches gives you the power to help make a difference, no matter where you come from or what your interests are. For many of us, discovering ways to contribute makes this an exciting and engaging field.

As you will find in the “What Can You Do?” boxes in every chapter, there are countless practical opportunities to protect and sustain natural resources. It doesn’t take a huge project to do important work for your local environment. Individuals and small groups have many opportunities to make positive change. As you read this book, look for ways to connect the issues and ideas to your other interests. Whether you are a biologist, a geologist, a chemist, an economist, a political scientist, a writer, or an artist or poet who can capture our imagination, you can find fruitful and interesting ways to connect with the topics in this book.

## Sustainable development is a central theme

Several main themes run through this book. As you will read in chapter 1, these include **sustainable development** (including population growth, food production, environmental quality, energy, and resources), **climate change** and its impacts, and fundamentals of how **scientific methods** help us ask and answer questions about the world around us.

These and other themes show both continuing challenges and evidence of progress. **Human population growth** continues, for example, but it is slowing almost everywhere as women’s education and economic opportunity allow for small, well-cared-for families. We remain addicted to fossil fuels, but **new energy technologies** now provide reliable alternatives in many countries. Solar, wind, biomass, geothermal energy, and conservation could supply all the energy we need, if we chose to invest in them. **Water quality** and **air pollution** remain dire problems in many areas, but we have shown that we can dramatically improve water quality, air quality, and environmental health, when we put our minds to it.

Governments around the world are acknowledging the costs of environmental degradation and are taking steps to reduce their environmental impacts. From China to Europe to North America and developing countries, policymakers have plans to restore forests, conserve water, reduce air and water pollution, and develop sustainable energy supplies. Public support for environmental protection has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

Businesses everywhere increasingly recognize the opportunities in conservation, recycling, producing non-toxic products, and reducing their ecological footprints. New jobs are being created in environmental fields. Public opinion supports environmental protection because voters see the importance of environmental health for the economy, society, and quality of life.

## What Sets This Book Apart?

As practicing scientists and educators, we bring to this book decades of experience in the classroom, in the practice of science, and in civic engagement. This experience helps give students a clear sense of what environmental science is and why it matters. Throughout the book, we also provide recent data that underly and inform emerging ideas in the field.

## Engaged and active learning

We've given particular attention to learning styles and active learning features in this edition, both in the text and in online **Connect** study materials and supplements. Throughout, the text promotes active, engaged learning practices. In each section heading, **key concepts** identify ideas for students to focus on as they read. **Section reviews** encourage students to check their learning at the end of each main section. These practices of active reading have been shown to improve retention of class topics, as well as higher-order thinking about concepts. **Key terms** at the end of each chapter encourage students to test their understanding. **Critical thinking and discussion questions** and **Data Analysis** exercises push students to explore further the concepts in the text.

A rich collection of online study resources is available on the **Connect** website. **LearnSmart** study resources, practice quizzes, animations, videos, and other resources improve understanding and retention of course material.

The book also engages course material with students' own lives: **What Can You Do?** sections help students identify ways to apply what they are learning to their own lives and communities. **What Do You Think?** readings ask students to critically evaluate their own assessments of a complex problem. We devote a special introduction (**Learning to Learn**) to the ways students can build study habits, take ownership of this course, and practice critical, analytical, and reflective thinking.

Many of these resources are designed as starting points for lectures, discussions in class, essays, lab activities, or projects. Some data analysis exercises involve simple polls of classes, which can be used for graphing and interpretation. Data analysis exercises vary in the kinds of learning and skills involved, and all aim to give students an opportunity to explore data or ideas discussed in the text.

## Quantitative reasoning and methods of science

Quantitative reasoning is increasingly recognized as essential in many aspects of education, and this book has greater coverage of this topic, and provides more up-to-date data and graphs, than other books on the market. **Quantitative reasoning** questions in the text push students to evaluate data and graphs they have read about. Attention to statistics, graphing, graph interpretation, and abundant up-to-date data are some of the resources available to help students practice their skills with data interpretation.

**Exploring Science** readings show how science is done, to demystify the process of answering questions with scientific and quantitative methods. Throughout the text, we emphasize principles and methods of science through discussions of scientific methods, uncertainty and probability, and detailed examination of how scientists observe the world, gather data, and use data to answer relevant questions.

## A positive focus on opportunities

Our intent is to empower students to make a difference in their communities by becoming informed, critical thinkers with an awareness of environmental issues and the scientific basis of

these issues. Many environmental problems remain severe, but there have been many improvements in recent decades, including cleaner water and cleaner air for most Americans, declining rates of hunger and fertility, and increasing access to education. An entire chapter (chapter 13) focuses on ecological restoration, one of the most important aspects of ecology today. Case studies show examples of real progress, and **What Can You Do?** sections give students ideas for contributing to solutions. Throughout this text we balance evidence of serious environmental challenges with ideas about what we can do to overcome them.

## A balanced presentation for critical thinking

Among the most important practices a student can learn are to think analytically about evidence, to consider uncertainty, and to skeptically evaluate the sources of information. This book offers abundant opportunities to practice the essential skills of critically analyzing evidence, of evaluating contradictory interpretation, and identifying conflicting interests. We ask students to practice critical and reflective thinking in **What Do You Think?** readings, in end-of-chapter discussion questions, and throughout the text. We present balanced evidence, and we provide the tools for students to discuss and form their own opinions.

## An integrated, global perspective

Globalization spotlights the interconnectedness of environmental resources and services, as well as our common interest in how to safeguard them. To remain competitive in a global economy, it is critical that we understand conditions in other countries and cultures. This book provides case studies and topics from regions around the world, with maps and data illustrating global issues. These examples show the integration between environmental conditions at home and abroad.

### **Google Earth™ placemarks**

Our global perspective is supported by placemarks and questions you can explore in Google Earth. This free, online program lets students view detailed satellite images of the earth that aid in understanding the geographical context of topics in the book. Through **Connect**, students can access placemarks, descriptions, and questions about those places. These stimulate a thoughtful exploration of each site and its surroundings. This interactive geographical exploration is a wonderful tool to give an international perspective on environmental issues.

## What's New in This Edition?

This edition has thoroughly updated data, figures, and tables, as well as 16 new opening case studies that reflect new developments in the field, and over a dozen new "Exploring Science" or "What Do You Think?" boxed readings. We have enhanced our focus on climate action and environmental action, something students in our classes find especially valuable. Brief "benchmark data"



tables provide reference values or comparisons that reflect key ideas in the chapter. Systematic discussions review topics such as uncertainty, graphing, statistics, experimental design, models, and systems. At the end of each chapter, we conclude with a new section, “Connecting the Dots,” that draws together major themes of the chapter.

## Specific chapter changes

The Introduction (Learning to learn) explains how each of us can engage with this field. Knowing what you care about is a good way to start connecting your interests to the study of our environment and how it works. We examine the nature of **critical thinking**, and we emphasize that learning to learn helps students not only in studying but in everyday life.

Chapter 1 presents **climate change** as an overarching concern. We introduce **sustainable development** as a topic that runs throughout the book as both a goal and a measure of progress. We discuss new environmental leaders, as well as the idea of **planetary boundaries**, which define limits of environmental services from major sectors of our environment.

Chapter 2 introduces a new case study on camera traps and **citizen science** to monitor migratory wildlife in Tanzania’s Serengeti National Park. This example illustrates **study design** as well as ways each of us can contribute to original research. Continuing our discussion of the principles and applications of science, we discuss significance and confidence in data.

Chapter 3 opens with a new case study on the growing hypoxic “dead zone” in the Gulf of Mexico. This case illustrates interconnections in a vast ecological system and shows how chemical elements and energy transfers underlie pollution, wastewater treatment, eutrophication, and other processes. An “Exploring Science” reading reviews the **CRISPR** gene editing system, including ethics of human embryo editing, in this fast-moving field.

Chapter 4 introduces a new contributor to this book. Dr. Kimberly Byrd, a conservation biologist who has revised this crucial chapter. She has written a new case study on the ecological importance of seagrass meadows, including ideas of **ecosystem complexity** and “blue carbon.” She has added a discussion of **complex adaptive systems** and system resilience. We hope readers will find her voice refreshing, interesting, and informative.

Chapter 5 has a new case study on **climate-driven shifts** in species ranges and biomes. These ecosystem changes directly affect lives and livelihoods. Recognizing the adaptations that allow species to adapt helps us understand survival factors for both humans and other species. A new section on human **disturbance** to biomes and ecosystems addresses the ways we are transforming the world.

Chapter 6 opens with a new case study on invasive Asian carp in the Mississippi watershed. Millions of dollars in sport fishing, recreation, and ecosystem services are at risk, as well as native species. We discuss growth patterns, life history strategies, and intrinsic and extrinsic factors that regulate growth. A new “Exploring Science” box describes methods for estimating population sizes for species, such as carp, that are difficult to count.

Chapter 7 uses a new case study on the rapid aging of China’s population to discuss **population momentum** and factors that influence **birth rates**. China now has the largest number of senior citizens in the world, and has one of the largest percentages of old people of any country. This phenomenon is becoming global, as world population growth has fallen from about 2.1 percent in 1960 to 0.1 percent today. Half us now live in countries where the birth rate just replaces the death rate. We have long called for this shift, but its implications for societies are not entirely clear.

Chapter 8 has an updated case study on perfluorocarbons, including an \$850 million settlement in 2018 between the state of Minnesota and the 3M corporation for uncontrolled dumping of these persistent chemicals. Developments in **contagious diseases** among humans and wildlife have necessitated major chapter updates. A new section reviews growing transfer of **antibiotic resistance** from livestock that threaten human health. Building on the opening case study, we highlight four widely distributed persistent organic pollutants that threaten the health of millions of people. The “What Do You Think?” box on acceptable risk has also been revised.

Chapter 9 opens with a new case study on low-cost **food security** initiatives in Burkina Faso, one of the world’s poorest countries. Farmers there are fighting land degradation and hunger using simple, traditional water conservation and farming techniques to improve food production. We also consider dietary diversity. We have new discussions of climate impacts on food production and on *Diet for a Small Planet*, and eating low on the food chain.

Chapter 10 has an updated opening case study on farming in Brazil’s Cerrado. This case became even more urgent with the 2019 election of Jair Bolsonaro, who aims to expand soy production and reduce protections for Amazonian rainforest. Destruction of the world’s largest tropical forest has dire implications for our climate and for survival of indigenous people. A new section discusses **carbon farming**, which could be part of the solution to controlling climate change. We also have updated the “What do you Think?” box on the environmental benefits of shade-grown coffee and cocoa.

Chapter 11 leads with a new case study on how the reintroduction of wolves, a top predator, has enhanced **biodiversity** in Yellowstone National Park, with cascading effects through both the food chain and the physical environment. We have emphasized the “climate” component of HIPPO factors in threats to species survival. We have enhanced discussion of the “sixth extinction” and added a boxed reading on the startling crisis of **disappearing insects**. Studies show losses of 80 percent of the flying insect fauna in some areas, with probably profound impacts on biodiversity more broadly.

Chapter 12 has a new case study on ecosystems in transition. Longer fire seasons and more extreme outbreaks of bark beetles threaten to alter western forests, as climate warming has produced the largest, most intense, and most damaging forest fires in U.S. history. Continuing our survey of landscapes in transition, we have added a new “Exploring Science” box on the effects of palm oil plantations on endangered orangutan populations on Borneo. A new “What Do You Think?” box examines

new threats to U.S. national monuments from mining and other extractive industries.

Chapter 13 introduces **restoration ecology** with a new case study on the science and practice of restoring coral reefs. At least one-third of all coral reefs have been damaged beyond recovery by pollution, overharvesting, ocean acidification, and climate change. Some experts warn there may be no coral reefs anywhere in the world by the end of this century. But restoration ecologists are exploring innovative strategies for protecting and restoring these amazing systems. A new box on the “monarch highway” project describes both the threats to these charismatic insects and efforts to restore their populations.

Chapter 14 begins an **environmental geology** discussion with a new case study on the proposed Pebble Mine in headwater salmon streams of Alaska’s Bristol Bay. This controversial project pits the fate of pristine wilderness and the world’s largest sockeye salmon run against the estimated profits and likely environmental damage from a mammoth copper-nickel mine. On one side are about 850 high-paying mining jobs over the expected 20-year life of the mine compared to 12,000 permanent jobs for native people and Alaskan citizens in the salmon fishing industry. This struggle reflects issues in many controversies about earth resources.

Chapter 15 demonstrates leadership in **climate action** with a new case study on groundbreaking climate policy in California. Challenges are daunting, but solutions are diverse, creative, and exciting. We have enhanced the discussion of jet streams and **polar vortex** effects on local weather, as well as the latest IPCC report as well as current information about major greenhouse gases as well as the latest news about polar ice melting and warming seas. A new box illustrates the effects of **black carbon** emissions on climate systems. We also examine options for **carbon capture** and other efforts to combat climate change.

Chapter 16 provides updated data on air pollution as well as updated discussion of the Montreal Protocol on ozone-destroying substances—including the **Kigali Amendment**, which accelerates the phase out of refrigerants that are also critical greenhouse gases. This step alone could prevent 0.5 degrees of global warming by 2100. We increase emphasis of the dangers of air pollution particulates smaller than 2.5  $\mu\text{m}$ , and we discuss the problems of air pollution in developing countries.

Chapter 17 updates the opening case study, “When Will Lake Mead Go Dry?” and the demands for Colorado River water that exceed the river’s flow. We provide recent data on looming **water shortages**, especially in regions dependent on glacial rivers, as in South Asia. Water is likely to be the most contentious natural resource in the future, but smarter **water conservation** policies, including pricing, irrigation and farming practices, and low-flow household appliances could reduce these risks. We also discuss China’s expanding dam-building projects, especially on the Mekong River.

Chapter 18 continues the water resource discussion with the example of the Ganges River, on which nearly a billion people in South Asia depend. We know how to prevent **water pollution**, and we know how to capture and remove pollutants. But finding ways to implement policies and pay for treatment is difficult even in

wealthy countries. These challenges are even steeper in developing regions as they struggle to improve health and quality of life.

Chapter 19 presents a new case study on the demise of one of the U.S. coal companies. We emphasize that while fossil fuels still provide most energy, the future of energy is not the past. We update data on production and consumption and discuss the shifting landscape of conventional energy, including growth in China. A new “Exploring Science” box discusses the growing importance of indigenous resistance to new pipelines across their land. We also highlight new debates about nuclear power, which is both expensive and low carbon.

Chapter 20 explores the fast-changing landscape of **renewable energy** with an updated case study on Germany’s *Energiewende*, or **energy transition** from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This chapter is heavily revised to reflect new developments in technology and energy production. Explanations of new systems include a discussion of *efficiency* and *power capacity*, as well as battery storage. We examine analysis showing how sustainable energy systems could meet all our needs, often saving money as well as reducing pollution.

Chapter 21 includes an updated case study on the phenomenal amounts of **plastic pollution** in the world’s oceans. A new section reviews the options for waste disposal and updates both the amounts and types of materials in our waste stream. We examine China’s decision to reject U.S. recycling and what this means for waste management.

Chapter 22 opens with a new case study showing how cities are leading efforts to become environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. We update data on **urban growth**, especially in African states, where some cities may have 100 million residents by the end of this century. How will these cities manage pollution, traffic, energy, food, and water supplies? We also examine the plight of sinking coastal cities amid rising seas. A final section discusses ways cities can be livable and sustainable.

Chapter 23 has an updated case study about British Columbia’s **carbon tax** and notes that when Washington State tried to pass a similar tax, the fossil fuel industry spent \$30 million to block the plan. Will other states be able to overcome this spending power? A new “Exploring Science” box notes that estimates of the value of global **ecosystem services** have increased from \$33 trillion a few decades ago to \$173 trillion today. Another boxed essay compares rapid job growth in sustainable energy compared to the fossil fuel industry. With interest growing in a Green New Deal, we have added a new “What Do You Think?” box to review this proposal.

Chapter 24 opens with a new case study about the recovery of North American green sea turtles with the help of the Endangered Species Act. In 1978 fewer than 300 sea turtles nested in Florida. By 2017, more than 39,000 turtles came ashore to nest, a major success in species protection. We review the provisions and successes of this and other major environmental policies. A new section discusses problems of **regulatory capture** in government agencies, as well as debates about how much regulation we want.

Chapter 25 presents a new case study on the history of Earth Day. It is critical that students understand how we got to where we

are, and how public involvement with environmental issues has emerged. A new box discusses fossil fuel divestment debates at U.S. colleges and universities. We end the chapter with a review of sustainability as an overarching goal for environmental science.

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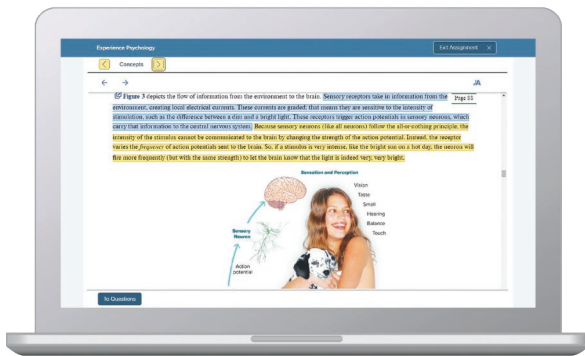
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# Key Elements

A global perspective is vital to learning about environmental science.

## Case Studies

All chapters open with a real-world case study to help students appreciate and understand how environmental science impacts lives and how scientists study complex issues.

## Exploring Science

Current environmental issues exemplify the principles of scientific observation and data-gathering techniques to promote scientific literacy.

### EXPLORING SCIENCE

#### Say Hello to Your 90 Trillion Little Friends

Have you ever thought of yourself as a biological community or an ecosystem? Researchers estimate that each of us has about 90 trillion bacteria, fungi, protozoans, and other organisms living in or on our bodies. And the viruses inside those organisms increase our biodiversity by another order of magnitude. The largest group—around 2 kg worth—resides in your gut, but there are thousands of species living in every orifice, gland, pore, and crevice of your anatomy. Although the 10 trillion or so mammalian cells make up more than 95 percent of the volume of your body, they represent less than 10 percent of all the cell types that occupy that space.



FIGURE 1. Lactobacillus bacteria are part of the normal flora of human intestines and are often used as probiotic supplements. These intestinal bacteria help control gut pathogens, aid in digestion, and supply your body with essential nutrients.

Because most of the other species with which we coexist are microorganisms, we call the collection of cells that inhabit us our microbiome. The species composition of your own microbial community will be very similar to that of other people and pets with whom you live, but each of us has a unique collection of species that may be as distinctive as our fingerprints.

As is the case in other species interactions, these relationships can be mutualistic, symbiotic, commensal, or predatory. We used to think of all microorganisms as germs to be eliminated as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Current research suggests, however, that many of our fellow travelers are beneficial, perhaps even indispensable, to our good health and survival.

Your microbiome is essential, for example, in the digestion and absorption of nutrients. Symbiotic bacteria in your gut supply essential nutrients (important amino acids and short-chain fatty acids, vitamins such as K and some B vitamins), hormones and

communicate with and modulate your immune and metabolic systems. They help exclude pathogens by competing with them for living space, or by creating an environment in which harmful species can't grow or prosper.

The inhabitants of different organs can have important roles in specific diseases. Oral bacteria, for example, have been implicated in cardiovascular disease, pancreatic cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, and gum disease. A healthy biome seems to be critical in controlling chronic inflammation that triggers many important long-term diseases. As is true in many ecosystems, the diver-

sity of a community-rich in good microbes will not only help you resist infection by pathogens but will allow faster recovery after a catastrophic event. People in primitive or rustic societies who eat a wide variety of whole grains, raw fruits and vegetables, and unpasteurized dairy products tend to have a much greater species variety than those of us who have a diet full of simple sugars and highly processed foods. Widespread use of antibiotics in our food, toothpaste, soaps, and many other consumer products also limits diversity in our symbiotic community.

A growing problem in many places is antibiotic-resistant, hospital-acquired infections. One of the most intractable of these is *Clostridium difficile*, or C. diff, which infects 250,000 and kills 14,000 Americans every year. An effective treatment for this superpathogen is a fecal transplant. A sample of the microbes from a healthy person is implanted either directly through a feeding tube into the patient's stomach or in frozen, encapsulated pellets of feces that are defrosted orally. In one trial, 18 of 20 patients who received fecal transplants recovered from C. diff.

Similarly, if plants from less than a meter that most from obese mice are transplanted into mice, the mice lose weight. So, it may

### CASE STUDY

#### Restoring Coral Reefs

Coral reefs are among the richest biological communities on Earth. They're the marine equivalent of tropical rainforests in diversity, productivity, and complexity. It's estimated that one quarter of all marine species spend some or all of their life cycle in the shelter of coral reefs. Globally, at least 17 percent of the protein we eat comes from species that occupy coral reef systems for at least part of their life cycle. In some coastal areas, that number can be as high as 70 percent. Reefs serve as nurseries and food sources for important commercial species, such as shrimp and tuna, and shelter ecologically important species, such as sharks. Reefs protect shorelines from storms, and are valuable recreation attractions for tourists.

But reefs are in serious trouble. According to recent surveys, we've already lost about 30 percent of coral worldwide, and another 60 percent of this valuable natural resource is threatened by climate change, destructive fishing methods, coral mining, sediment runoff, pollution, and other human-caused stresses. Some researchers warn that if current trends continue there won't be any viable coral reefs anywhere in the world by the end of this century. Reefs are really colonies of tiny invertebrate animals embedded in calcium carbonate shells cemented together to create branches, digits, brackets, heads, and reefs. Individual animals are called polyps, which have minute fan-shaped tentacles to collect zooplankton and nutrients from the water. There can be thousands of polyps on a single coral branch. Nutrients are sparse in the clear, tropical waters where corals live, so reef-building corals form symbiotic relationships with microscopic algae, called zooxanthellae. Photosynthesis by the algae provide as much as 90 percent of the energy the corals need to grow and survive. Consequently, most corals need clear water and abundant sunlight.

One of the most visible and dangerous signs of reef damage occurs when water temperatures get too high. Under these conditions, the symbiotic algae produce toxins by-products that cause the host corals to expel them in a process called bleaching. This doesn't kill the corals immediately, but if they don't reacquire new algae, they're already lost about 30 percent of coral worldwide, and another 60 percent of this valuable natural resource is threatened by climate change, destructive fishing methods, coral mining, sediment runoff, pollution, and other human-caused stresses. Some researchers warn that if current trends continue there won't be any viable coral reefs anywhere in the world by the end of this century. Reefs are really colonies of tiny invertebrate animals embedded in calcium carbonate shells cemented together to create branches, digits, brackets, heads, and reefs. Individual animals are called polyps, which have minute fan-shaped tentacles to collect zooplankton and nutrients from the water. There can be thousands of polyps on a single coral branch. Nutrients are sparse in the clear, tropical waters where corals live, so reef-building corals form symbiotic relationships with microscopic algae, called zooxanthellae. Photosynthesis by the algae provide as much as 90 percent of the energy the corals need to grow and survive. Consequently, most corals need clear water and abundant sunlight.

Climate warming is a global risk to reefs, but scientists, volunteers, and community activists are working to protect and restore coral reef systems around the world. Many of these projects are aimed at reducing pollution and destructive human impacts. In Hawaii, large, barge-mounted vacuum cleaners hover over reefs that are smothering reefs. In Palau, the government, together with international advisors, is training community

organizations on how to protect priority marine and coastal areas. In Indonesia, conservation organizations are working with indigenous groups to stop destructive harvest techniques, such as cyanide and dynamite fishing. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, officials are working to reduce sediment, sewage, and pollution runoff from the land. And in Australia, divers are removing or killing crown-of-thorns urchins that destroy corals.

Some of the most exciting projects are studying ways to regrow—and even improve—corals. Some branched corals, such as staghorn and elkhorn, which are among the most threatened of all species, can grow and reproduce through fragmentation. If a branch breaks off and conditions are favorable, it can reattach to the rock substrate and begin to grow a new colony. Researchers are taking advantage of this feature by harvesting coral fragments and growing them in underwater nurseries (see fig. 13.1) until they're large enough to be relocated to suitable areas. Dozens of these nurseries are now in operation worldwide, and tens of thousands of baby corals have been transplanted to damaged or depleted reefs. Practitioners have found that it's best to create clustered colonies of different coral species so they can protect and support each other.

Some restoration projects are looking for corals with special characteristics to increase the success in restoration efforts. In Oahu lagoon in American Samoa, for example, corals have been found that can survive much warmer water than most corals can tolerate. If studies can unlock the secret of this unusual heat resistance, it could be valuable in restoration efforts. At this point, most coral reefs in the world have bleached, and many have recovered. What different environmental or biological conditions favor recovery? Similarly, an interesting example of natural selection has been

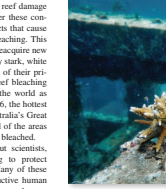


FIGURE 13.1. Fragments of staghorn and elkhorn coral can be cultivated in nurseries and later transplanted to replenish damaged reef systems.

FIGURE 13.1. Fragments of staghorn and elkhorn coral can be cultivated in nurseries and later transplanted to replenish damaged reef systems.

### Data Analysis

#### Exploring Global Food Data

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is one of the most important sources of global food data. It lets you explore changing food production, and population growth in Burkina Faso and other countries.

Go to the website (<http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#compare>). In the Compare Data section, you can specify Groups = Production, Domains = Crops, Country = Burkina Faso, Element = Area Harvested, and Item = Maize and Cassava. Then click Compare Data. Scroll down the page to see the graph you have just produced. This is an excellent site to understand real-world changes, which affect peoples' lives around the world. What other countries and crops would be interesting? Try looking at Brazil's soy production (discussed in chapter 10). There is a wealth of data here, free for you to explore.

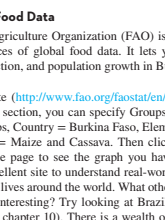


FIGURE 1 The UN FAO website lets you graph and examine changing production of many crops. Here data are shown for Burkina Faso. Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAOSTAT (<http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#compare>)

### What Do You Think?

#### Too Many Deer?

A century ago, few Americans had ever seen a wild deer. Uncontrolled hunting and habitat destruction had reduced the deer population to about 50,000 animals nationwide. Some states had deer at all. To protect the remaining deer, laws were passed in the 1920s and 1930s to restrict hunting, and the main deer predators—wolves and mountain lions—were exterminated throughout most of their former range.

As Americans have moved from rural areas to urban centers, forests have regrown, and with no natural predators, deer populations have undergone explosive growth. Maturing at age two, a female deer can give birth to twin fawns every year for a decade or more. Increasing from about 20 percent annually, a deer population can double in just three years, an excellent example of irruptive, exponential growth.

Wildlife biologists estimate that the contiguous 48 states now have a population of more than 30 million white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), probably triple the number present in pre-Columbian times. Some areas have as many as 200 deer per square mile (800/m<sup>2</sup>). At this density, woodland plant diversity is generally reduced to a few species that deer won't eat. Most deer, in such conditions, suffer from malnourishment, and many die every year of disease and starvation.



White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) can become emaciated and sick when they exceed their environment's carrying capacity. Howard Sanble/Shutterstock

Other species are diminished as well. Many small mammals and ground-dwelling birds begin to disappear when deer populations reach just 25 animals per square mile. At 50 deer per square mile, most ecosystems are seriously impoverished.

The social costs of large deer populations are high. In Pennsylvania alone, where deer numbers are now about 500 times greater than a century ago, deer destroy about \$70 million worth of crops and \$75 million worth of trees annually. In nationally, there are over 1.3 million automobile collisions with deer each year. (With an average insurance claim of over \$4,000, these amount to over \$5 billion in damages each year.) Deer help spread Lyme disease, and in some states chronic wasting disease is found in wild deer herds. Some of the most heated criticisms of current deer management policies are in the suburbs. Deer love to browse on flowers, young trees, and ornamental bushes in suburban yards, among the ire of gardeners and home owners.

At the same time, many people are fond of deer. They enjoy watching them—helps that deer are much easier to spot than rare or nocturnal wildlife—and many people feel sympathy for deer as fellow creatures. Many people feel more connected to nature when they see deer in their neighborhoods.

In remote forest areas, many states have extended hunting seasons, increased the bag limit to four or more animals, and encouraged hunters to shoot does (females) as well as bucks (males). Some hunters criticize these changes because they believe that fewer deer will make it harder to hunt successfully and less likely that they'll find a trophy buck. Others, however, argue that a healthier herd and a more diverse ecosystem is better for all concerned.

In urban areas, increased sport hunting usually isn't acceptable. Wildlife biologists argue that the only practical way to reduce deer herds is culling by professional sharpshooters. Animal rights activists protest lethal control methods in forest and suburban areas. They call instead for fertility controls, the reintroduction of predators, such as wolves and mountain lions, or trap and translocate programs. But control works in captive populations but is expensive and impractical with wild animals. Trapping is expensive, and few places are willing to take surplus animals, which usually die after relocation, having lost their home territory, resources, and social group.

This case shows that carrying capacity can be more complex than simply the maximum number of organisms an ecosystem can support. While it may be possible for 200 deer to survive in a square mile, the ecological carrying capacity—the population that can be sustained without damage to the ecosystem and to other species—is usually considerably lower. There's also an ethical carrying capacity: if we don't want to see animals suffer from malnutrition, disease, or starvation. There may also be a cultural carrying capacity, if we consider the tolerable rate of depredation on crops and lawns or an acceptable number of motor vehicle collisions.

To address this issue with your fellow students, suppose that some of you are wildlife biologists, charged with managing the deer herd in your state, while others are deer defenders. How would you reconcile the different interests in this issue? What sources of information or ideas shape views for and against population control in deer? What methods would you suggest to reach the optimal population size? What social or ecological indicators would you look for to gauge whether deer populations are excessive or have reached an appropriate level?

## Google Earth

Google Earth interactive satellite imagery gives students a geographical context for global places and topics discussed in the text. Google Earth icons indicate a corresponding exercise in Connect. In these exercises, students will find links to locations mentioned in the text, as well as corresponding assessments that will help them understand environmental topics.

## What Do You Think?

Students are presented with challenging environmental studies that offer an opportunity to consider contradictory data, special interest topics, and conflicting interpretations within a real scenario.

## Learning Outcomes

Found at the beginning of each chapter, and organized by major headings, these outcomes give students an overview of the key concepts they will need to understand.

## Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- 9.1 Describe patterns of world hunger and nutritional requirements.
- 9.2 Identify key food sources, including protein-rich foods.
- 9.3 Explain new crops and genetic engineering.
- 9.4 Discuss how policy can affect food resources.

## Section Reviews

Section reviews are a series of content-specific questions that appear at the end of each section in the chapter. These questions encourage students to periodically review what they have read and offers an opportunity to check their understanding of key concepts.

### Section Review

1. How many people in the world are chronically undernourished? What does chronically undernourished mean?
2. List at least five African countries with high rates of hunger (fig. 9.3; use a world map to help identify countries).
3. What are some of the health risks of overeating? What percentage of adults are overweight in the United States?

## Connecting the Dots

This section summarizes the chapter by highlighting key ideas and relating them to one another.

## Connecting the Dots

The potential location of biological communities is largely determined by temperature and moisture availability. Consequently, ecologists anticipate that changes in climate patterns will produce changes in biome distributions. For people accustomed to familiar ecosystems, such as the maple-rich northern hardwood forests of New England, these changes are likely to disrupt livelihoods and even cultural references.

Understanding the global distribution of biomes, and knowing the differences in what lives where and why, are essential to ecology. Plants and animals are adapted to live in particular biomes, such as the alpine tundra, or chaparral. You understand limiting factors that affect human occupation and use of the biomes found

in particular locations. Humans tend to prefer mild climates and the highly productive biological communities found in temperate zones. These biomes also suffer the highest rates of degradation and overuse.

While many of us pay most attention to terrestrial systems, oceans cover over 70 percent of the earth's surface. Marine biomes, such as coral reefs or mangroves, can be as biologically diverse and productive as any terrestrial biome. Freshwater ecosystems, too, are critically important, even though their extent is small overall. People have always depended on rich, complex ecosystems. In recent times, the rapid growth of human populations, coupled with more powerful ways to harvest resources, has led to extensive destruction of these environments. Awareness of emerging threats like climate change may help inspire more action to protect these living systems.

## Critical Thinking and Discussion Questions

1. Do people around you worry about hunger? Do you think they should? Why or why not? What factors influence the degree to which people worry about hunger in the world?
2. Global issues such as hunger and food production often seem far too large to think about solving, but it may be that many strategies can help us address chronic hunger. Consider your own skills and interests. Think of at least one skill that could be applied (if you had the time and resources) to helping reduce hunger in your community or elsewhere.
3. Suppose you are a farmer who wants to start a confined animal feeding operation. What conditions make this a good strategy for you, and what factors would you consider in weighing its costs and benefits? What would you say to neighbors who wish to impose restrictions on how you run the operation?
4. Debate the claim that famines are caused more by human actions (or inactions) than by environmental forces. What kinds of evidence would be needed to resolve this debate?
5. Outline arguments you would make to your family and friends for why they should eat a mostly vegetarian diet, along the lines of *Diet for A Small Planet*. What reasons would be most compelling? What are some reasons why it is, or is not, fair to influence someone else's food practices?
6. Given what you know about GMO crops, identify some of the costs and benefits associated with them. Which of the costs and benefits do you find most important? Why?
7. Corn is by far the dominant crop in the United States. In what ways is this a good thing for Americans? How is it a problem? Who are the main beneficiaries of this system?

## Critical Thinking and Discussion Questions

Brief scenarios of everyday occurrences or ideas challenge students to apply what they have learned to their lives.

## What Can You Do?

This feature gives students realistic steps for applying their knowledge to make a positive difference in our environment.

## What Can You Do?

### Controlling Pests

Based on the principles of integrated pest management, the U.S. EPA releases helpful guides to pest control. Among their recommendations:

1. *Identify pests, and decide how much pest control is necessary.* Does your lawn really need to be totally weed-free? Could you tolerate some blemished fruits and vegetables? Could you replace sensitive plants with ones less sensitive to pests?
2. *Eliminate pest sources.* Remove from your house or yard any food, water, and habitat that encourages pest growth. Eliminate hiding places or other habitats. Rotate crops in your garden.
3. *Develop a weed-resistant yard.* Pay attention to your soil's pH, nutrients, texture, and organic content. Grow grass or cover varieties suited to your climate. Set realistic goals for weed control.
4. *Use biological controls.* Encourage beneficial insect predators such as birds, bats that eat insects, ladybugs, spiders, centipedes, dragonflies, wasps, and ants.
5. *Use simple manual methods.* Cultivate your garden and handpick weeds and pests from your garden. Set traps to control rats, mice, and some insects. Mulch to reduce weed growth.
6. *Use chemical pesticides carefully.* If you decide that the best solution is chemical, choose the right pesticide product, read safety warnings and handling instructions, buy the amount you need, store the product safely, and dispose of any excess properly.

Source: *Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety*. EPA 730-K-95-001

## Quantitative Reasoning

Compare the estimates of known and threatened species in table 11.1. Are some groups overrepresented? Are we simply more interested in some organisms, or are we really a greater threat to some species?

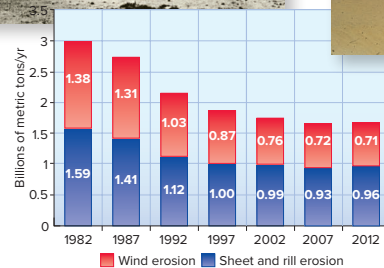
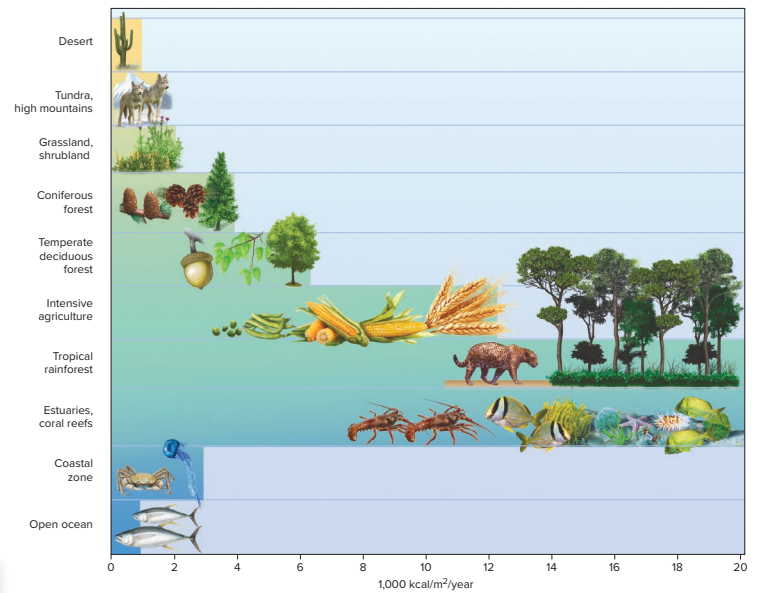
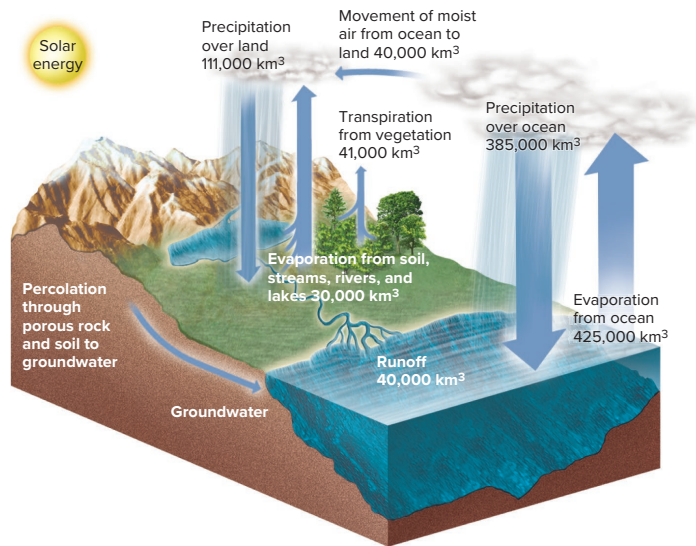
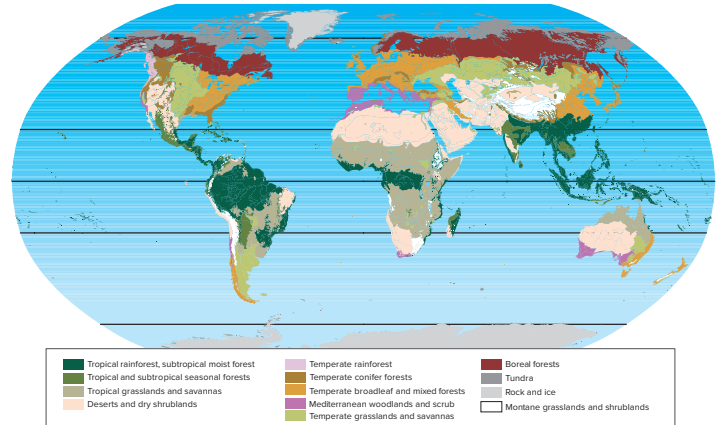
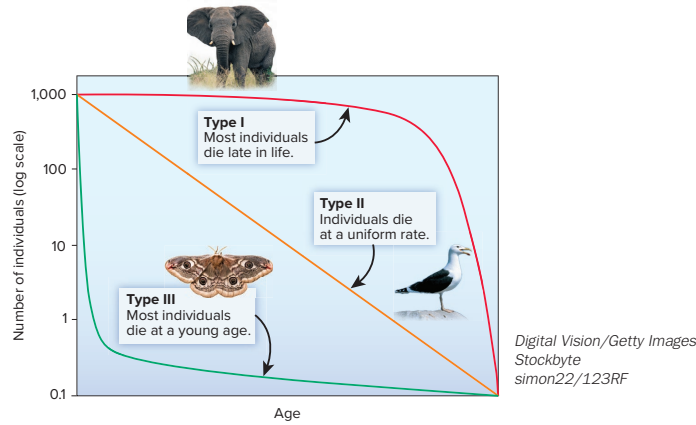
## Quantitative Reasoning

Quantitative reasoning questions in the text push students to evaluate data and graphs they have read about. Attention to statistics, graphing, graph interpretation, and abundant up-to-date data are some of the resources available to help students



# Relevant Photos and Instructional Art Support Learning

High-quality photos and realistic illustrations display detailed diagrams, graphs, and real-life situations.



Source: a - b. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service





# Introduction

## Learning to Learn



## Learning Outcomes

▲ Learning to learn is a lifelong skill.  
William P. Cunningham

*After studying this introduction, you should be able to:*

- L.1** Form a plan to organize your efforts and become a more effective and efficient student.
- L.2** Apply critical and reflective thinking in environmental science.
- L.3** Identify logical errors, persuasive tricks, and biases used in popular media.
- L.4** Describe issues that motivate you and consider ways they connect to environmental science.

*“What kind of world do you want to live in?  
Demand that your teachers teach you what  
you need to know to build it.”*

*– Peter Kropotkin*





## How can I do well in environmental science?

Case studies in environmental science examine a particular place or theme that draws together many of the themes in a chapter. For this chapter on learning to learn, a good case study to start with is you. You come to this course with particular backgrounds and ideas. You have expertise and skills. As you start reading this book, consider these two questions: How do you want to draw on your abilities and background and connect them to themes in this book? And how do you want to develop your knowledge and skills to answer questions that are important to you?

Responses to these question will differ for everyone. But the questions are relevant for everyone because environmental science is a field that involves a diversity of topics, with connections to basic ecology, natural resources, and policy questions that influence those systems. Topics in this course primarily involve our natural environment, but we also examine our human environment, including the built world of technology and cities, as well as human social or cultural institutions. All of these interrelated aspects of our life affect us, and, in turn, are affected by what we do.

Another way this chapter relates to you is that it gives suggestions for how you can organize your learning process as you study. This means being aware and intentional about your study habits. Take time as you read this chapter to consider what you do well as you study, and what you need to do better to be effective with study time. This is another skill set that will serve you well in other contexts.

Part of doing well in this course is to develop your habits of critical thinking, that is, assessing how and why we think about things as we do. Critical thinking is one of the most useful skills you can learn in any of your classes, and so it is a focus of this chapter. Many central topics in environmental science are highly contested: What kinds of energy are most important? Where should they come from? What is a resource? How should we manage and conserve water resources? Who should pay the cost of controlling air pollution? Answering these questions requires analysis of evidence. But evidence can depend on when and by whom it was gathered and evaluated. For every opinion there is an equal and opposite opinion. How can you make sense out of this welter of ever-changing information?

As you consider these sometimes contradictory views, pay attention to developing your capacity to think independently, systematically, and skillfully to form your own opinions (fig. L.1).



**FIGURE L.1** Knowing what you care about and why is a good start to connecting your interests to the study of our environment and how it works.

Hero Images/Image Source

These qualities and abilities can help you in many aspects of life. Throughout this book you will find “What Do You Think?” boxes that invite you to practice your critical and reflective thinking skills.

Thinking about how we think is a practice that applies in ordinary conversation, as well as in media you encounter, and even in textbooks. Finding these patterns in arguments can be fun; it’s also important. Paying attention to these sorts of argument strategies is also a good practice in any class you take. These are a few of the logical errors you can watch for:

- *Red herring*: Introducing extraneous information to divert attention from the important point.
- *Ad hominem attacks*: Criticizing the opponent rather than the logic of the argument.
- *Hasty generalization*: Drawing conclusions about all members of a group based on evidence that pertains only to a selected sample.
- *False cause*: Drawing a link between premises and conclusions that depends on some imagined causal connection that does not, in fact, exist.
- *Appeal to ignorance*: Because some facts are in doubt, a conclusion is impossible.
- *Appeal to authority*: It’s true because someone says so.
- *Equivocation*: Using words with double meanings to mislead the listener.
- *Slippery slope*: A claim that some event or action will cause some subsequent action.
- *False dichotomy*: Giving either/or alternatives as if they are the only choices.

These skills are important to doing well in this class, and they are part of becoming a responsible and productive environmental citizen. Each of us needs a basis for learning and evaluating scientific principles, as well as some insights into the social, political, and economic systems that impact our global environment. We hope this book and the class you’re taking will give you the information you need to reach those goals. As the noted Senegalese conservationist and educator Baba Dioum once said, “In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.” The more you can connect ideas in this course to topics you care about, the better you can make use of them—and the more likely you will be to do well in the class.

## L.1 HOW CAN I GET AN A IN THIS CLASS?

- *Making a frank and honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses will help you do well in this class.*
- *Reading in a purposeful, deliberate manner is an important part of productive learning.*

What do you need to know to succeed in a class on environmental science? This chapter provides an overview of some skills to keep in mind as you begin. As Henry Ford once said, “If you think you can do a thing, or think you can’t do a thing, you’re right.”

One of the first things that will help you do well in this class—and enjoy it—is to understand that science is useful and accessible, if you just take your time with it. To do well in this class, start by identifying the ways that science connects with your interests and passions. Most environmental scientists are motivated by a love for something: a fishery biologist might love fishing; a plant pathologist might love gardening; an environmental chemist might be motivated by wanting to improve children’s health in the city in which she lives. All these people use the tools of science to help them understand something they get excited about. Finding that angle can help you do better in this class, and it can help you be a better and happier member of your community (fig. L.2).

Another key to success is understanding what “science” is. Basically, science is about trying to figure out how things work. This means examining a question carefully and methodically. It means questioning your own assumptions, as well as the statements you hear from others. Understanding some basic ideas in science can be very empowering: Learning to look for evidence and to question your assumptions is a life skill, and building comfort with thinking about numbers can help you budget your groceries, prioritize your schedule, or plan your vacation. Ideas in this book can help you understand the food you eat, the weather you encounter, the policies you hear about in the news—from energy policy to urban development to economics.



**FIGURE L.2** Finding the connections between your studies and the community, places, and ideas you care about can make this class more rewarding and fun.

Source: Gwen Bausmith, U.S. EPA

## What are good study habits?

What are your current study skills and habits? Making a frank and honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses will help you set goals and make plans for achieving them during this class. A good way to start is to examine your study habits. Rate yourself on each of the following study skills and habits on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (needs improvement). If you rate yourself below 3 on any item, think about an action plan to improve that competence or behavior.

- How well do you manage your time (do you tend to run late, or do you complete assignments on time)?
- Do you have a regular study environment where you can focus?
- How effective are you at reading and note-taking (do you remember what you’ve read; do you take notes regularly)?
- Do you attend class regularly, listen for instructions, and participate actively in class discussions? Do you bring questions to class about the material?
- Do you generally read assigned chapters in the textbook before attending class, or do you wait until the night before the exam?
- How do you handle test anxiety (do you usually feel prepared for exams and quizzes or are you terrified of them? Do you have techniques to reduce anxiety or turn it into positive energy)?
- Do you actively evaluate how you are doing in a course based on feedback from your instructor and then make corrections to improve your effectiveness?
- Do you seek out advice and assistance outside of class from your instructors or teaching assistants?

Procrastination is something almost everyone does, but a few small steps can help you build better habits. If you routinely leave your studying until the last minute, then consider making a study schedule, and keep a written record of how much time you spend studying. Schedule time for sleep, meals, exercise, and recreation so that you will be rested and efficient when you do study. Divide your work into reasonable sized segments that you can accomplish on a daily basis. Carry a calendar to keep track of assignments. And find a regular study space in which you can be effective and productive.

How you behave in class and interact with your instructor also can have a big impact on how much you learn and what grade you get. Make an effort to get to know your instructor. Sit near the front of the room where you can see and be seen. Learn to ask questions: This can keep you awake and engaged in class. Practice the skills of good note-taking (table L.1). Attend every class and arrive on time. Don’t fold up your papers and prepare to leave until after the class period is over. Arriving late and leaving early says to your instructor that you don’t care much about either the class or your grade.

Practice active, purposeful learning. It isn’t enough to passively absorb knowledge provided by your instructor and this textbook. You need to actively engage the material in order to really understand it. The more you invest yourself in the material, the easier it will be to comprehend and remember. It is very helpful to have a study buddy with whom you can compare notes and try out ideas (fig. L.3).



## Table L.1 Learning Skills—Taking Notes

1. Identify the important points in a lecture and organize your notes in an outline form to show main topics and secondary or supporting points. This will help you follow the sense of the lecture.
2. Write down all you can. If you miss something, having part of the notes will help your instructor identify what you've missed.
3. Leave a wide margin in your notes in which you can generate questions to which your notes are the answers. If you can't write a question about the material, you probably don't understand it.
4. Study for your test under test conditions by answering your own questions without looking at your notes. Cover your notes with a sheet of paper on which you write your answers, then slide it to the side to check your accuracy.
5. Go all the way through your notes once in this test mode, then go back to review those questions you missed.
6. Compare your notes and the questions you generated with those of a study buddy. Did you get the same main points from the lecture? Can you answer the questions someone else has written?
7. Review your notes again just before test time, paying special attention to major topics and questions you missed during study time.

Source: Dr. Melvin Northrup, Grand Valley State University.

It's well known that the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else. Take turns with your study buddy explaining the material you're studying. You may think you've mastered a topic by quickly skimming the text, but you're likely to find that you have to struggle to give a clear description in your own words. Anticipating possible exam questions and taking turns quizzing each other can be a very good way to prepare for tests.



**FIGURE L.3** Cooperative learning, in which you take turns explaining ideas and approaches with a friend, can be one of the best ways to comprehend material.

Prostock-studio/Shutterstock

## How can you use this textbook effectively?

An important part of productive learning is to read assigned material in a purposeful, deliberate manner. Ask yourself questions as you read. What is the main point being made here? How does the evidence presented support the assertions being made? What personal experience have you had or what prior knowledge can you bring to bear on this question? Can you suggest alternative explanations for the phenomena being discussed? A study technique developed by Frances Robinson and called the **SQ3R** method can improve your reading comprehension. It's also helpful to have a study group (fig. L.4). After class and before exams, you can compare notes, identify priorities, and sort out points that are unclear. Try these steps as you read the first few chapters of this book, and see if they improve your recall of the material:

1. **Survey** the entire chapter or section you are about to read, so you can see how it fits together. What are the major headings and subdivisions?
2. **Question** what the main points are likely to be in each of the sections. Which parts look most important or interesting? Where should you invest the most time and effort?
3. **Read** the material, taking brief notes as you go. Read in small segments and stop frequently for reflection and to make notes.
4. **Recite**: Stop periodically to recite to yourself what you have just read. Check your comprehension at the end of each major section. Ask yourself: Did I understand what I just read? What are the main points being made here? Summarize the information in your own words to be sure that you really understand and are not just depending on rote memory.
5. **Review**: Once you have completed a section, review the main points to make sure you remember them clearly. Did you miss any important points? Do you understand things differently



**FIGURE L.4** Talking through ideas with your peers is an excellent way to test your knowledge. If you can explain it, then you probably understand the material.

Tara Moore/Getty Images

the second time through? This is a chance to think critically about the material. Do you agree with the conclusions suggested by the authors?

### Will this be on the test?

You should develop different study strategies depending on whether you are expected to remember and choose between a multitude of facts and details, or whether you will be asked to write a paragraph summarizing some broad topic. Organize the ideas you're reading and hearing in lecture. This course will probably include a great deal of information, so try to organize for yourself what ideas are most important. What's the big picture? As you read and review, ask yourself what might be some possible test questions in each section. Memorize some benchmark figures: Just a few will help a lot. Pay special attention to ideas, relationships, facts, and figures about which your instructor seemed especially interested. Usually those points are emphasized in class because your teacher thinks they are most important to remember. There is a good chance you'll see those topics again on a test.

Pay special attention to tables, graphs, and diagrams. They were chosen because they illustrate important points, and they are often easy to put on a test. Also pay attention to units. You probably won't be expected to remember all the specific numbers in this book, but you probably should know orders of magnitude. The world population is about 7.3 *billion* people (not thousands, millions, or trillions). It often helps to remember facts and figures if you can relate them to some other familiar example. The United States, for instance, has about 330 million residents. The populations of the European Union is slightly larger; India and China are each more than four times as large. Those general relationships are usually easier to remember and compare than detailed figures.

### Section Review

1. What is your strongest learning style?
2. What are the five techniques of the SQ3R method for studying?

## L.2 THINKING ABOUT THINKING

- Critical thinking is a valuable tool in learning and in life.
- Certain attitudes, skills, and approaches are essential for well-reasoned analysis.

Perhaps the most valuable skill you can learn in any of your classes is the ability to think clearly, creatively, and purposefully. Developing the ability to learn new skills, examine new facts, evaluate new theories, and formulate your own interpretations is essential to keep up in a changing world. In other words, you need to learn how to learn on your own.

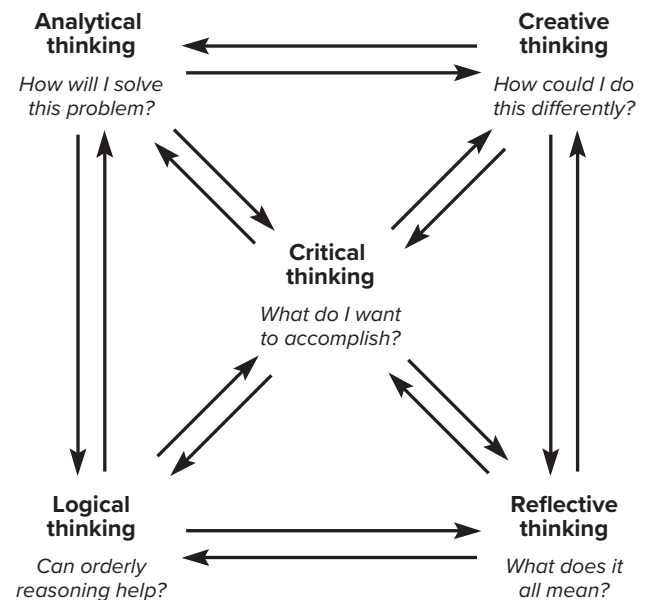
Thinking about thinking means pausing to examine you are forming ideas, or how you interpret what you hear and read. A number of approaches can help us evaluate information and make decisions. **Analytical thinking** asks, "How can I break this problem down into its constituent parts?" **Creative thinking**

asks, "How might I approach this problem in new and inventive ways?" **Logical thinking** asks, "How can orderly, deductive reasoning help me think clearly?" **Critical thinking** asks, "What am I trying to accomplish here and how will I know when I've succeeded?" **Reflective thinking** asks, "What does it all mean?" As figure L.5 suggests, critical thinking is central in the constellation of thinking skills. Thinking critically can help us discover hidden ideas and means, develop strategies for evaluating reasons and conclusions in arguments, recognize the differences between facts and values, and avoid jumping to conclusions.

### How do you tell the news from the noise?

With the explosion of cable channels, blogs, social networks, and e-mail access, most of us are interconnected constantly to a degree unique in history. There are well over 150 million blogs on the Web, and new ones are added every day. Most of us, even in low-income countries and regions, are linked in social networks. Every day several billion e-mails, tweets, text messages, online videos, and social media postings connect us to one another. As you participate in these networks, you probably already think about the sources of information you are exposed to on a daily basis.

One of the issues that has emerged with this proliferation of media is partisan journalism—reports that serve one viewpoint, rather than trying to weigh diverse evidence and perspectives. Partisan journalism has become much more prevalent since the deregulation of public media in 1988. From the birth of the broadcasting industry, the airwaves were regulated as a public trust. Broadcasters, as a condition of their licenses, were required to operate in the "public interest" by covering important policy issues and providing equal time to both sides of contested issues. In 1988, however, the



**FIGURE L.5** Different approaches to thinking are used to solve different kinds of problems or to study alternate aspects of a single issue.

Federal Communications Commission ruled that the proliferation of mass media gives the public adequate access to diverse sources of information. Media outlets are no longer obliged to provide fair and balanced coverage of issues. Presenting a single perspective or even a deceptive version of events is no longer regarded as a betrayal of public trust.

An important aspect of partisan reporting is attack journalism. Commentators often ridicule and demean their opponents rather than weighing ideas or reporting objective facts and sources, because shouting matches are entertaining and sell advertising. Most newspapers have laid off almost all their investigative reporters and most television stations have abandoned the traditional written and edited news story. According to the Center for Journalistic Excellence, more than two-thirds of all TV news segments now consist of on-site “stand-up” reports or live interviews in which a single viewpoint is presented as news without any background or perspective.

Part of the reason for the growth of sensationalist media is that real news—topics that affect your community and your environment—often don’t make exciting visuals. So they don’t make it into TV coverage. Instead, crime, accidents, disasters, lifestyle stories, sports, and weather make up more than 90 percent of the coverage on a typical television news program. An entire day of cable TV news would show, on average, only 1 minute each about the environment and health care, 2 minutes each on science and education, and 4 minutes on art and culture. More than 70 percent of the segments are less than 1 minute long, which allows them to convey lots of emotion but little substance. People who get their news primarily from TV are significantly more fearful and pessimistic than those who get news from print media. And it becomes hard to separate rumor from truth. Evidence and corroboration take a backseat to dogma and passion.

How can you detect bias in blogs, social media, or news reporting? Ask the questions below as you look at media. Also ask these questions as you examine your own work, to avoid falling into these traps.

1. Are speakers discussing facts and rational ideas, or are they resorting to innuendo, name-calling, character assassination, and *ad hominem* (personal) attacks? When people start calling each other Nazi or communist (or both), civil discourse has probably come to an end.
2. What special interests might be involved? Who stands to gain presenting a particular viewpoint? Who is paying for the message?
3. What sources are used as evidence in this communication? How credible are they?
4. Are facts or statistics cited in the presentation? Are they credible? Are citations provided so you can check the sources?
5. If the presentation claims to be fair and balanced, are both sides represented by credible spokespersons, or is one simply a foil set up to make the other side look good?
6. Are the arguments presented based on evidence, or are they purely emotional appeals?

## Applying critical thinking

In logic, an argument is made up of one or more introductory statements (called **premises**), and a **conclusion** that supposedly follows logically from the premises. Often in ordinary conversation, different kinds of statements are mixed together, so it is difficult to distinguish between them or to decipher hidden or implied meanings.

We all use critical or reflective thinking at times. Suppose a television commercial tells you that a new breakfast cereal is tasty and good for you. You may be suspicious and ask yourself a few questions. What do they mean by good? Good for whom or what? Does “tasty” simply mean more sugar and salt? Might the sources of this information have other motives in mind besides your health and happiness? Although you may not have been aware of it, you already have been using some of the techniques of critical analysis. Working to expand these skills helps you recognize the ways information and analysis can be distorted, misleading, prejudiced, superficial, unfair, or otherwise defective. Here are some steps in critical thinking:

*Identify and evaluate premises and conclusions in an argument.* What is the basis for the claims made here? What evidence is presented to support these claims and what conclusions are drawn from this evidence? If the premises and evidence are correct, does it follow that the conclusions are necessarily true?

*Acknowledge and clarify uncertainties, vagueness, equivocation, and contradictions.* Do the terms used have more than one meaning? If so, are all participants in the argument using the same meanings? Are ambiguity or equivocation deliberate? Can all the claims be true simultaneously?

*Distinguish between facts and values.* Are claims made that can be tested? (If so, these are statements of fact and should be able to be verified by gathering evidence.) Are claims made about the worth or lack of worth of something? (If so, these are value statements or opinions and probably cannot be verified objectively.) For example, claims of what we *ought* to do to be moral or righteous or to respect nature are generally value statements.

*Recognize and assess assumptions.* Given the backgrounds and views of the protagonists in this argument, what underlying reasons might there be for the premises, evidence, or conclusions presented? Does anyone have an “axe to grind” or a personal agenda in this issue? What do they think you know, need, want, or believe? Is there a subtext based on race, gender, ethnicity, economics, or some belief system that distorts this discussion? (fig. L.6).

*Distinguish the reliability or unreliability of a source.* What makes the experts qualified in this issue? What special knowledge or information do they have? What evidence do they present? How can we determine whether the information offered is accurate, true, or even plausible?

*Recognize and understand conceptual frameworks.* What are the basic beliefs, attitudes, and values that this person, group, or society holds? What dominating philosophy or ethics control their outlook and actions? How do these beliefs and values affect the way people view themselves and the world around them? If there are conflicting or contradictory beliefs and values, how can these differences be resolved?





**FIGURE L.6** Often the conditions that lead to environmental problems like hazardous waste, and the explanations that surround them, are based on unspoken assumptions. Identifying underlying assumptions is a key step to finding solutions.

Source: Eric Vanceonse, U.S. EPA

As you read this book, you will have many opportunities to practice critical thinking. Every chapter includes facts, figures, opinions, and theories. Are all of them true? Probably not. They were the best information available when this text was written, but scientific knowledge is always growing. Data change constantly as does our interpretation of them. Environmental conditions change, evidence improves, and different perspectives and explanations evolve over time.

As you read this book or any book, try to distinguish between statements of fact and opinion. Ask yourself if the premises support the conclusions drawn from them. Although we have tried to present the best available scientific data and to represent the main consensus among environmental scientists, it is always important for you, as a reader, to think for yourself and utilize your critical and reflective thinking skills to find the truth.

### Section Review

1. Describe seven attitudes needed for critical thinking.
2. List six steps in critical thinking.

## Connecting the Dots

In each chapter, we try to help connect issues in the topic back to the case study. Sometimes the connections will be obvious, sometimes less so. You can try to make those connections for yourself, too, as you read and study.

There are many ways to do well in a course like this. Finding the ways topics are meaningful and useful for you will help make the work worthwhile. Doing well also involves paying attention to things like good study habits, setting realistic goals for yourself,

taking the initiative to look for interesting topics, finding an appropriate study space, and working with a study partner. We all have our own learning styles. You may understand and remember things best if you see them in writing, hear them spoken by someone else, reason them out for yourself, or learn by doing. By determining your preferred style, you can study in the way that is most comfortable and effective for you.



# 1

## Understanding Our Environment



▲ Many of the most important challenges in environmental quality and sustainable development occur in informal settlements like Kibera, in Nairobi, Kenya.  
Tatsiana Hendzel/Shutterstock

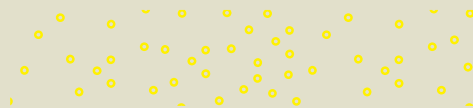
### Learning Outcomes

*After studying this chapter, you should be able to:*

- 1.1 Explain what environmental science is, and how it draws on different kinds of knowledge.
- 1.2 Identify some early thinkers on environment and resources, and contrast some of their ideas.
- 1.3 Describe sustainable development and its goals.
- 1.4 Explain core concepts in sustainable development.
- 1.5 Identify ways in which ethics and faith might promote sustainability and conservation.

*“Working together, we have proven that sustainable development is possible; that reforestation of degraded land is possible; and that exemplary governance is possible when ordinary citizens are informed, sensitized, mobilized and involved in direct action for their environment.”*

*– Wangari Maathai (1940–2011)  
Winner of 2004 Nobel Peace Prize*





## Sustainable Development Goals for Kibera

The idea of sustainable development is that we can improve well-being for poor populations, including reducing severe poverty, while maintaining or improving the environment on which we depend. These goals might seem contradictory, but increasing evidence shows that they can go together. In fact, as our resource consumption and population grow, it is increasingly necessary that they go together. Starting in 2016, the United Nations launched a new program to promote 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including access to education, health care, a safe natural environment, clean water, and other priorities, as well as conserving biodiversity and slowing climate change (fig. 1.1). Are all these goals possible?

Perhaps the greatest test case of this question is in fast-growing urban settlements of the developing world. One of the largest of these is a slum known as Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. Every week, some 2,500 people arrive in Nairobi, drawn by hopes for better jobs and education. The city cannot build housing fast enough for this influx. Nor can it provide sanitary sewage, safe water systems, electric power, or other services. New arrivals build

informal neighborhoods on the margins, using whatever materials are available to construct simple shelters of mud, brick, and tin roofing. Kibera is the largest of about 200 such settlements in Nairobi. These are home to over 2.5 million people, around 60 percent of the city's population (although reliable numbers are hard to come by).

Kibera grew on lowlands along the Nairobi River, in an area prone to flooding that periodically inundates houses and muddy informal streets. Because there is no system for managing sewage or garbage, both end up in the river, often entering homes with flood waters. Much of the time, a fetid odor of decomposing waste fills the air, and plastic shopping bags and other debris fill the corners of roadways and buildings. Occupying degraded outskirts of large cities, neighborhoods like Kibera suffer from the pollution produced by wealthy neighborhoods, and also create their own pollution and health hazards.

The city government has a complicated relationship with Kibera. The settlement provides much-needed housing, and residents contribute

labor and consumer markets for growing businesses. But substandard housing is an embarrassment for city governments. Impoverished and unemployed populations turn to crime, even while they are the main victims of criminal activity. The city regularly tries to remove this and other slums, replacing them with modern housing, but the new flats are usually too expensive, and insufficient in supply, for the displaced residents.

Similar settlements exist in many of the world's fast-growing urban areas—Rio de Janeiro, Manila, Lagos, Cairo, Mumbai, Delhi, and many others—because global processes drive the growth of these vast slums. Rural population growth reduces access to farmland; forest destruction and soil degradation make

traditional lifestyles difficult to maintain. Large landholders expand, displacing rural communities. Climate change threatens crop production. Declining water resources make farming difficult, and farmers are driven to the city.

In striving to enter the middle class, residents of Kibera also increase their environmental impacts. As they succeed, they consume more material goods, more energy, more cars and fuel, and electronics. All of these expand the environmental footprint

of residents. On the other hand, the per capita energy and resource consumption of most Kibera residents is vanishingly small compared to consumption of their wealthy neighbors, who may have multiple cars and large houses, many appliances, and rich diets.

The global challenge of sustainable development is to find ways to improve the lives and the environment of people everywhere, including those in Kibera and other informal settlements. Slum residents have energy and ideas and are eager to improve the lives of their children, like people everywhere.

Environmental science is a discipline that seeks to understand both the natural systems we depend on and the ways we exploit or steward those resources. Sustainable development is central to environmental science, as we seek to protect resources and also support human well-being. As you read this book, you'll consider many issues of environmental systems, stewardship, and resource use. Ideally, a better understanding of these issues can help us find ways to address them, both locally and globally.



**FIGURE 1.1** Sustainable development goals include access to education and electricity to study by at night.

*Mark Boulton/Alamy Stock Photo*