

Name: _____ Date: _____

Master 4-1

Questions Related to Local Issues

Use these questions and examples to help you think about the environmental issues near where you live.

Question	Example
Is your town or city concerned about how to dispose of trash?	Some areas do not have any more space to put garbage in a landfill.
Do you live in a coastal area with oil drilling or large oil tankers?	When problems happen with oil drilling or oil tankers, large amounts of oil can be released into the water. This can cause problems for plants, animals, and the quality of the water.
Do you live in an area with many cars on the road? Are there many industrial plants in the area?	Cars and factories can release a lot of pollution into the air.
How does your area get its energy? Are there any local efforts to use more renewable energy?	Many communities in the United States use coal as their energy source. Coal is a nonrenewable source of energy, meaning humans use it faster than it is created. Solar power and wind power are renewable sources of energy. Many communities are interested in using more renewable sources of energy.
Are species in the area in danger of becoming extinct?	Many plants and animals are at risk of becoming extinct. Sometimes we think of endangered animals as living far away from us, but there are thousands of examples in the United States alone. These include the Mexican gray wolves, some sea turtles, the whooping crane, and a particular swallowtail butterfly. Certain types of cacti and flowers are also endangered.
Are there animals or weeds that did not originally live in the area?	The Asian carp is a fish that has become a problem near the Great Lakes. This fish takes away resources, such as food, from other fish. It may also prey on other fish. Kudzu is a weed that grows very quickly. It is a problem in the southern United States because it can shade out other plants.
Are there industries that produce toxic chemicals in the area? Do these chemicals go into the water or the air?	Factories sometimes release chemicals as they make their products. Some toxic chemicals come from rocket testing. This usually occurs near military bases.
Is the water in your area affected by organisms?	Sometimes water can become contaminated by bacteria. This can be caused by pigeon droppings or human feces that are in the water.
Are there industries that release gases into the air in your area?	Many industries such as transportation, usable energy production, and agriculture release greenhouse gases into the air. Increased greenhouse gases lead to climate change. Other gases can cause air pollution.
Is there a lack of water in your area?	Many areas of the country do not have enough water for people to use. Sometimes this is caused by a large population. Other areas have frequent droughts that lead to a lack of water.
Are people changing the way land is being used?	In some places, forests or agricultural areas are being changed into neighborhoods with many houses. In other places, empty buildings are being torn down and changed into community gardens.
Are natural forces such as wind or water changing the land?	Wind and water can cause the surface of the land to be changed and moved. This is a natural process called erosion. Humans can have an impact on erosion when they build buildings over larger and larger areas and when they remove plants from an area.