

Active Reading

Section 2: Changing Population Trends

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

In many of the poorest countries, wood is the main fuel source. When populations are low, people use fallen tree limbs for fuel, which does not harm the trees. When populations grow rapidly, deadwood does not accumulate fast enough to provide enough fuel. People begin to cut down living trees, which reduces the amount of wood available in each new year. Parts of Africa, Asia, and India have been cleared of vegetation by people collecting fuelwood.

A supply of fuel ensures that a person can boil water and cook food. In many parts of the world, water taken directly from wells or public supplies is not safe to drink because it may carry water-borne parasites or other diseases. The water can be sterilized by boiling it, but fuel is needed to do so. Also, food is often unsafe or harder to digest unless it is cooked. Without enough fuelwood, many people suffer from disease and malnutrition.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

One reading skill is the ability to identify the main ideas of a passage. The main idea is the main focus or key idea. Frequently, a main idea is accompanied by supporting information that offers detailed facts about main ideas.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

1. The main source of fuel for many poorer countries is

2. People use fallen tree limbs for fuel when their population is

3. If a population grows quickly, people begin to cut down for fuel wood. _____

4. Public water supplies are unsafe in some parts of the world because the water may carry _____ and _____.

5. Explain how an area of land can become cleared of vegetation because a population grows.

Active Reading *continued*

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Read the following question and write the answer in the space provided.

6. Define deadwood in the context of these two sentences: “When populations are low, people use fallen tree limbs for fuel, which does not harm the trees. When populations grow rapidly, deadwood does not accumulate fast enough to provide fuel.”

SEQUENCING INFORMATION

One reading skill is the ability to sequence information, or to logically place items or events in the order in which they occur.

Sequence the statements below to show the steps to a shortage of fuel wood. Write “1” on the line in front of the first step, “2” on the line in front of the second step, and so on.

- _____ 7. The growing population begins to cut down living trees for fuel.
- _____ 8. The area in which the population lives may become cleared of vegetation.
- _____ 9. The amount of available wood decreases.
- _____ 10. A low population that was using deadwood starts to grow rapidly.
- _____ 11. The deadwood does not accumulate fast enough to provide the population with enough fuel.

RECOGNIZING CAUSE AND EFFECT

One reading skill is the ability to recognize cause and effect.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

12. What purpose does fuel wood serve?

13. What is the result of an inadequate supply of fuel wood?
