



Close Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What is Gore's claim in the last two full paragraphs on page 856 (from "But the most vulnerable . . ." to ". . . the last 10,000 years")? What evidence does Gore present to support this claim? Explain whether Gore's evidence is relevant and sufficient to support his claim, including why or why not.
2. What additional consequences of climate change does Gore predict? Make inferences about how climate change could lead to these consequences.
3. In the paragraphs on page 857 beginning "Our fundamental challenge . . ." and ending "And it is working," what steps does Gore suggest to try to address the problem of climate change?
4. In these paragraphs, Gore invokes religious language and appeals to the various nations gathered in Kyoto. What is the effect of each kind of rhetoric on Gore's speech?
5. Reread the last two paragraphs of Gore's speech on page 859, beginning with "So let us press forward." How do the content and tone of Gore's conclusion add to the meaning and persuasiveness of the speech?

UNIT 1



Visionaries of the American Environmental Movement

Core Passages Assessment Questions

1. Reread the Saturday March 19th 1842 entry in **Henry David Thoreau's *Journals*** (pages 3–4). In this entry, Thoreau suggests that nature can be understood from different points of view. Which two pieces of evidence from the text support this statement?
 - A “I walk in the fields of Concord and meditate on . . . the unexhausted energies of this new country.”
 - B “The earth is strewn with relics of a race which has vanished as completely as if trodden in with the earth.”
 - C “I find it good to remember the eternity behind me as well as the eternity before.”
 - D “Where ever I go I tread in the tracks of the Indian.”
 - E “The crows flew over the edge of the woods, and wheeling over my head seem to rebuke.”
 - F “If I consider its history it is old—if its destiny it is new—I may see a part of an object or the whole.”
2. Reread this phrase in the Saturday March 19th 1842 entry of **Henry David Thoreau's *Journals*** (page 4): “Nature has her russet *hues* as well as green—.” What is the meaning of the word “hues” as used in this phrase?
 - A colors
 - B seasons
 - C times of day
 - D reddish browns

3. Reread the part of the excerpt of **John Muir's *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*** beginning "The world, we are told . . ." through the end (pages 86–89). In this section, Muir argues against the claim that the world was made especially for man. Which evidence from the text is not relevant to this argument?
- A "Whales are storehouses of oil for us, to help out the stars in lighting our dark way until the discovery of the Pennsylvania oil wells."
 - B "Nature's object in making animals and plants might possibly be first of all the happiness of each one of them."
 - C "This star, our own good earth, made many a successful journey around the heavens ere man was made."
 - D "Venomous beasts, thorny plants, and deadly diseases of certain parts of the earth prove that the whole world was not made for him."
4. Reread the paragraphs from **John Muir's *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*** beginning "But if we should ask . . ." and ending ". . . beyond our deceitful eyes and knowledge" (pages 87–88). In these paragraphs, Muir asks a number of questions. How do these questions contribute to the power of Muir's argument?
- A They draw the reader into the author's quest for answers.
 - B They make the author seem approachable and inquisitive.
 - C They introduce new scientific ideas to promote further research.
 - D They challenge the belief that everything in the world was made for humans.

5. Reread **Theodore Roosevelt's** letter *To Frank Michler Chapman* (pages 130–131). In which sentence from the text does Roosevelt use an analogy to communicate the idea of loss?
- A “I would like to see all harmless wild things, but especially all birds protected in every way.”
 - B “Spring would not be spring without bird songs.”
 - C “A tanager or a cardinal makes a point of glowing beauty in the green woods.”
 - D “I feel just as if the works of some great writer had perished.”
6. Which of the following sentences best states an important theme found in **Woody Guthrie's** song “*This Land Is Your Land*” (pages 258–259)?
- A Nature in America speaks only to select individuals.
 - B The American landscape is intertwined with our existence as free citizens.
 - C Residents must constantly struggle against the American climate.
 - D Americans have manipulated the landscape to build farms and wheat fields.
7. Which of the following sentences objectively summarizes **Wendell Berry's** poem “*Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front*” (pages 505–506)?
- A Berry's suggestions for a return to nature are utopian, not practical.
 - B Berry balances his negative view of modern living with praise for traditional values.

- ⋮

C Berry describes a responsible vision of human interaction with the environment.
 - D** Berry criticizes aspects of modern life and advocates alternate ways of living in relation to nature.
- 8.** Reread this sentence from **Al Gore’s Speech at the Kyoto Climate Change Conference** (page 857): “To do so requires *humility*, because the spiritual roots of our crisis are pridefulness and a failure to understand and respect our connections to God’s Earth and to each other.” Which word or phrase from the sentence has a meaning that is the opposite of “humility”?
- A** spiritual roots
 - B** crisis
 - C** pridefulness
 - D** failure to understand



Close Reading Comprehension Questions

1. In the section *Thinking Like a Mountain*, the author discusses how seeing a wolf die changes his views (page 275). What does Leopold learn from watching the wolf die?
2. How do the details in the section *Thinking Like a Mountain* (pages 274–276) support the idea that all life in an ecosystem is interconnected?
3. In the final paragraph of the section *Thinking Like a Mountain*, what does Leopold mean by the statement that “too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run” (page 276)? What actions do his statements in this paragraph suggest people should take?
4. In the section *The Land Pyramid*, why does Leopold argue that a pyramid is the best representation of nature’s systems? What does the pyramid structure suggest about the role of the land in an ecosystem?
5. Reread the paragraph at the bottom of page 286 and the top of page 287 in the section *The Land Pyramid*. Based on this paragraph, what is a food chain? Give your own example of a food chain. How does the idea of the food chain fit into the concept of the biotic pyramid?

UNIT 2



Interconnected Earth

Core Passages Assessment Questions

Answer these questions about the core passages individually.

1. On the first two pages of the section “The Community Concept” in **Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*** (page 278), what does Leopold’s term “land ethic” mean?

- A the declaration of love for and obligation to the land
- B the alteration, management, and use of plant and mineral resources
- C the individual’s struggle between conflict and competition in human society
- D the understanding of humans as part of a community of soil, water, plants, and animals

2. In the passage from **Friends of the Earth’s *Only One Earth*** (pages 500–503), the authors claim that life on Earth is so intertwined that changes to any life on Earth will affect all life on Earth. Which three pieces of evidence from the text support this claim?

- A “The mixing of dead atoms in some strange swamp or ocean made by chance a new kind of matter.”
- B “Patterns of atoms have come together to make cells, and cells to make tissues, and tissues to make organs, and organs to make redwoods and bees and sharks and hawks and men.”
- C “Life is never still, always trying to become something else, something more efficient and stable and strong.”
- D “All the matter and energy needed for life moves in great closed circles from which nothing escapes and to which only the driving force of the sun is added.”

- E** “Nearly everything is used by life, used and reused in thousands of complex ways, moved through vast chains of plants and animals and back to the beginning.”
- F** “The web of life has so many threads that a few can be broken without making it all unravel.”
- G** “In the complex world of living things everything depends on everything else, all life is the same life, every effect is a cause, nothing can happen by itself.”
- H** “For the first time in his short history, man is now facing the limits of the earth that he likes to call his.”
- 3.** In the passage from **Friends of the Earth’s *Only One Earth***, the section “Getting It in Proportion” (pages 502–503) considers Earth’s history as one week. How does this section help develop the authors’ ideas about life on Earth?
- A** It demonstrates that Earth has limited resources to sustain life.
- B** It shows that all forms of life depend on one another to survive.
- C** It highlights what a short time humans and human civilization have existed.
- D** It emphasizes the role of evolution in the development of plant and animal life.
- 4.** According to **Lewis Thomas’s *The World’s Biggest Membrane*** (pages 550–553), which crucial step led to the continued development of life on Earth?
- A** Living things began to catch and hold energy.
- B** Water began to create a shield against ultraviolet radiation.

- C** Photosynthesis began to breathe oxygen into the atmosphere.
 - D** A drop in carbon dioxide began to decrease the atmosphere’s ability to hold in solar heat.
- 5.** In Lewis Thomas’s *The World’s Biggest Membrane* (pages 550–553), Thomas describes Earth’s atmosphere as having “perfection of function.” Which detail from the text supports this claim?
- A** Earth’s atmosphere destroys meteorites that would otherwise hit Earth.
 - B** Earth’s atmosphere’s “breathing” would be damaged by a nuclear explosion.
 - C** Earth’s atmosphere was first formed from gases that were released when Earth cooled.
 - D** Earth’s atmosphere goes through cycles related to levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide.
- 6.** Which best summarizes the European colonists’ and the Indians’ relationship to the New England environment as described in **William Cronon’s** *Seasons of Want and Plenty* (pages 635–637)?
- A** Colonists feared poor harvests, and Indians were confident that the land would provide for them.
 - B** Colonists expected continual plenty, and Indians knew they had to adapt to the cycles of the seasons.
 - C** Colonists viewed the land as more fertile than Europe, and Indians wanted to tame and cultivate the land.
 - D** Colonists believed that the area would support farming, and Indians thought it was a better place for hunting.

7. What is the main issue that **David Quammen** identifies on page 877 of *Planet of Weeds*?
- A The collective impact of the *Homo sapiens* species is destroying the world.
 - B Biologists believe that Earth is headed into a sixth period of mass extinction.
 - C Humans are causing so much global wreckage that it will result in their own extinction.
 - D Polluted air and water, acid rain, greenhouse gases, and toxic waste have caused irreversible contamination.
8. Which sentence from the passage from **Janisse Ray's** *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* (pages 900–903) best explains why the gopher tortoise is described as a “keystone”?
- A “The tortoise is central in holding the ecosystem together.”
 - B “A gopher tortoise can live for up to fifty years, although they take a long time to mature.”
 - C “The life of a gopher tortoise revolves around its burrow, although it can occupy more than one.”
 - D “Their ancestors were one of at least twenty-three species of land tortoises that originated in North America some sixty million years ago.”



Close Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What elements does Thoreau value in a town? Why does Thoreau value these features? How does Thoreau suggest towns and cities should go about preserving their natural features?
2. Based on this passage, make an inference about how Thoreau views city living. What evidence from the text supports this inference?
3. Compare and contrast the way the town has used the river and the way Thoreau believes the town should use the river.
4. What is Thoreau's purpose in this passage? How does Thoreau's language contribute to the power and persuasiveness of his text?

UNIT 3



Wild America: From City to Country

Core Passages Assessment Questions

1. Reread the passage from **P. T. Barnum's *The Humbugs of the World*** (pages 81–83). Based on this passage, when does Barnum—himself known for using striking advertisements—object to advertising?
 - A when it uses religion to sell a product
 - B when it advertizes quack medicines or rum
 - C when it uses large letters and obtrusive colors
 - D when it is in the middle of a natural landscape
2. Reread the passage from **P. T. Barnum's *The Humbugs of the World*** (pages 81–83). In this passage, what is the effect of Barnum comparing a natural landscape to a beautiful wife or daughter?
 - A It recognizes that nature is incomplete without humans.
 - B It suggests that readers' family life can be a part of living in harmony with nature.
 - C It emphasizes the reader's connection to and responsibility to protect the landscape.
 - D It highlights the idea of natural human beauty by comparing it to an untouched wilderness.
3. Reread from the top of page 121 through the top of page 122 in the passage from ***A Review of Recent Changes, and Changes which Have Been Projected, in the Plans of the Central Park***, by **Frederick Law Olmsted**. According to the text, why does Olmsted believe that it is important that Central Park be so large?

- A** It will be in an area that is not suitable for other uses.
 - B** It will not be overwhelmed by surrounding buildings and traffic.
 - C** It will be easy to reach from any place on the island of Manhattan.
 - D** It will be able to accommodate New York’s many millions of residents.
- 4.** Reread **Donald Culross Peattie’s “*Birds that Are New Yorkers*”** (pages 245–246). Which phrase from the text refers to one necessary characteristic for both birds and people that live in the city?
- A** “the spirit of discovery, true scientific discovery”
 - B** “Mendelian strains, bred, interbred, and bred out again to the normal”
 - C** “the ability to survive constant association with human beings”
 - D** “experiences as social denizens of the vast human rookery we call a city”
- 5.** Reread **Donald Culross Peattie’s “*Birds that Are New Yorkers*”** (pages 245–246). According to the author, birds living in the city face more disadvantages than advantages. Which three of the following are advantages for a bird living in the city?
- A** shelter in winter
 - B** bright lighting at night
 - C** a jumble of valleys and canyons
 - D** strong updrafts from tall buildings

- E** little competition from other species
 - F** refuse piles available for scavenging
 - G** the supply of insects and grain for food
 - H** the presence of other animals such as cats and rats
6. Reread the paragraph at the bottom of page 359 and the top of page 360 in the passage from **Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of American Cities***. In this paragraph, what does Jacobs's analogy between human cities and prairie dog colonies and oyster beds suggest?
- A** that human cities are unique in nature
 - B** that humans and their cities are part of nature
 - C** that humans have better building abilities than other species
 - D** that only humans, and not other species, can survive in human cities
7. Reread the passage from the **Wilderness Act of 1964, by Howard Zahniser** (pages 392–394). According to the act, which area would be considered wilderness?
- A** a 6,000-acre forest
 - B** a 1,200-acre nature park
 - C** a 7,500-acre stretch of farmland
 - D** a 5,000-acre suburban tract with strict zoning restrictions

8. Reread pages 739–742 in the passage from **Terry Tempest Williams’s *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place***. Based on the text, what is significant about the lake level of 4206'?
- A It is the lake’s historic lowest level.
 - B It is the lake’s historic highest level.
 - C It is the level at which the bird refuge would flood.
 - D It is the level at which the airport would be under water.



Close Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Based on the excerpts you have read, summarize the central idea of *Silent Spring*. Then explain how these parts of the text support this idea.
2. Why did Rachel Carson write the section “A Fable for Tomorrow” in the form of a fable within the larger context of the book *Silent Spring*? Did the use of a fable within the larger text advance her purpose or point of view? Why or why not?
3. According to pages 374 and 375, what are two ways pesticides can harm birds?
4. In the part of the passage on pages 374–376, what steps does Carson follow to build her argument about the harmfulness of pesticides? How does the final paragraph of the passage engage the reader?

UNIT 4



Human Impact

Core Passages Assessment Questions

1. Reread the excerpt from **Gene Stratton-Porter's *The Last Passenger Pigeon*** (pages 196–199). Based on this text, which event contributed to the pigeon's extinction?
 - A People preferred the taste of pigeons to the taste of doves.
 - B Hunters used guns to hunt pigeons, rather than poles and bags.
 - C People counted their wealth by the number of pigeons they had.
 - D Hunters filled bags with pigeons and caused the birds needless suffering.

2. Reread the excerpt from **Gene Stratton-Porter's *The Last Passenger Pigeon*** (pages 196–199). Based on this text, what is the irony of the last passenger pigeon being stuffed and “preserved for future generations” at the Smithsonian?
 - A The Smithsonian had contributed to the extinction of the pigeons.
 - B Future generations were unlikely to care about passenger pigeons.
 - C People had failed to preserve the species itself for future generations.
 - D Stuffing and mounting the pigeon was not an effective way to preserve its body.

3. In the section “The Problem” in the passage from **Paul R. Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb*** (pages 434–435), what is the effect of the author’s repetition of the word “people”?
- A It expresses the author’s feeling that the planet is becoming too crowded.
 - B It expresses the author’s uncertainty that overpopulation is a serious issue.
 - C It expresses the author’s fear of his audience failing to pay attention to his warning.
 - D It expresses the author’s idea that controlling population is everyone’s responsibility.
4. Reread from page 438 to “. . . brings ruin to all” on page 439 of the passage from **Garrett Hardin’s *The Tragedy of the Commons***. Based on this passage, what does Hardin’s term “tragedy of the commons” mean?
- A individuals’ overuse of shared resources
 - B the community’s failure to help individuals in need
 - C the community’s inability to police shared resources
 - D individuals’ inability to contribute to each other’s needs
5. Reread the section “Pollution” in the passage from **Garrett Hardin’s *The Tragedy of the Commons*** (pages 440–441). According to the author, why does having private property fail to solve the problem of pollution?
- A Property owners do not care if their property becomes polluted.

- B** The costs to property holders are not yet high enough to discourage pollution.
 - C** The effects of pollution on air and water reach far beyond a polluter's personal property.
 - D** Dividing property among individual owners does not address the tragedy of the commons.
- 6.** Reread **Stephanie Mills's Mills College valedictory address** (pages 469–472). What does Mills predict will be a consequence of the rising human population?
- A** famine and death
 - B** increased productivity
 - C** changing family structures
 - D** a lower value on human life
- 7.** Reread pages 718–719 in the passage from **Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature***. In the passage, what does “the sound of the saw” represent?
- A** natural forces at work
 - B** the noises of the forest
 - C** human impact on nature
 - D** changes in temperature and rainfall
- 8.** Reread pages 718–719 in the passage from **Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature***. Which definition best expresses the way McKibben uses the term “nature”?
- A** timeless forces in the world that can never be changed
 - B** any forces that help shape human experience of the world

- C** forces in the world that humans can influence without realizing it
 - D** wild forces that shape human experience but are beyond human control
9. Reread pages 760–762 in the passage from **Rick Bass’s** *The Ninemile Wolves*. According to this passage, what was a consequence of humans’ decimation of the buffalo?
- A** Wolves became extinct.
 - B** Wolves began to kill cattle.
 - C** Wolves started to attack humans.
 - D** American wolves moved to Canada.



Close Reading Comprehension Questions

1. In the section from the beginning of the passage on page 659 to the break at the top of page 662, what does Walker notice about the trees when she is lying on their roots?
2. What impact do you think Walker intends to have on her readers by imagining a dialogue with the trees and referring to their “feet” and “faces”?
3. Why do the trees in Walker’s dialogue not accept her protestations that she is innocent of harming them? According to Walker, who is ultimately responsible for taking care of the Earth and preventing crimes from being committed against it?
4. Reread the section from the top of page 662 to the break in the middle of page 665. What is the impact of Walker’s use of the word “murder” and her reference to the story of Adam and Eve in regard to the snake?
5. Why is Walker so bothered by the killing of the snake? To what does she attribute both the “murder” of the snake and other human slaughters of nature?
6. What parallels does Walker draw between the way she treated the snake, and humans treat nature more generally, and the way white settlers treated Native Americans? What does Walker see as Native Americans’ role in America? How does Walker suggest that other Americans should relate to this role?
7. Reread the first full paragraph on page 667. What problems does Walker identify in this paragraph? How does she use language to show the seriousness of these problems?
8. How does she suggest addressing or solving these problems?

UNIT 5



Environmental Justice and Personal Responsibility

Core Passages Assessment Questions

- 1. In William O. Douglas’s dissent in *Sierra Club v. Morton* (pages 355–358), what does the word “standing” mean as it is used in the text?**
 - A** the status of protected regions
 - B** the legal right to bring a case to court
 - C** the role of community in nature conservation
 - D** the formal responsibility to care for wilderness areas

- 2. Which piece of evidence from William O. Douglas’s dissent in *Sierra Club v. Morton* (pages 355–358) best supports his claim that nature has a right to be represented in court?**
 - A** “Public interest’ has so many different shades of meaning as to be quite meaningless on the environmental front.”
 - B** “Groves of trees, swampland, or even air . . . feel . . . the destructive pressures of modern technology and modern life.”
 - C** “Inanimate objects are sometimes parties in litigation. A ship has a legal personality, a fiction found useful for maritime purposes.”
 - D** “Federal agencies . . . are not venal or corrupt. But they are notoriously under the control of powerful interests who manipulate them.”

3. According to pages 609–611 in the passage from **Lois Marie Gibbs’s *Love Canal: My Story***, why did Gibbs and her neighbors leave their neighborhood?
- A Toxic chemicals that caused illnesses, miscarriages, and birth defects were buried under a nearby field.
 - B After their children were grown, they no longer needed to be so close to a school and a playground.
 - C The government forced them to move so that the Hooker Chemical Corporation could develop Love Canal.
 - D Many of the houses in the area had unkempt, overgrown gardens and lawns and were surrounded by chain link fences.
4. What is **César Chávez’s** intent in pages 693–695 of his **Wrath of Grapes Boycott Speech**.
- A to persuade listeners to petition the courts to hear cases related to pesticide use
 - B to persuade listeners to support lawmakers and politicians who favor banning pesticides
 - C to persuade listeners to provide help to children and workers injured or killed by pesticides
 - D to persuade listeners to give money and boycott grapes to protest the use of harmful pesticides
5. In pages 693–695 of **César Chávez’s Wrath of Grapes Boycott Speech**, what is one way Chávez uses rhetoric to help persuade listeners to support his cause?
- A He appeals to powerful political figures for aid.
 - B He uses flattering language to try to appease growers.

- C** He refers to the protesters against pesticides as a family.
- D** He warns that listeners themselves may be harmed by pesticides if they do not act.
- 6.** Read from “The problem of polluted black communities . . .” on page 729 to “. . . have common roots” on page 731 in the passage from **Robert D. Bullard’s *Dumping in Dixie***. Which answer best represents the reason that the social justice and environmental movements became intertwined?
- A** Civil rights leaders became active in the early environmental movement.
- B** Desegregation opened environmental organizations to new black participants.
- C** LULUs began to have an increased impact on middle-class environmental activists.
- D** Poor black communities were disproportionately used to dispose of unwanted toxins.
- 7.** In **Mary Oliver’s poem “This Summer Day”** (pages 737–738), what do Oliver’s questions at the beginning of the poem and her description of the grasshopper suggest?
- A** that people are responsible for maintaining natural systems
- B** that people are responsible for protecting wildlife in nature
- C** that people are responsible for appreciating even the smallest parts of nature
- D** that people are responsible for following religions that are compatible with nature

8. In the epilogue of **Terry Tempest Williams’s *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*** (pages 752–759), what does the author believe is responsible for the pervasiveness of cancer in her family?
- A bad genetics
 - B fallout from nuclear tests
 - C visits to contaminated towns
 - D insomnia from recurring nightmares
9. In the section of the passage from **Paul Hawken’s *Blessed Unrest*** from “The third report . . .” on page 962 to the break on 965, according to Hawken what is the main issue in the Coca-Cola case?
- A the profitability of Coke versus Pepsi
 - B community rights versus corporate rights
 - C large nonprofit organizations versus small NGOs
 - D E.U. water standards versus Indian water standards
10. In the section of the passage from **Paul Hawken’s *Blessed Unrest*** on pages 969–970, what does the author consider the most effective way to stop a corporation from violating a community’s right to resources such as clean water?
- A encourage members of the community to file lawsuits
 - B pass legislation banning corporations from using natural resources
 - C have motivated individuals and small groups work together to take action
 - D increase lobbying by large, well-established organizations such as the Audubon Society