

The term **ecology** comes from a Greek word that means “the study of the house.” Ecology is the study of how all living things interact with their environments. In a way, Earth is the house of all living things. We all live together on this planet and it is our home. Today, we also understand ecology to mean taking care of the Earth so that humans, plants and animals can all thrive. However, we can damage the environment. Sometimes the damage is **irreversible**.

Ecology is a huge area of study. It covers every part of a living creature’s ecosystem that affects its ability to live. Ecology considers how a living thing reacts to climate, soil conditions. It also studies how much clean water is available and the amount natural resources. By learning about how living things, including humans, affect each other, we can make smart decisions that protect all living things and the resources they need.

There are many things that children can do to help make sure that their world stays healthy. The decisions you are making today can affect the future.

Conservation is one area of ecology where we can all make a difference. It does not matter how old we are or where we live. Conservation means using Earth’s limited resources wisely so that they don’t run out. When you are home, take a moment to think about how you use resources. Many people waste resources. Leaking toilets, half-filled dishwashers or clothes washers, and unattended hoses all waste precious water. If you leave lights on and appliances running in rooms where they are not being used, you are wasting energy.

There’s another way we can help conserve Earth’s resources. We can show our support of businesses that make their products using methods and materials that do not damage Earth. By buying their products, we are telling them that we appreciate their efforts to be Earth-friendly.

We need to take the time to learn about how to save resources. More importantly, we must then put into practice what we learn. Children can do their part. They can show their families some ways to save resources. Together, we can all make a difference.

Name: _____

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don’t forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) The passage compares Earth to a house. How are they alike?

2) What does ecology study?

3) Sometimes Earth-friendly products are a little more expensive. Why should you buy them anyway?

4) Why do you think people leave lights on when they are not using them?

5) What is one thing that you, personally, could do today to help conserve resources?

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Name: Key

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don’t forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

Actual wording of answers may vary.

1) The passage compares Earth to a house. How are they alike?

Earth is like a house for all living things.

2) What does ecology study?

It studies how living things interact with their environment.

3) Sometimes Earth-friendly products are a little more expensive. Why should you buy them anyway?

It shows support for companies who are not using materials or methods that might harm the Earth.

4) Why do you think people leave lights on when they are not using them?

student’s choice; example of correct answer: They forget to turn them off.

5) What is one thing that you, personally, could do today to help conserve resources?

student’s choice: example of correct answer: Remember to turn off the lights.