# Deforestation

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What do humans use forests for?

2. How does deforestation affect the food chain?

3. Why are consumers partly to blame for deforestation?

### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | 1. conversion | a) | the removal of a large portion of a forest |
| _____ | 2. clear-cut (*adjective*) | b) | the natural home of a plant or animal |
| _____ | 3. destruction | c) | the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere |
| _____ | 4. eliminate | d) | the effect something has on someone or something |
| _____ | 5. habitat | e) | a rule that prevents or limits something |
| _____ | 6. clear-cutting (*noun*) | f) | likely to be harmed |
| _____ | 7. impact | g) | the destroying of something |
| _____ | 8. reforestation | h) | the replanting of a forest that has been destroyed or removed |
| _____ | 9. susceptible | i) | to remove entirely |
| _____ | 10. restriction | j) | definite, specific |
| _____ | 11. carbon emissions | k) | the change from one form to another |

# Reading

**DEFORESTATION**
*Do we need a **clear-cut** plan?*

1. Deforestation refers to the **destruction** and **conversion** of forests. Humans are largely responsible for the loss of forests. The cleared land is used for farming, housing, businesses, mining, and roads. The resources are used for building materials, fuel, medicine, food, and paper. According to some estimates, up to half of the world's tropical rain forests have already been cleared for these purposes.

2. The majority of the earth's plants and animals live in forests. Deforestation disrupts the food chain. What will come of the remaining species if we **eliminate** their **habitat**? According to some experts, we will soon find out. Based on the current rate of deforestation, the world's rain forests could vanish within 100 years.

3. How did humans let this happen? Survival is the main reason. Converting forests to agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation. Farmers use **clear-cutting** to make land available for livestock and crops. They rely on the income and the resources for survival. For many years, farmers were unaware of the **impact** of deforestation. Consumers are also to blame. Do you ever think about the trees that were lost so that you could enjoy your daily coffee, tea, rice, or peanuts? We are all contributors to deforestation.

4. Humans in many parts of the world are feeling the effects of deforestation. Can the damage be undone? New **restrictions** on clear-cutting have been introduced in some of the most heavily forested nations, including Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. Governments are focusing on **reforestation** methods, and are exploring ways to reverse the damage. Planting mixed forests that are less **susceptible** to disease is one method. Learning how to prevent soil erosion is also crucial.

5. When a tree falls, it releases carbon into the atmosphere. What does this mean for global warming? According to some scientists, approximately 20% of global **carbon emissions** result from deforestation. That's more than the carbon emissions of all of the vehicles in the world!

*"To be without trees would, in the most literal way, to be without our roots."*
—Richard Mabey

# Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. Define deforestation.

2. What is the leading cause of deforestation?

3. Why does the reading mention coffee and tea?

4. What two reforestation methods are mentioned?

5. How does deforestation contribute to global warming?

# Vocabulary Review

## A. Chunking

Create five words or expressions by pairing the words that are commonly together in English. Write a sentence for each example.

**Word List**

- reverse
- susceptible
- the damage
- to disease
- emissions
- global
- warming
- tropical
- rain forest
- carbon

| # | Word/Expression | Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |

# Vocabulary Review cont.

## B. Odd One Out

Circle the word or phrase that does NOT belong in the group.

1. a) habitat
   b) home
   c) restriction
   d) environment

2. a) damage
   b) destruction
   c) ruins
   d) impact

3. a) clear-cut
   b) definite
   c) distinct
   d) loss

4. a) eliminate
   b) affect
   c) impact
   d) influence

5. a) carbon emissions
   b) atmosphere
   c) environment
   d) estimate

6. a) limitation
   b) rule
   c) restriction
   d) destruction

# Discussion

1. Discuss how the subtitle in this reading is a play on words. How would you answer the question?

2. Should reforestation be a global priority? If yes, what can an everyday person do to help make it one? If no, why not?

3. How does deforestation contribute to disasters such as flooding and landslides? Can we call these "natural disasters" if humans helped cause them?

# Critical Thinking

**IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS**

Trees are useful for humans in so many different ways that it seems they are meant for us to use. Do you think humans can find ways to use trees without abusing the environment, or should forests be left untouched?

# Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

**DEFORESTATION**
*Do we need a clear-cut plan?*

1. Deforestation refers to the destruction and conversion of forests. Humans are largely _____ for the loss of forests. The cleared land is used for farming, housing, businesses, mining, and roads. The resources are used for building materials, fuel, medicine, food, and paper. According to some _____ , up to half of the world's tropical rain forests have already been _____ for these purposes.

2. The majority of the earth's plants and animals live in forests. Deforestation _____ the food chain. What will come of the remaining species if we eliminate their habitat? According to some experts, we will soon find out. Based on the current rate of deforestation, the world's rain forests could _____ within 100 years.

3. How did humans let this happen? Survival is the main reason. Converting forests to _____ is the leading cause of deforestation. Farmers use clear-cutting to make land available for livestock and crops. They _____ the income and the resources for survival. For many years, farmers were unaware of the impact of deforestation. _____ are also to blame. Do you ever think about the trees that were lost so that you could enjoy your daily coffee, tea, rice, or peanuts? We are all contributors to deforestation.

4. Humans in many parts of the world are feeling the _____ of deforestation. Can the damage be undone? New restrictions on clear-cutting have been introduced in some of the most heavily forested nations, including Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. _____ are focusing on reforestation methods, and are exploring ways to reverse the damage. Planting mixed forests that are less susceptible to disease is one method. Learning how to prevent soil erosion is also crucial.

5. When a tree falls, it releases carbon into the _____ . What does this mean for global warming? According to some scientists, approximately 20% of global carbon emissions result from deforestation. That's more than the carbon emissions of all of the _____ in the world!

# Answer Key

**LESSON DESCRIPTION:**

In this lesson, students read about deforestation. The lesson includes vocabulary review exercises, comprehension questions, and discussion questions.

**LEVEL:**  Int – Adv

**TIME:**  1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:**  discussion, environment, deforestation, clear-cutting, global warming

## Pre-Reading

**A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS**

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

**B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. k | 3. g | 5. b | 7. d | 9. f | 11. c |
| 2. j | 4. i | 6. a | 8. h | 10. e | |

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

1. Deforestation is the destruction of forests for other purposes.
2. The leading cause of deforestation is converting forests to agriculture.
3. The reading mentions coffee and tea to show that land is cleared for the use of consumers around the world. We are all contributors to this environmental problem.
4. The two reforestation methods mentioned are: 1) planting diverse forests that aren't as susceptible to disease, and 2) preventing soil erosion.
5. When trees fall, they release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

## Vocabulary Review

**A. CHUNKING**

Individual answers for sentences.

1. reverse the damage
2. global warming
3. susceptible to disease
4. tropical rain forest
5. carbon emissions

**B. ODD ONE OUT**

Invite students to explain *why* a word doesn't fit.
Can they think of another word that *does* fit?

1. c    2. d    3. d    4. a    5. d    6. d

*(continued on the next page…)*

# Answer Key cont.

## Discussion

Answers will vary.

## Critical Thinking

Answers will vary.

## Listening

1. responsible, estimates, cleared
2. disrupts, vanish
3. agriculture, rely on, Consumers
4. effects, Governments
5. atmosphere, vehicles

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

*Rain forest* is two words in American English, but only one word, *rainforest*, in British English. Outside of the US, most English-speaking countries, including Canada, spell it as one word.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

If you're looking for an interesting film or book on deforestation, try *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. It's a great story for discussion!