From Concern to Action

Trace how environmental goals shaped public debate and law.

USH.C.7.3.D "Identify the goals of the environmental protection movement, including the influence of the publication of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring and passage of the Clean Air Act."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three goals of the environmental protection movement, circle one way *Silent Spring* influenced public action, and number two tools the Clean Air Act gave governments.

Protecting What We Share

1 In the mid-twentieth century, a family might watch a plane spray pesticide over fields while cars filled the streets with exhaust. Many Americans welcomed the benefits of new chemicals and growing industry, but others asked who paid the hidden costs. The environmental protection movement sought to limit pollution, protect wildlife and natural resources, and reduce threats to human health. Its supporters wanted evidence about environmental harm to shape public decisions, not just private choices. Their goals connected a child's breathing, a bird's survival, and the quality of a neighborhood's air and water.

2 In 1962, marine biologist Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, a book examining the widespread use of chemical pesticides, especially DDT. She described how chemicals could move through food chains and harm birds and other animals. She also raised concerns about possible effects on people and challenged the assumption that new products were safe simply because they were useful. Chemical companies disputed her claims, but her carefully documented argument brought pesticide risks into a national debate. The book did not itself ban DDT. It helped build public pressure for closer study and stronger controls, advancing the movement's goals of protecting wildlife and health.

3 Air pollution offered another test of what protection could mean. Smog and exhaust crossed property lines, so a single household could not solve the problem alone. The Clean Air Act of 1963 gave the federal government a larger role in addressing air pollution. Major amendments in 1970 established national air-quality standards and required states to plan how to meet them. They also strengthened federal power to limit emissions from sources such as factories and cars. These measures reflected a movement goal: use enforceable public rules to reduce harmful pollution. Unlike Carson's book, the law gave governments specific tools to act.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which environmental protection goals did *Silent Spring* advance, and how did the book help advance them?

2. What movement goal did the Clean Air Act address? Name one tool the 1970 amendments gave governments to pursue it.

3. How did Carson's book and the Clean Air Act take different approaches to environmental protection?

4. Why did the goal of reducing air pollution call for public rules rather than only private choices?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine buses idling beside a school while insecticide is sprayed near a pond. In four or five sentences, recommend two environmental goals for the town, explain how Carson's example could guide its questions, and describe how the Clean Air Act's approach could guide action on bus exhaust.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.7.3.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three goals of the environmental protection movement, circle one way *Silent Spring* influenced public action, and number two tools the Clean Air Act gave governments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which environmental protection goals did *Silent Spring* advance, and how did the book help advance them?	**It advanced the goals of protecting wildlife and human health by bringing pesticide risks into national debate and building pressure for closer study and stronger controls.**
2	What movement goal did the Clean Air Act address? Name one tool the 1970 amendments gave governments to pursue it.	**The goal was to reduce harmful air pollution. The amendments established national air-quality standards, required state plans to meet them, or strengthened federal power to limit emissions.**
3	How did Carson's book and the Clean Air Act take different approaches to environmental protection?	**Carson's book raised public awareness and pressure for action, while the Clean Air Act gave governments enforceable tools to reduce pollution.**
4	Why did the goal of reducing air pollution call for public rules rather than only private choices?	**Smog and exhaust crossed property lines, so one household could not solve the problem alone. Public rules could limit emissions from sources such as factories and cars.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The town should aim to protect the pond's wildlife and reduce air pollution near the school. Following Carson's example, residents could ask what evidence shows how the insecticide affects animals and people before deciding whether to keep using it. They could also measure pollution from idling buses. Following the Clean Air Act's approach, officials could use enforceable emissions rules to reduce bus exhaust rather than relying only on voluntary choices.

Accept other accurate goals and passage-supported tools. In Part 3, look for a reasoned recommendation that distinguishes investigating insecticide risks from using enforceable rules to address air pollution.