

31.Pollution

People in industrial societies frequently complain about trash and litter on the ground and about smog and bad smells in the air. But even more serious is the poor health caused by pollutants. Tiny air- or water-borne particles, that are too small to be seen, kill more than twice the number who dies in automobile accidents. They are so small that they can evade the body's respiratory defenses and lodge themselves deeply in lung tissue, where they slowly kill their hosts. Car exhaust is the biggest source, so if the automobile doesn't kill you in an accident it may still kill you by polluting the air you breathe.

Pollution is also responsible for making many animals and plants extinct. Pesticides are probably the worst offenders in this regard. Designed to kill insects that may destroy a farmer's crop, they also get into the ground water. And once they enter the food chain, they cause death and disease throughout an ecological system. One of the ironies is, after a few generations, the target insects acquire immunity and are little affected, but the poison designed to control them continues to spread uncontrollably among other animals, perhaps forever.

Comprehension

1. Give at least two examples of irony in the essay.
2. Does the essay offer any solution to the problem?
3. What are the visible signs of pollution?

Your opinion

1. Air pollution is mainly caused by trucks and cars. Would you buy an electric car for a cleaner environment, in spite of its higher price and greater inconvenience?
2. What do you think is the most important reason to clean our air?
3. Some doubt our water supply is safe and free from pollution, despite reassurances from the government. Are you willing to buy and drink mineral water at high prices to protect yourself?
4. Do you think bottled water is any healthier than tap water?
5. It is said that disposable diapers take more than one hundred years to





decompose, and they are filling our landfills at remarkable speed. Do you think we should discontinue their production?

6. What do you think about building more nuclear power plants in spite of the potential danger of radioactive release?
7. Would you be willing to sacrifice your current standard of living for a cleaner environment?
8. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for a healthier environment?
9. Do you think our country's anti-pollution laws are tough enough?
10. Are you concerned about other forms of pollution than just bad air and water? What about too much noise?
11. Do you think over crowdedness is a form of pollution?

