

Who Will Speak for the Thneeds?



In *The Lorax*, Dr. Seuss introduces the "Once-ler" who cuts down the beautiful Truffula trees so that he can use their wonderful silk tufts to knit "thneeds". Thneed sales are so successful that the Once-ler builds a factory and invents the Super Axe Hacker which cuts down four trees at a time. The Lorax speaks up in defence of the trees, animals, air and water that the Once-ler is destroying in pursuit of bigger and bigger profits. Finally, when the last Truffula tree is cut down, production of the Thneeds ends. Closed factories, polluted air, polluted water and an uninhabitable wasteland are all that remain on the once beautiful site. The Lorax can no longer live here, but he leaves behind a small pile of rocks on which the word UNLESS is inscribed. *The Lorax* illustrates an ecosystem, a natural unit in which living and non-living parts interact. All of the parts are linked together and functions as a unit. When one of the parts is altered or damaged, the entire system may fail.

Understanding Questions

1. Name all of the animals in this story.
2. What must be done before there is any chance of the Lorax coming back?
3. What happened to all of the Truffula Trees?
4. Why was the Once-ler so determined to make Thneeds?
5. Why did the Lorax sneeze, snarrgle, snuffle, sniff, whuffle, and speak with a cruffulous croak?
6. How, exactly, was the Lorax lifted?
7. How many people and animals were helped by efforts of the Once-ler?

Thinking Questions

1. Is the Oncler a good steward for the planet, is he practicing good sustainable practices?
2. What could the Oncler have done to be sustainable and a good steward?
3. Write a story depicting the Oncler as a *responsible* business owner, with a re-written ending to the story!