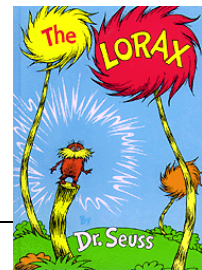


Who Will Speak for the Trees?



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.

What happened to the Truffala Village?

1. Why did the Once-ler cut down the Truffula trees?
2. Why do the Brown Bar-ba-loots have to leave?
3. What kind of problems does the Thneed factory cause for the environment? Name at least three.
4. What happens to the Once-ler when there are no more Truffula trees?
5. What happens to the Lorax?
6. What do YOU think the Lorax's message "UNLESS" means?
7. What could the Once-ler have done to minimize his factory's effect on the environment?
8. Is bigger always better? Give an example to back up your opinion.
9. A "Thneed" is defined as a fine thing that everyone thinks they need (but probably really don't). What are some examples of thneeds -things that we think we need but could do quite well without?
10. The Lorax spoke for trees "for the trees have no tongues". What would you choose to speak for, and what would you say? Plan a one minute talk on behalf of something which cannot speak for itself.

Understanding the Storylines

1. How is the Truffala Village an ecosystem?
2. How does each character, animal, plant, or object fit into the Truffala Village Ecosystem?
3. Do you recognize any groups or people that characters in The Lorax could represent from our own ecosystem and larger world environment?
4. How does the fate of the Truffala Village relate to current predictions for our own environment?
5. What do we need to know/learn to help prevent our own environment from becoming like the Truffala Village?
6. What are some examples of "thneeds" that we see everyday in our own culture? How do their uses affect our environment?

Activities

1. Investigate the efforts of a conservationist of your choice. Identify several factors that help motivate people to devote so much time and effort to research and species protection.
2. List at least 10 changes that need to be made in order to improve protection of biodiversity.
3. Identify an individual, group, or policy that is working to protect biodiversity in your local community. Identify the issue of concern, explain the initiatives that are being planned or implemented, and evaluate their impact.
4. Evaluate the current policies of the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario in protecting biodiversity.