

**CHAPTER 24** Section 4 (pages 808–813)

# Environmental Activism

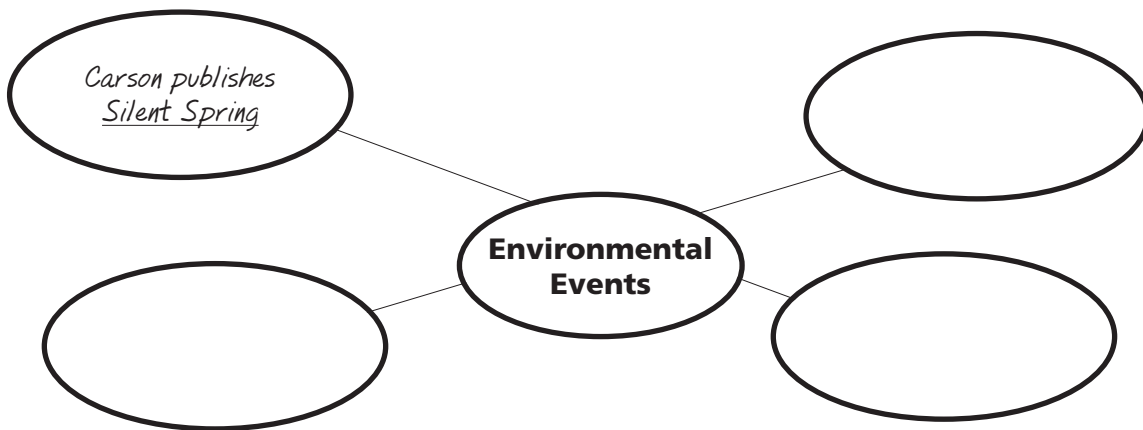
## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you learned about Presidents Ford and Carter.

In this section, you will see how Americans addressed their environmental concerns.

## AS YOU READ

Use the web below to take notes about important events for the environmental movement in the United States.



### TERMS AND NAMES

**Rachel Carson** Environmentalist leader in the U.S.

**Earth Day** Annual day to celebrate the environment

**environmentalist** Person who actively tries to protect the environment

**Environmental Protection Agency** Federal agency formed to decrease pollution

**Three Mile Island** Site of a nuclear plant that released radiation into the air

## The Roots of Environmentalism

(pages 808–809)

### What is environmentalism?

Concern for the environment was increased by the 1962 book *Silent Spring*, written by **Rachel Carson**. That book argued that *pesticides* were poisoning food and killing birds and fish. *Silent Spring* sold nearly half a million copies within months.

Carson’s book was an awakening to many Americans. President Kennedy set up a committee to investigate the situation shortly after the book’s publication. In 1963, Congress passed the Clean Air Act. This law regulated *emissions* from cars and factories. Carson’s work helped to outlaw the use of DDT, a harmful pesticide, in 1972.

1. How did *Silent Spring* encourage environmentalism?

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## Environmental Concerns in the 1970s

(pages 809–812)

### What were the key environmental issues of the 1970s?

On April 22, 1970, Americans celebrated **Earth Day** for the first time. Earth Day became a yearly event to highlight environmental issues.

Richard Nixon was not an **environmentalist**—someone who takes an active role in protecting the environment. But he did recognize the nation’s

concern over the environment. In 1970, he created the **Environmental Protection Agency**. This agency had the power to regulate *pollution* standards and to conduct research.

Nixon also signed the 1970 Clean Air Act. This law required industry to reduce pollution from factories and automobiles. Other new laws to protect the environment also passed.

In 1968 oil was found in Alaska. In 1974, oil companies began building a pipeline to carry the oil 800 miles across the state. The discovery of oil and the construction of the pipeline created many new jobs and increased state revenues.

But the pipeline raised concerns about Alaska's environment and the rights of Alaska's native peoples. In 1971, Nixon signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This law gave millions of acres of land to the state's native tribes.

In 1978, President Carter set aside 56 million more acres in Alaska as national monuments. In 1980, Congress added another 104 million acres to Alaska's protected conservation areas.

In the 1970s, some people believed that nuclear energy was the energy of the future. They believed that it was cheap, plentiful, and safe.

Others opposed nuclear energy. They warned that nuclear plants were dangerous to humans and the environment. These people also feared accidents and nuclear waste.

On March 28, 1979, the concerns of opponents of nuclear energy appeared to come true. An accident caused one of the nuclear reactors on **Three Mile Island**, in Pennsylvania, to release *radiation*

into the air. An investigation showed that workers at the plant had not been properly trained. It also showed that some safety measures were not taken. Afterwards, the government strengthened nuclear safety regulations.

**2. What did the government do after the accident at a nuclear reactor on Three Mile Island?**

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**A Continuing Movement** (page 813)

*Have the goals of the environmental movement changed?*

The debate over the environment continues today. In the 1990s, Americans began addressing new environmental problems. Scientists warned that pollution from industries was destroying the earth's ozone layer. This protects the earth from the sun's most dangerous rays.

Some studies also showed that the continued burning of fossil fuels (such as oil and coal) was contributing to global warming. This is a general rise in the earth's temperature. Today Americans are trying to strike a balance between economic growth and conservation.

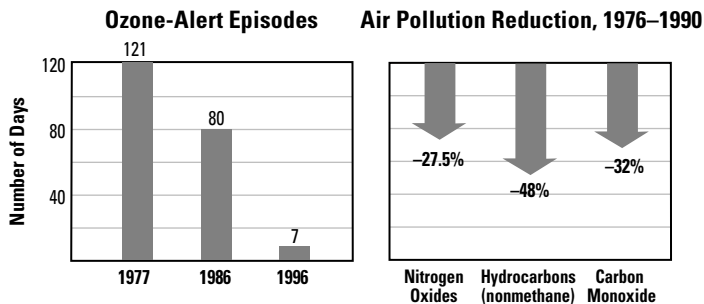
**3. What issue faces Americans today regarding the environment?**

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**Environmental Progress in Los Angeles Region**



Source: California Air Resources Board

**Skillbuilder**

Use the charts to answer these questions.

**1. How many days in 1996 did people in Los Angeles face ozone-alert episodes?**

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**2. How much did carbon monoxide pollution decrease in Los Angeles between 1976 and 1990?**

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## **Chapter 24: An Age of Limits (pages 784–815)**

### **Section 4: Environmental Activism (pages 808–813)**

1. *Silent Spring* encouraged environmentalism by telling people about the effects of pesticides on wildlife.
2. The government investigated and found that some workers had not been properly trained and some safety measures were not taken. The government strengthened its nuclear safety regulations.
3. Possible responses: Destruction of the ozone layer, global warming, balancing economic growth and conservation

### **Skillbuilder**

1. 80
2. 32 percent