

Using Natural Resources

Our life is based on natural resources. Natural resources in the form of minerals, water, and energy, as well as the land available to us on earth, are the basis of all living beings on our planet. We humans are also part of nature. Without the constant use of natural resources, neither our economy nor our society could function. Nature provides humans with all resources necessary for life:

- energy for heat, electricity, and mobility
- wood for furniture and paper products
- cotton for clothing
- construction materials for our roads and houses
- food and pure water for a healthy diet

However, the natural resource base that our societies are built on is in severe danger of overexploitation and collapse. Due to the growth of the world population, continued high levels of resource consumption in the developed world, and rapid industrialization of countries such as China, India, and Brazil, worldwide demand on natural resources and related pressures on the environment are steadily increasing.

Many of the problems that threaten mankind's survival on the planet result from the increased consumption of energy, water, and raw materials, the increased production of waste and emissions and the increased human use of land area.

The environmental consequences of this over-demand are already clear. Climate change is the most important environmental problem linked to our natural resource use. Global ecosystems and the ecological services they provide are being degraded: freshwater reserves and forests are shrinking, many species are under threat of extinction and fertile land is being eroded.

QUESTIONS	#	ANSWERS
According to the text, what three factors have placed the natural resource base in severe danger?	1	
	2	
	3	
According to the text, what three things have caused problems that threaten mankind's survival?	1	
	2	
	3	
According to the text, what are four environmental consequences of our resource use?	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	