

# ***CULTURAL ISSUES ⇄ ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES***

環境と文化から見るグローバル世界

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NAN'UN-DO

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## Preface

An important lesson you will learn while reading this book is that nature and our lives are deeply connected. Cultural issues and environmental issues are two sides of one coin, or two important halves of the only world we have. All of our behaviors and ideas influence the environment, and the environment, in turn, affects us.

Our cultures developed in response to environmental conditions. Many cultures traditionally lived in balance with nature, but that balance no longer exists. Unfortunately, our population, now over seven billion people, is destroying the natural environment. Our wasteful lifestyles are causing climate change, the deaths of millions of plants and animals each year, and air and water pollution. To save the natural environment, we need cultural change. We have to change our lifestyles.

Despite the seriousness of today's environmental destruction, there is hope. If people like you and I learn more about culture and the environment, we can make the natural world and our homes and cities better places for all living creatures. This is one of the main points of this book.

You will also study English while learning about cultural issues and environmental issues.

This book prepares you for a better future by

- ▶ improving your English abilities
- ▶ giving you a better understanding of culture
- ▶ helping you to understand how daily life affects the environment
- ▶ teaching you the necessary vocabulary for higher level discussions (vocabulary that also helps with improving your scores on TOEIC and similar tests)
- ▶ developing your critical thinking skills
- ▶ encouraging you to act like a citizen of the world
- ▶ increasing your sensitivity to the conditions of other peoples
- ▶ widening your knowledge of world habitats
- ▶ empowering you to make decisions that affect Earth

Our planet needs culturally and environmentally aware students. Your lifestyle choices both positively and negatively affect the world. Will our future environment be a healthy one or an unhealthy one? Your behavior will answer that question.

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# UNIT 1 Connecting Culture and Environmental Issues



## Prereading Exercises

▶▶ Discuss the questions below with a partner or in a group.

- Which photos show the traditional clothes of people who live in cold regions and of people who live in hot, sunny areas?
- Which photo shows the clothes of people who work and live in air-conditioned buildings?

► Read the sentences below, which define or explain the underlined words. Then fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the correct underlined words. One word will not be used.

- The environment is everything around us.
- The population of Japan is a little less than 127,000,000 people.
- Various groups of people, for example, Indians, Malays, Chinese, and Europeans, live and work in Singapore.
- The things that people make are products.
- Material objects are things that we can see and touch.
- Ideas are nonmaterial, which means that we cannot touch or see them.
- The book about climate change influenced how many of us think and behave.

1. On birthdays, children want \_\_\_\_\_ gifts or money. Just saying "Happy Birthday" is not enough.
2. Nowadays, most local grocery stores sell foods from \_\_\_\_\_ countries.
3. Love is the most important \_\_\_\_\_ gift one person can give another.
4. After the two factories moved into our town, our air and water became very dirty. Our \_\_\_\_\_ is no longer healthy.
5. The number of babies being born today is greater than the number of people dying, so the world's \_\_\_\_\_ is growing.
6. When traveling, many people buy the special \_\_\_\_\_ of the area they visit and give them to friends and family when they return home.



## Reading Text

►► Read this passage carefully and do the exercises that follow.

Environmental issues are questions about the destruction and protection of the environment. Long ago, humans could only slowly change Earth's environment. However, because of cultural changes over the last few hundred years, humans are rapidly destroying natural environments everywhere.

- 5 Culture includes the behaviors of groups of people. Environmental issues are cultural issues because cultural activities change our environment. For example, within the last forty years, shopping with plastic bags became a common Japanese cultural behavior that replaced using the eco-friendly *furoshiki*. As a result, millions of seabirds and other animals now die every year after eating or getting caught in
- 10 plastic bags, as well as other plastic garbage.



Cultural ideas both positively and negatively affect Earth. People who believe a nearby mountain is the home of gods will probably protect that mountain. But, members of another culture might think that cutting down and selling the mountain's trees is a better use of that mountain.

Culture affects nature. Nature also influences culture. Consider fashion. Long ago, most people lived in natural environments, so they developed cultural products that helped them to live with nature. The Inuit in Alaska and the people of Mongolia learned to make thick clothing from animals to survive cold winters. People living in deserts in Egypt developed thin, loose, cotton clothing for protection from strong sunlight. Today, most people live in temperature-controlled buildings, so nature has less influence on what we wear.

The “Cool Biz Campaign” has greatly influenced both fashion and the environment. In 2005, the Japanese government decided that room temperatures should not be lower than 28 Celsius during the summer. The government also encouraged office workers not to wear ties, long-sleeved shirts, and suits. The media published images of the Japanese prime minister wearing a short-sleeved shirt. Soon, ideas of “good” fashions for the office changed, and various other countries followed Japan’s cultural invention. Cool Biz saves energy and has prevented the release of millions of tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.

Cultures produce numerous cultural products. Material cultural products are objects we can touch, see, smell, taste, or hear. Kimonos, flags, computers, swords, fishing boats, guns, hamburgers, and books are examples of material culture. Our objects affect the environment, for example, cell phone makers use energy and create pollution to make cell phones. When we buy new phones, our older phones become garbage to be thrown away or recycled. Producing and destroying modern material culture almost always requires energy and creates pollution.

Cultural products can be material and nonmaterial. We cannot touch ideas, so ideas are nonmaterial culture. The belief—or idea—that eating meat and fish every day is better than eating only vegetables is an example of nonmaterial culture. Because our ideas lead us to create material products, nonmaterial culture is more powerful than material culture. Millions of us think that beef is a healthy food, so we cut down forests to make more farms for growing the plants that feed the cows that we kill and turn into hamburgers.

Cultural ideas, however, can also lead to environmental protection. Today the residents of Sado Island, Niigata, are using fewer chemicals in their rice fields to save the Japanese ibis, *toki*. Why? Because that bird is not just a bird: it’s an idea—a cultural symbol of Niigata. In Southeast Asia, some trees are being saved because of the belief that spirits live in those trees. As you can see, environmental issues and culture are tied together.

(575 words)

### More Vocabulary Study

The suffixes *-ist*, *-er*, *-ier*, and *-or* are added to words to turn the words into the names of the people who do or study the things that these words represent. Add the correct suffix to each word below, as in the example.

| Example: special | specialist |
|------------------|------------|
| 1. environmental |            |
| 2. natural       |            |
| 3. classify      |            |
| 4. deny          |            |
| 5. survive       |            |
| 6. destroy       |            |
| 7. ecotour       |            |
| 8. biology       |            |

### Reading Comprehension Check A

Choose the best answer to each question below.

1. What is culture?  
a. our ideas  
b. our behaviors  
c. the natural & unnatural environment  
d. a & b
2. What do we call the ideas and objects that people produce?  
a. environmental problems  
b. cultural products  
c. touchable  
d. unnatural

### Reading Comprehension Check B

Unscramble the words in the parentheses to make the correct answer to each question.

1. Are environmental issues and culture connected?  
Environmental ( and issues closely are cultural tied issues ) together.  

---
2. What are two results of the Cool Biz campaign?  
Ideas ( fashion about changed business carbon and less ) dioxide was released.  

---

3. What is the connection between many of our favorite objects and pollution?

Pollution (objects when and made created is are) destroyed.

---

Listening Comprehension  
Check

**Part 1** *Listen to each question and circle the letter of the best answer.*



1. a. nonmaterial culture  
c. only material culture
- b. material culture  
d. both a & b
2. a. They are touchable.  
b. They can lead to pollution.  
c. They can help protect the environment.  
d. They are considered nonmaterial culture.
3. a. They're cute.  
c. They're symbols.
- b. They're protected.  
d. They're fashionable.

**Part 2**



*Listen and write the questions. Then circle the letter of the best answer for each.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a. 2002                  b. 2005                  c. 2007                  d. 2012
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a. a plastic bottle                  b. a park  
c. video games                  d. liking plastic bags
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a. Alaska                  b. Mongolia                  c. worldwide                  d. Egypt

▶▶ *Discuss these questions with a partner or in a group.*

1. What do you do that positively and negatively affects the environment? Why do you do those actions?
2. Are any of your culture's cultural symbols connected to nature? Explain your answer.
3. What temperature do you want your room to be at in summer and winter? Why?
4. Which three material products would you hate to live without? Why?
5. Do most people in your culture try to protect nature? Why or why not?

*Now, discuss this topic with your own questions and ideas.*



## UNIT 2 Culture, Popular Pets, and Unwanted Animals



### Prereading Exercises

▶ Write the number of the picture that matches each animal below.

- a. Ezo salamander \_\_\_\_\_      b. owl \_\_\_\_\_      c. python \_\_\_\_\_  
d. raccoon \_\_\_\_\_      e. grey parrot \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Discuss the questions below with a partner or in a group.

- Would you like to have any of the animals above as pets? Why or why not?
- Do you have a pet? If yes, would you ever throw it away? If you do not have a pet, would you like to have one?

► Read the sentences below, which define or explain the underlined words. Then fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the correct underlined words. One word will not be used.

- An invasive species is an animal or plant from far away that has come into our local area and that causes environmental problems.
- To abandon a pet is to leave it alone somewhere on its own.
- Driving at 80 kilometers an hour on the expressway is legal, so we can do it without worrying about police stopping us. Driving faster than 80 is not legal.
- The police will try to catch us if we do something illegal, such as stealing.
- The population of Japan is around 127,000,000 people.
- When you strongly desire something, you want it very much.
- The media have the power to influence, or change the ideas and feelings, of millions of people.

1. I have all the money and things I need, so all I \_\_\_\_\_ is to be happy and healthy.
2. An imported fish called black bass eats many Japanese native fish all over Japan, so we call it an \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Unfortunately, many people \_\_\_\_\_ old bicycles, televisions, and even unwanted kittens in rivers and other public places.
4. Although it is \_\_\_\_\_, many people throw garbage out of their car windows onto public roads.
5. Teachers and parents hope that their lessons will \_\_\_\_\_ children to do good things such as eat well, study hard, and think deeply.
6. Driving at 160 kilometers an hour on expressways is \_\_\_\_\_ in Germany, but not in Japan.



## Reading Text

► Read this passage carefully and do the exercises that follow.

Movies and television programs influence the hearts and minds of billions of people in many ways, including how they feel about wild animals and pets. Keeping pets is a cultural activity that is connected to various environmental issues. Many people desire the animals they see in movies and on TV, so they rush out to buy them.

- 5 But later, when they discover that real animals are not as much fun as the animals in the movies, people throw the animals away like trash. Buying and abandoning animals negatively affects the natural environment, and it causes many animals to

feel pain, hunger, and loneliness.

The desire for unusual pets has created an international business worth billions of dollars yearly. We can buy owls, parrots, alligators, monkeys, chimpanzees, lions 10 and numerous other animals in legal pet shops and illegal markets worldwide.

After the Harry Potter movies became popular, owls became desirable pets. However, owls are difficult to take care of. They make homes messy and need lots of exercise and special food. After purchasing an owl, many owl owners discovered that having a pet owl is not the magical experience they imagined. Many people 15 abandoned the birds in parks or woods. Animal rescue centers in England, where the movies were very popular, reported large numbers of abandoned owls after each movie was shown in theaters. Most owls, like other animals that have grown up in pet shops, die hungry, sick, or injured after being abandoned because they have never learned how to find food or avoid enemies. 20

In the 1970s, one Japanese media company showed on TV an American cartoon program, which the company named "Araiguma Rascal." Japanese pet shops soon started importing raccoons to sell. However, raccoons, like owls, are not easy to raise. Many owners abandoned their raccoons. Some raccoons also escaped. Raccoons, though, can survive in various habitats: forests, parks, and even cities, and 25 now raccoons are living in many prefectures. Raccoons occasionally eat endangered Japanese animals, like the Ezo salamander. The Japanese government now considers raccoons as an "invasive species." Government workers kill thousands of raccoons yearly, yet the raccoon population is increasing. Raccoons sometimes make homes in the roofs of houses and have even lived for a short time in the roof of the Byodoin 30 Temple in Kyoto, a World Heritage Site. Raccoon claws damaged culturally important artwork.

In the US, one very troublesome invasive species is the python. Many were abandoned pets that didn't die. Pythons grow to over ten meters long, and large ones eat dogs, raccoons, deer, birds, and even alligators. Female pythons can lay 50 35 eggs a year. Thousands of pythons are now living in the famous Everglades National Park in Florida. Consequently, the populations of other animals in the Everglades are becoming smaller.

Pirate movies often include clever talking parrots. The grey parrot, a bird that is popular because it can repeat human speech, is a fashionable pet. In the last two 40 decades, bird catchers have taken over 500,000 grey parrots from their habitats for sale. Wild bird parents that try to protect their young are often killed. Birds and many other animals caught for sale die during transportation. Because of this international trade in grey parrots, the birds are rapidly disappearing in the wild. In the future, these beautiful birds, like many other popular animals, might only live in zoos or 45 cages.

(561 words)

### More Vocabulary Study

Fill in the blanks below with the correct verb and noun forms.

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. import   |                |
| 2.          | transportation |
| 3. export   |                |
| 4.          | population     |
| 5. invade   |                |
| 6.          | expectation    |
| 7. destruct |                |
| 8.          | deforestation  |
| 9. confuse  |                |
| 10.         | imitation      |

### Reading Comprehension Check A

Choose the best answer to each question below.

- How many people are influenced by movies and television?  
a. hundreds      b. millions      c. thousands      d. billions
- What happens to many abandoned animals?  
a. They die.      b. They enjoy freedom.  
c. They find new owners.      d. They become popular.

### Reading Comprehension Check B

Unscramble the words in the parentheses to make the correct answer to each question.

- Why do people abandon their unusual pets, like owls, raccoons, and snakes?  
Taking (real of care animals is than more difficult) they had imagined.  

---
- What do some invasive species do in their new homes?  
In order (to and native eat many they kill live,) animal species.  

---



3. What is a good reason not to buy imported animals?

Many (imported while to being die transported animals ) other countries.

---

---

Listening Comprehension  
Check

**Part 1** Listen to each question and circle the letter of the best answer.



1. a. hunger                      b. loneliness                      c. pain                      d. all of these
2. a. owls                      b. eagles                      c. monkeys                      d. lions
3. a. the 1960s                      b. the 1970s                      c. the 1980s                      d. the 1990s

**Part 2**



Listen and write the questions. Then circle the letter of the best answer for each.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a. in every prefecture                      b. in many prefectures  
c. ten prefectures                      d. southern prefectures only
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a. alligator                      b. monkey                      c. snake                      d. bird
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
a. They dance.                      b. They sing.  
c. They act like pirates.                      d. They can sound like people.

▶ *Discuss these questions with a partner or in a group.*

1. Do movies, television shows, or new reports influence how you think and feel about animals? If yes, give an example. If no, why not?
2. Have you ever seen any abandoned animals? If yes, give details. If no, why haven't you seen any?
3. Should people who abandon animals be punished? If yes, why? If no, why not?
4. Is it possible to stop people from abandoning animals? If yes, how can we stop them? If no, why not?
5. What do you know about animal rescue organizations in Japan?

*Now, discuss this topic with your own questions and ideas.*

