

NAME _____ DATE _____

The following description is based on a real community that faced an environmental justice issue. As you read through the scenario, identify the problem and the challenges that might make it difficult to address the problem. Then, write the solutions you would propose.

Kim’s family recently moved to a new neighborhood in a large city. Kim enjoys playing basketball, but the closest park with a basketball court is nearly a mile away. To get there, Kim must walk past several vacant lots enclosed by chain-link fences with signs reading, “Caution: Toxic Waste.” These lots once held factories and are still contaminated by chemicals that leaked into the soil.

The park is located near a solid waste facility that processes one-third of the city’s garbage. All day, every day, diesel trucks carrying garbage to and from this facility pass by houses, exposing Kim’s neighbors to fumes from burning diesel. As a result, asthma rates are three times higher in this neighborhood than elsewhere in the city.

Kim’s neighborhood is one of the poorest in the country, with nearly one-third of the residents living in poverty. One-quarter of the residents are unemployed. Because of the pollution and lack of parks, people in the neighborhood tend to stay inside and not exercise, which increases the level of asthma, obesity, and diabetes.

Despite these challenges, many neighbors worry that closing the solid waste facility would take jobs away from the neighborhood. They also worry that adding parks or other improvements will hurt them because it would drive up property values. They’ve seen how in other areas of the city, redevelopment has driven up prices and forced people to move out.



Problem: _____

Challenges: _____

Proposed Solutions: _____

CAREER CORNER

SAFETY INSPECTORS ensure that the workplace is a safe and healthy place for workers. They provide information, advice, and guidance to both employees and employers to help them meet safety policies and regulations.



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Angel's family lives in a large city in the southern United States. Angel's neighborhood doesn't have as many trees as other parts of the city. On hot summer days, the lack of shade means that people have little relief from the sweltering sun.

In addition to shade, city trees provide lots of other benefits, including:

- Lowering city temperatures by as much as 15 degrees on hot days
- Improving air quality
- Reducing noise levels
- Increasing a city's sense of community
- Creating a nicer-looking city
- Reducing stress in city residents

The lack of trees in Angel's neighborhood has created health problems for the residents. For example, because it is hotter there than in the surrounding areas, Angel's neighbors tend to stay indoors rather than being active outdoors. That means that there are more cases of asthma, diabetes, and heart conditions than in other neighborhoods in the city.

Studies show that an uneven distribution of urban trees is often related to wealth and class. Angel's family and neighbors experience poverty at a higher rate than the city as a whole. They do not have extra money to pay for trees around their homes or for maintaining them, as other neighborhoods in the city do.



Problem: _____

Challenges: _____

Proposed Solutions: _____



CAREER CORNER

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS plan and design land areas for cities, parks, campuses, recreational facilities, and businesses. They work in urban and rural landscapes to create outdoor spaces that contribute to thriving communities.





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Dani lives in a tropical coastal village in a country made up of numerous small islands. Like many other communities in the country, Dani's village relies on shrimp farming as a source of income. Most of the shrimp is exported to other countries, like the United States, where shrimp is the most popular seafood. The average U.S. resident eats 4.1 pounds of shrimp per year.

Although shrimp farming makes lots of money for the country, the industry also has negative effects. Shrimp are raised in ponds near the ocean, which can spill harmful waste into the sea and spread diseases to ocean sea creatures. In order to build the ponds, farmers remove mangrove trees, destroying the mangrove forests.

Mangrove forests grow at the water's edge along ocean coastlines. Their tangled roots and thick canopies shield villages from storms and floods, and they prevent soil from washing away. Mangroves also help protect villages from the effects of sea-level rise due to the changing climate. They also provide habitats for beneficial animals and improve air quality.

Dani's village used to be surrounded by mangrove forests. However, as shrimp farming has expanded in recent decades, most of the mangroves have been cut down. Worldwide, more than one-third of the world's mangroves have been removed to create shrimp ponds. Shrimp farming makes villages more vulnerable to storms, flooding, and sea-level rise. It also puts residents in the difficult position of choosing between having a good income to support their families and protecting their local environment.



Problem: _____

Challenges: _____

Proposed Solutions: _____

CAREER CORNER

WATER QUALITY SPECIALISTS assess the water in rivers, lakes, and water systems to make sure it is safe for people and the environment. They may analyze water samples for pH or other chemical properties and to determine the level of pollution.

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GREEN JOB!



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Harper lives in a rural, mountainous region of the United States, where most of the residents are white and experience poverty. It is hard to make a living in the area, as there aren't many jobs. For decades, coal mining has been the biggest industry and the biggest employer in the region. Both of Harper's parents are coal miners.

In recent years, mountaintop removal mining has become more and more common in the region. With this type of mining, coal companies use dynamite to blast off the tops of mountains to access thin layers of coal beneath. The process creates many environmental problems: destroying trees, burying streams and waterways, polluting drinking water, and damaging natural habitats. The process also causes health problems for people who live nearby, including cancer, kidney disease, birth defects, heart disease, and lung disease.

Although mountaintop removal mining provides jobs for many of Harper's neighbors, the jobs don't pay very much, so the residents of the region remain in poverty. Also, working in this industry doesn't require an education, so kids don't have much incentive to stay in school. Harper's region has lower graduation rates and higher drop-out rates than the rest of the country.

Still, many of Harper's neighbors support mountaintop removal mining because it provides jobs. For them, having an income for their families is a more immediate need than protecting the environment.

Problem: _____

Challenges: _____

Proposed Solutions: _____



CAREER CORNER

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE INSPECTORS conduct routine investigations of job sites to ensure that all projects comply with environmental laws. They protect the health of workers, the general public, and the land.

