



Environmental Literacy

by **Brian K. Yeoman**
NAEP

We have entered a time when more and more institutions are adopting green purchasing policies, signing the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) pledge, and becoming members of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). It would seem appropriate and right to provide more information on greening for our individual and collective benefit.

Thinking that this could be a fun approach, here is the tried-and-true multiple choice and true/false testing methodology.

Here we go!

- What date is Earth Day?
 - January 20
 - April 1
 - April 22
- Climate Change is: (select all that are true)
 - Causing ice to melt at the North and South Poles
 - Causing more stormy weather all over the globe
 - Caused by heat trapping greenhouse gases such as methane
 - All of the above
- Where are greenhouse gases?
 - In the atmosphere
 - In the mountains
 - In outer space
 - In soil
- Plastics are found naturally on the planet. True or False?
 - The sun
 - The wind
 - The tides
 - All of the above
- What are greenhouse gases?
 - Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere
 - Gases made by plants growing in greenhouses
 - Gases used to heat greenhouses so they can grow
 - All of the above
- All plastic products are made from...
 - Trees
 - Bones
 - Fossil fuels
 - None of the above
- Coal is made from...
 - Hot Lava
 - Chemicals mixed together under extreme pressure
 - Ancient dead plants and animals
 - None of the above
- When we recycle one ton of paper we save...
 - 7,000 gallons of water
 - 60 pounds of criteria air pollutants
 - Seventeen mature trees
 - All of the above
- Almost all of the energy we use on the planet came from where?
 - The sun
 - The oceans
 - The soil
 - The air
- How many planet "Earths" would we need if every person on the planet had a footprint like the average American?
 - 3.9
 - 5.8
 - 7.6
 - 10.0
- Which of the following is NOT a greenhouse gas?
 - Methane
 - Nitrous Oxide
 - Oxygen
 - Carbon Dioxide

13. There are twice as many people on the planet today as there were 50 years ago. True or False?
14. How many times can a piece of paper be recycled?
- Twice
 - Four times
 - Seven times
 - Ten times
15. The popular mantra is "reduce, reuse and recycle." Which is the least important of these?
- Reduce
 - Reuse
 - Recycle
 - None of the above; they are all equally important
16. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television for how long?
- 3 hours
 - 5 hours
 - 6 hours
 - 8 hours
17. A 10-gram gold ring required how many pounds of ore to be processed to yield the gold?
- 500
 - 1600
 - 2500
 - 6000
 - 8000
18. How many gallons of water does it take to make a hamburger?
- none
 - 59
 - 314
 - 565
 - 703
19. A typical computer chip requires how many gallons of water to be manufactured?
- none
 - 250
 - 500
 - 1000
 - 2800

20. An Indonesian shoe-factory worker making all of the major brand name shoes you pay \$90 for is paid how much per hour?
- \$0.25
 - \$1.40
 - \$5.65
 - \$7.50

These questions are intended to assist each of us in building our general level of knowledge. As we engage in the process, we will be working to create a learning organization. We will do this at a pace that doesn't push anyone and, hopefully, we can have some fun along the way. There is a certain danger in this. First, I could offend you. Second, I could embarrass myself. Or third, I could waste much of your time. Regardless, I decided to pursue this because it is my job to demonstrate sustainability leadership for NAEP. So I hope you enjoyed it.

If you have questions or comments to share, please send them to me. Remember that we all start a journey with but a single step. No matter where we are today, it will take time to reach our destination. So please be patient and rejoice in knowing that you too can do great things!



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Answers to Environmental Literacy article

16.	a	17.	d	18.	e	19.	e	20.	a
11.	d	12.	c	13.	true	14.	c	15.	c
6.	a	7.	c	8.	c	9.	d	10.	a
1.	c	2.	a,b,c	3.	a	4.	false	5.	d

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