



Reading Handout: Who Pollutes? Story

The weather is changing; it's beginning to rain and soil from a nearby **construction site** is washing into the mountain river. As the storm gets worse, the wind through the **trees** blows leaves into the water. *Would you drink this water? Play in it? Is it safe for animals?*

High up in the mountains there is a **mining** operation and in the process of removing rocks from the earth, acids are produced that get into the river. Along the river in the mountains there is a house that has a septic tank to hold wastewater from the house. This **homeowner** doesn't know it, but here is a leak in the tank and untreated sewage is seeping into the river. Down the dirt road from the home there is a **cattle farm** that also has a lot of **horses**. The manure from these animals washes into the river with each rain. *Would you drink this water? Play in it? Is it safe for animals?*

On the edge of the river is a farm site. It uses chemical **pesticides** on crops to keep the bugs away. The farmer also uses **fertilizer** on the plants he grows. Every time it rains, some of the poisons wash into the river. Further down the river, there is an old military base. Harmful chemicals such as **PCBs** were used in the 1950's during experiments. Some of these chemicals are still in the soil, so when it floods they are washed into the river. *Would you drink this water? Play in it? Is it safe for animals?*

Downstream, the river runs through a city. People in the city drive to and from work every day. These **cars** leak small amounts of motor oil into the street, which runs down the storm drains and into the river with each rain. The **exhaust** from the cars goes into the air as a gas. These gases combine with the moisture in the air and come back down to earth in the water cycle. Some of the city people work in a **factory**, where smog from the smokestacks also adds to the air and water pollution. *Would you drink this water? Play in it? Is it safe for animals?*

At home, a father is teaching his daughter to **tune up** the family car. They pour the used motor oil and **antifreeze** down the storm drain. Across the street, the neighbors are **washing the car**. The soapy water runs down the curb and into the storm drain. Another family is cleaning out their garage. They find an old rusty can with some sort of **mysterious liquid** in it. They aren't sure what it is, but it looks dangerous. Not knowing how to properly dispose of it, they decide to get rid of it by pouring it down the storm drain. People in the neighborhood often throw their trash onto the ground, and this **garbage** gets blown into the storm drains, which empties into the ocean. *Would you drink this water? Play in it? Is it safe for animals?*

Near the mouth of the river, where the river empties into the ocean, there is a **power plant** that creates electricity by burning coal and fossil fuel. Again, emissions from the smokestack combine with other gases to create air and water pollution. The river flows into the ocean where some **motorboat** drivers are out having fun. As they zoom around, some oil from their engine leaks into the water. On the beach, there are some **picnickers** and some people having a **party** who leave their trash behind on the shore. This trash is blown and washed into the ocean. Nearby, there is a person **fishing** who gets their fishing wire tangled around a log in the water and the nylon line breaks off. *Why could this be a problem? Is the water safe for wildlife? Would it be safe to play in? But do you?*

