Worksheet 3.3

Investigating sustainability through creative writing

Introduction

Children’s literature has a tradition of pioneering new concepts and ideas. The idea of sustainability is no exception. In 1971 children’s author Dr Seuss brought out a book called *the Lorax* which dealt with issues concerning the sustainable use of Earth’s resources, long before the idea had become widely accepted in science and the media. Similar ideas had also been explored in Shel Silverstein’s 1964 book *the Giving Tree*.

Your task

A. Read Dr Seuss’ *the Lorax*. The book can be ordered from your local bookshop, borrowed from your local library, or you can read it [here](#). Also, have a look at *the Lorax* homepage.

B. Answer the following questions on *the Lorax*:

1. Define and give an example of non-renewable natural capital. (2)
2. What is the name of the natural capital being discussed in *the Lorax*? (1)
3. What other natural resources does the story include? (3)
4. What is the difference between natural capital and natural income? (2)
5. If you were the Once-ler, what would you have done differently to protect the forest? Think of a possible natural income from the natural capital discussed in this book. (2)
6. A Truffula forest contains 5000 trees, each year on average, 400 saplings start to grow and survive to maturity after 30 years. The trees can be cut when they are sufficiently mature to supply a reasonable amount of timber. What would be a sustainable yield for this forest, assuming that the first 30 years has passed? (1)

7. a) What did the Once-ler have to do once he had exceeded the sustainable yield of the forest? (1)
   b) How is this an example of ‘the tragedy of the commons’? *(See page 313 of the textbook)* (1)

8. What other forms of natural capital might also have been lost once the Once-ler had cut down all the trees? (1)

C. Write a sequel to *the Lorax*, or your own children’s story on sustainability. Cover as many points as you can from the ESS syllabus (pages 96-105 of textbook).

Sample stories are provided to stimulate ideas (stories by Augusta Charlton, Freddie Crossley, Chantelle Dunn, Fatima Perbellini, and Katherine Pfeiffer). These can be accessed via the website.