

# Earth Day

Use the text to answer each question below.

**1.** Earth Day was founded in 1970 by Gaylord Nelson. Nelson was a US senator from Wisconsin. He noticed that most Americans didn't seem to care much about the environment. At the time, there was little research about the impact people have on the planet. There were no laws to prevent factories from polluting the air and water with waste. Very few Americans even recycled!

During the 1960s, environmental disasters became more serious and more frequent. In 1969, the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland caught fire after an oil spill. The same year, 3 million gallons of oil spilled off the coast of southern California. The spill killed an estimated 3,500 seabirds. Hundreds of other marine animals died, too. This disaster inspired Nelson to organize the very first Earth Day.

Which of the following best describes Americans before the founding of Earth Day?

- A. All Americans made sure to recycle.
- B. Most Americans were very worried about pollution.
- C. All Americans believed oil spills were good for the environment.
- D. Most Americans did not know how they were hurting the planet.

**2.** Nelson was inspired by the anti-war protests taking place on college campuses. He imagined Earth Day as a series of grassroots demonstrations, or protests by passionate people organizing to fight for a cause. He hoped this would force politicians to pay attention and take environmental issues seriously.

In 1969, Nelson started reaching out to activists across the country. He worked with student volunteers from hundreds of universities. Nelson chose April 22nd for Earth Day's official date. He decided on this day because it would be warm enough for most people to go outside and enjoy nature. On April 22, 1970, 20 million people participated in the first Earth Day. Earth Day events took place in almost every major American city. Celebrities appeared at some of these events. Members of Congress even took a break to speak with the people they represented at Earth Day events.

According to the passage, a person involved in a grassroots demonstration most likely

- A. does not support the protest.
- B. cares deeply about the protest.
- C. is trying to shut down the protest.
- D. does not have strong opinions about the protest.

3. The first Earth Day was very effective. Democrats and Republicans came together to create better regulations to protect the planet. In the decade that followed, several key environmental laws were passed. These included the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Water Quality Improvement Act. And soon after the first Earth Day, the Environmental Protection Agency was established.

Nelson continued to work with students and politicians to make Earth Day an annual event, or one that happened every year. He also worked to promote environmental education in schools. 200 million people in 141 countries celebrated Earth Day in 1990. In 1995, President Bill Clinton awarded Senator Nelson the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This is the highest honor a US civilian can receive.

Which of the following describes what happened in the decade after the first Earth Day?

- A. Americans did not observe Earth Day again.
- B. Americans stopped supporting environmental regulations.
- C. Senator Nelson was honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- D. Politicians passed several laws to protect animals and keep the air and water clean.

4. With the power of the internet, Earth Day has grown. Over one billion people now celebrate Earth Day every year. There are many ways to celebrate Earth Day. People plant trees, pick up trash or simply go outside and appreciate nature. They also participate in political demonstrations and write to their representatives asking them to support environmental issues. But it's important to remember to take care of the Earth all the other days of the year, too! There are easy ways to make environmentalism part of daily life, including saving water and electricity, walking or biking instead of driving and recycling.

Which of the following people are taking care of the environment?

- A. Sam takes short showers and makes sure all the lights are turned off in her house when she's not there.
- B. Jorge rides his bike to the library instead of asking his mom to drive him there.
- C. Mamie recycles the cardboard box from the package she just ordered.
- D. all of the above