



Key

nonpoint source

point source



Point and Nonpoint Water Pollution

Background Information

Water pollution can come from different sources. They can be point or nonpoint sources. Pollution from a point source enters water from one single place. This could be sewage that overflows from pipes at a factory. It could also be chemicals that leak into water from an industrial building. This can make water unsafe for drinking. It can make water unsafe for fishing. It could even make water unsafe for swimming.

Pollution from a nonpoint source is also harmful. It comes from many different places. It can be caused by rainfall moving over the ground. The rainfall can pick up pollution as it goes. This pollution can be natural. It can also be human-made. It gets into oceans. It gets into lakes. It gets into rivers and underground sources of drinking water. One example of this is runoff from farms. The farms use pesticides to help crops grow. The pollutants are carried away by rainwater. They get into bodies of water near the farms. Another example is oil that collects on roads. Rainwater washes it into bodies of water near the roads. All of these nonpoint sources are harmful to plants. They are harmful to animals. They are even harmful to humans.

Pollution from both kinds of sources may be harmful. All living organisms are affected by dirty water. There are laws that help to lower the amount of water pollution. The laws are for businesses. The laws are for factories. The laws are even for people who live in cities and towns. We can all work to reduce water pollution.

Analyzing Science

- Name at least three sources of water pollution.
- What is the difference between nonpoint and point sources of water pollution? Name an example of each type.
- ▲ Can the water cycle help reduce water pollution? Why or Why not?

Nonfiction Writing Prompt

Write a letter to an oil company, addressing the issue of oil spills and how they impact the environment. Talk about how aquatic plants and animals can be harmed by spilled crude oil. Explain why you think this is an important issue.

Fiction Writing Prompt

Write a story that takes place on a beach. Write about all the different living organisms that can thrive in a coastal environment. Include details about how these living organisms could be impacted by water pollution. Base your story on scientific facts.

Scientific Challenge

How are human beings both responsible for and impacted by water pollution? Research this question on the Internet or at the library. Outline your argument and then share it with your classmates.