

STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY QUESTIONS & RESPONSES - 2018 & 2021 COMPARISONS

(percentage distribution)*

	2018	2021
ENVIRONMENT		
<i>1. What is the most common cause of pollution of streams and rivers?</i>		
a. Dumping of garbage by cities	13	12
b. Surface water running off yards, city streets, paved lots, and farm fields**	41	39
c. Litter near streams and rivers	5	3
d. Waste dumped by factories	18	28
e. Don't know	23	18
Total	100	100
<i>2. Ozone forms a protective layer in the earth's upper atmosphere. What does ozone protect us from?</i>		
a. Acid rain	2	1
b. Climate change	2	4
c. Sudden changes in temperature	2	3
d. Harmful UV rays	90	87
e. Don't know	5	5
Total	100	100
<i>3. Which of the following is an example of sustainable forest management?</i>		
a. Setting aside forests to be off-limits to the public	12	11
b. Never harvesting more than what the forest produces in new growth	69	68
c. Producing lumber for nearby communities to build affordable housing	2	2
d. Putting the local communities in charge of forest resources	2	4
e. Don't know	15	15
Total	100	100
<i>4. Of the following, which would be considered living in the most environmentally sustainable way?</i>		
a. Recycling all recyclable packaging	27	26
b. Reducing consumption of all products	49	56
c. Buying products labeled "eco" or "green"	12	8
d. Buying the newest products available	0	1
e. Don't know	11	9
Total	100	100
SOCIAL		
<i>5. Which of the following is the most commonly used definition of sustainable development?</i>		
a. Creating a government welfare system that ensures universal access to education, health care, and social services	4	8
b. Setting aside resources for preservation, never to be used	3	3
c. Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	70	69
d. Building a neighborhood that is both socio-demographically and economically diverse	2	3
e. Don't know	20	17
Total	100	100
<i>6. Over the past 3 decades, what has happened to the difference between the wealth of the richest and poorest Americans?</i>		
a. The difference has increased	84	88
b. The difference has stayed about the same	4	3
c. The difference has decreased	2	2
d. Don't know	10	7
Total	100	100

STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY QUESTIONS & RESPONSES - 2018 & 2021 COMPARISONS

(percentage distribution)*

	2018	2021
ECONOMIC		
<i>7. Many economists argue that electricity prices in the U.S. are too low because...</i>		
a. They do not reflect the costs of pollution from generating the electricity	54	57
b. Too many suppliers go out of business	2	3
c. Electric companies have a monopoly in their service area	12	13
d. Consumers spend only a small part of their income on energy	2	2
e. Don't know	30	25
Total	100	100
<i>8. Which of the following is the most commonly used definition of economic sustainability?</i>		
a. Maximizing the share price of a company's stock	2	3
b. Long term profitability	43	45
c. When costs equal revenue	16	15
d. Continually expanding market share	5	4
e. Don't know	35	33
Total	100	100
ECONOMIC/ENVIRONMENTAL		
<i>9. Which of the following countries passed the U.S. to become the largest emitter of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide?</i>		
a. China	81	80
b. Sweden	1	1
c. Brazil	2	2
d. Japan	2	2
e. Don't know	14	15
Total	100	100
<i>10. Which of the following is a leading cause of the depletion of fish stocks in the Atlantic Ocean?</i>		
a. Fishermen seeking to maximize their catch	28	30
b. Reduced fish fertility due to genetic hybridization	3	3
c. Ocean pollution	26	24
d. Global climate change	16	18
e. Don't know	28	25
Total	100	100
SOCIAL/ECONOMIC		
<i>11. Which of the following is the best example of environmental justice?</i>		
a. Urban citizens win a bill to have toxic wastes taken to rural communities	5	6
b. The government dams a river, flooding Native American tribal lands to create hydro-power for large cities	3	5
c. All stakeholders from an indigenous community are involved in setting a quota for the amount of wood they can take from a protected forest next to their village	62	87
d. Multi-national corporations build factories in developing countries where environmental laws are less strict.	2	2
e. Don't know	29	0
Total	100	18
ENVIRONMENTAL/SOCIAL		
<i>12. Put the following list in order of the activities with the largest environmental impact to those with the smallest environmental impact:</i>		
A. Keeping a cell phone charger plugged into an electrical outlet for 12 hours		
B. Producing one McDonald's quarter-pound hamburger		
C. Producing one McDonald's chicken sandwich		
D. Flying in a commercial airplane from Washington D.C. to China		
a. A, C, B, D	5	3
b. D, A, B, C	21	16
c. D, C, B, A	9	8
d. D, B, C, A	47	57
e. Don't know	20	16
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	2938	3410
* Percentage distributions are based on the weighted number of respondents to each question. The actual number of respondents for each question differs since not all questions were answered by all respondents. The minimum number of respondents is shown for the student cross section and panel.		
**Correct answers in bold.		