



Silent Spring (B2 -Upper Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What are the most serious environmental problems at present, in your opinion?
2. What do you know about the use of pesticides?
3. Have you ever used them? If so, what for?
4. Have you ever heard of DDT? If so, what do you know about it?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Rachel Carson was the founder of the Environmental Protection Agency.
2. She got her degree in Science while working for the US Bureau of Fisheries.
3. Before writing *Silent Spring*, she wrote a book about the origins of the sea.
4. *Silent Spring* is about the dangers of using synthetic pesticides to kill insects.
5. Carson did not realise pesticides could be harmful to humans as well as animals.
6. President J. F. Kennedy initiated an investigation into pesticides after reading *Silent Spring*.
7. *Silent Spring* is still studied in university courses.
8. Rachel Carson did not live long enough to see the publication of her book.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Who influenced Rachel Carson's choice of university course?
2. What is the connection between the line from Keats's poem and the contents of Carson's book?
3. What US government programme does *Silent Spring* focus on?
4. What were some of the other uses of DDT during World War II?
5. What style of writing does Carson use at the beginning of the book?
6. What is Carson's main claim in *Silent Spring*?
7. Why did she hide the fact that she was ill?
8. What examples does the article give of dangerous substances that are present today?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. The company will bring out a new _____ of electrical appliances next year.
2. There was an interesting TV _____ about food additives on Channel 4 last night.
3. Swimming has now been _____ in this river because of the high level of pollution.
4. The building was demolished because the walls had been _____ by the earthquake.
5. That was the scariest horror film I've ever seen. It was truly _____.
6. The suspect's _____ that he had an alibi for the time of the robbery proved to be false.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 4)

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. Use between 2 and 5 words including the word given.

Example: Rachel Carson's book greatly influenced the popular imagination in the US.

IMPACT Rachel Carson's book had a great impact on the popular imagination in the US.

1. Few books have been so powerful that they changed the course of history.

ENOUGH Few books have been _____ change the course of history.

2. As a child, Rachel Carson loved to write.

PASSION As a child, Rachel Carson _____ writing.

3. In 1957, they sprayed a mixture of pesticides and fuel oil from agricultural aircraft.

MIXED In 1957, pesticides _____ sprayed from agricultural aircraft.

4. The use of DDT was widespread during World War II.

WIDELY DDT _____ during World War II.

5. Carson's reaction to criticisms of her book was composed and confident.

WITH Carson reacted _____ to criticisms of her book.

6. Powerful companies try to convince us that today's chemicals aren't very important.

PLAY Powerful companies seek to _____ of today's chemicals.

F – Write about it

Write about an environmental problem you consider to be one of the most serious at present.

Mention:

- where the problem occurs;
 - who/what it affects;
 - what the causes are;
 - why you think it's one of the most serious problems;
 - what could/should be done about it, in your opinion.
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Answers: Silent Spring (B2 - Upper Intermediate)

B – Listen and answer

1. F – Her book led to the creation of the EPA. 2. F – She went to work for the US Bureau of Fisheries after graduating. 3. T 4. T 5. F – During her research she discovered that they were carcinogenic. 6. T 7. T 8. F – She did not live long enough to see the impact it had on the environmental movement.

C – Read and answer

1. An enthusiastic zoology teacher. 2. John Keats's poem mentions a place where no birds sing. Carson's book describes a landscape where there is no bird song in spring because the birds' food chain has been poisoned by pesticides. 3. It focuses on the 1957 programme to eradicate the invasive gypsy moth. 4. It was used to control malaria, typhus, body lice and bubonic plague. 5. She uses the style of a children's story. 6. Her main claim is that pesticides don't just destroy insects, but everything associated with them in the food chain. 7. Because she thought her opponents in the chemical industry might use her illness to undermine her book. 8. Microplastics and PFAS.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. range 2. broadcast 3. banned 4. weakened 5. spine-chilling 6. claim

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. powerful enough to 2. had a passion for 3. mixed with fuel oil were 4. was widely used
5. with composure and confidence 6. play down the importance