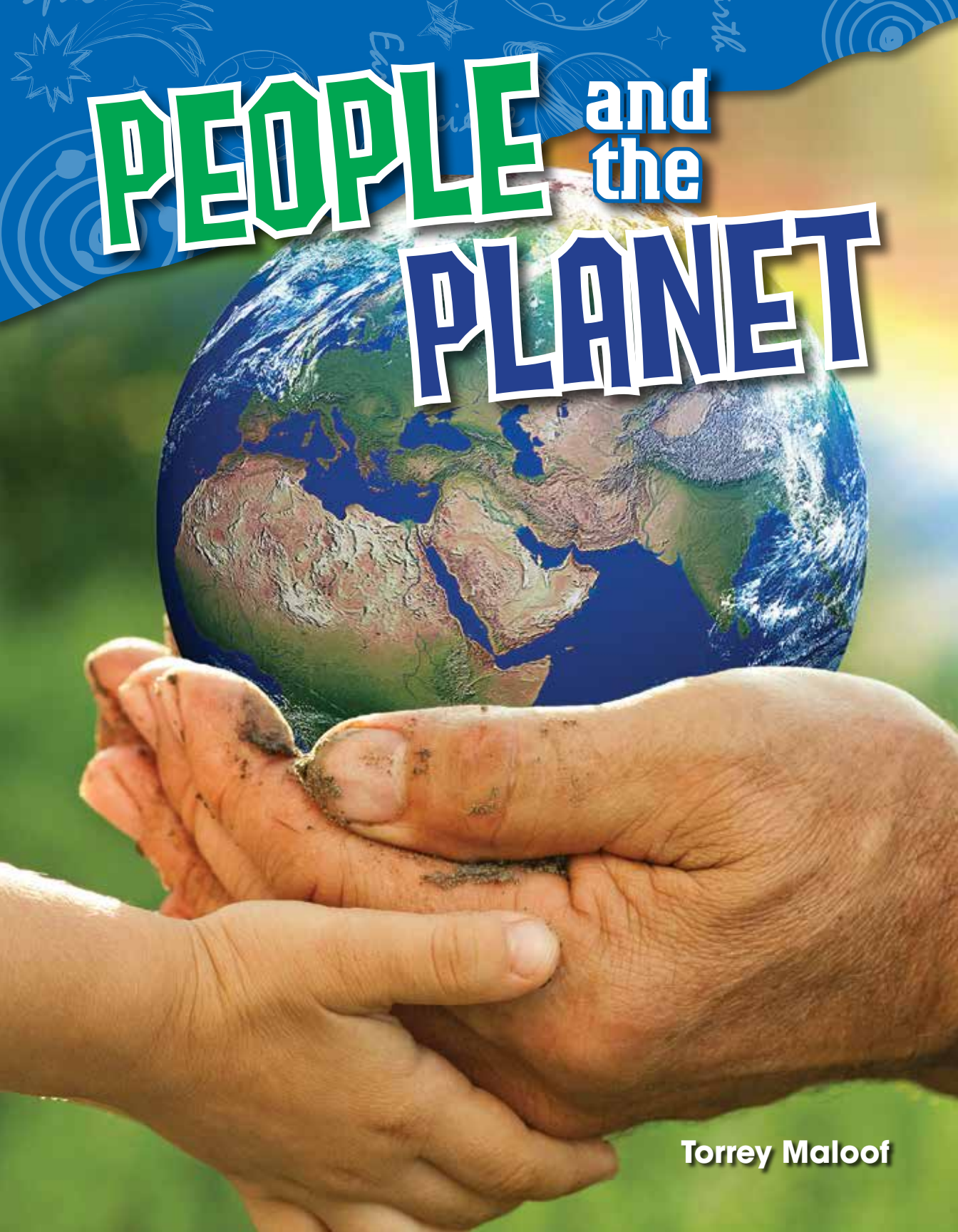
PEOPLE and the PLANET



Torrey Maloof

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Table of Contents

Our Changing Planet 4

Deforestation 6

Desertification 10

Pollution 14

Terracing 20

Saving Our Planet 24

Think Like a Scientist 28

Glossary 30

Index 31

Your Turn! 32

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Our Changing Planet

Imagine that each day you came home and found more people living in your house. What if they left trash lying around the house? What if they ate all the food in your kitchen? What if they started pulling boards out of the wall to build furniture? What if they burned the house down trying to stay warm? And what if billions of people around the world were all living this way?

The way we live does affect our home—Earth. Over time, our presence on Earth has changed it. Every day, we use its **natural resources**. We use the planet's water to grow our food. We use its oil to make fuel. We change the landscape of Earth's surface. We farm the land. We cut down forests to build homes. We change Earth's **atmosphere** with harmful substances released by cars and factories.

Scientists are learning that all these changes have serious consequences. People have lived on Earth for a long time. But we are just beginning to see the impact of our actions on our planet. We need to use its resources carefully. We need to make wise choices that will protect our planet.



Saving the Planet

Conservationists are people who work to protect land, plants, and animals. Conservationists find ways to conserve our natural resources.



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The Earth is the only home we have.
We must work together to protect it.

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Deforestation

One way people change the planet is by cutting down and removing trees from forests. This is called *deforestation*. There are many reasons trees are cut down. Trees are a natural resource. People cut down trees to use the wood to make paper and build homes. Wood can also be used to heat homes or cook food. The demand for wood and paper is high. So more forests are being cut down every day.

Some people clear forests to make room for crops. But after a few years, the soil may lose its **nutrients**. It's not as rich without trees. This makes it difficult for crops to grow there.



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Disappearing Forests

Deforestation is occurring in all of the biggest rainforests around the world. The countries with the most serious deforestation problems are Brazil, Malaysia, and Nepal.

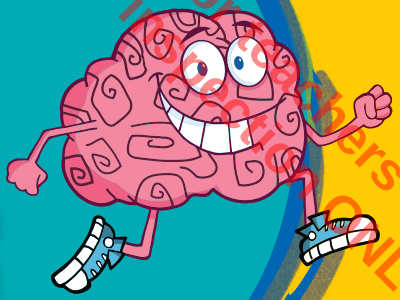
"At first I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I am fighting for humanity."

—Chico Mendes, conservationist



After

Think Like a Scientist



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How do trees prevent soil erosion? Experiment and find out!

What to Get

- damp sand
- small block
- tray
- twigs and grass
- water

