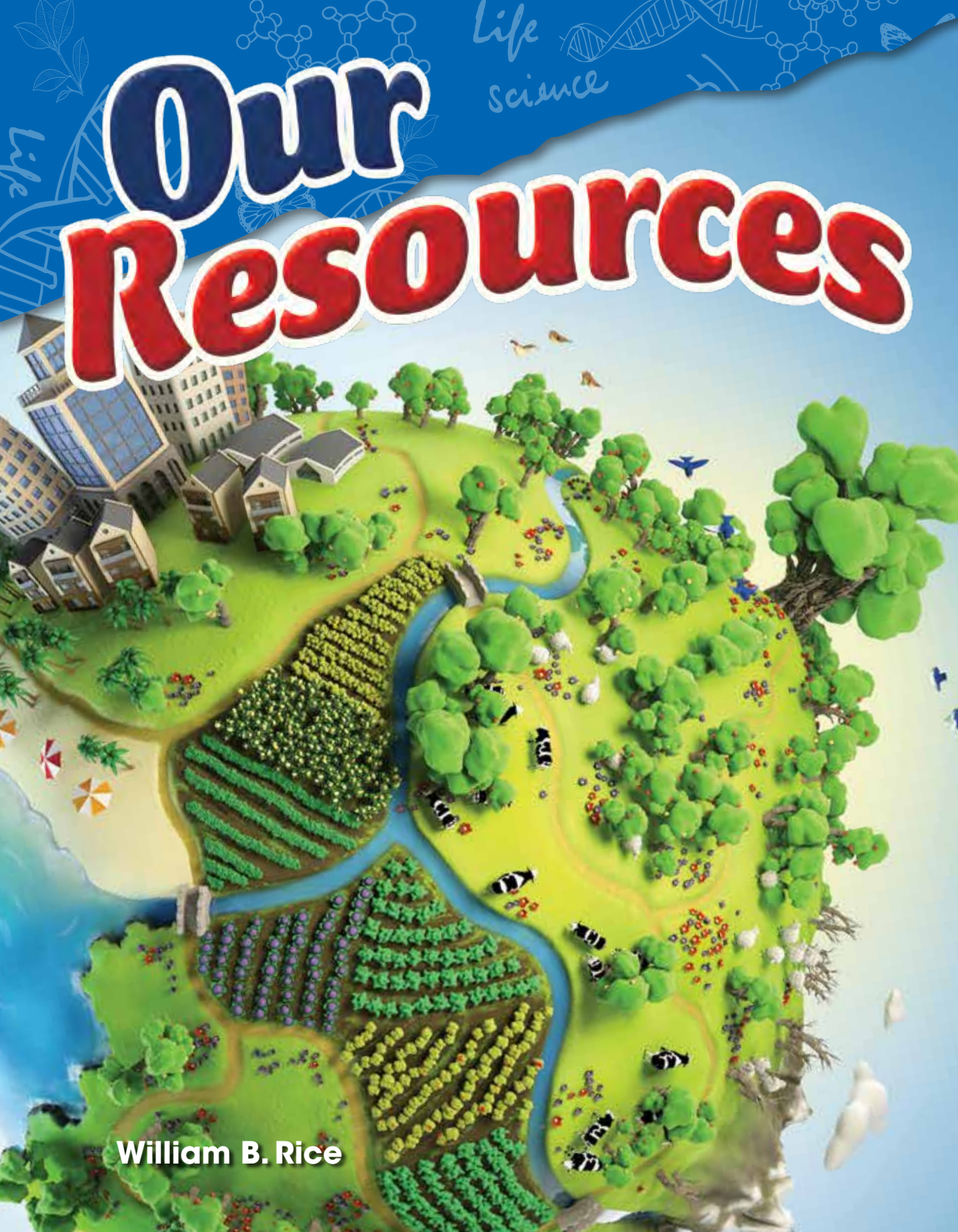
Our Resources



William B. Rice

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A Day in the Life

Alonzo woke to a buzzing alarm clock. "Shhh!" he mumbled as he rolled out from under the covers. He shuffled to the bathroom and turned on the shower to warm up the water. He brushed his teeth while he waited. Then, it was time to soap up and shampoo. Finally, he felt awake!

Alonzo pulled some jeans, rubber-soled sneakers, and a cotton shirt from his closet. Dressed and ready, he went to the kitchen and got milk and juice from the fridge. He poured cereal from a box, added milk, and ate his breakfast while he read about last night's game on his smartphone. Then, putting his cup and bowl in the dishwasher, he grabbed his bag and headed out the door. He jumped in his car and drove to school just in time for computer lab.



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Alonzo went from class to class, ate a hot lunch with his friends, and finished the day with swimming practice in the school's solar-heated pool. Then, he drove home, where he flipped on his laptop, did some homework, and read a book on his tablet until dinner. He cooked kabobs on the grill with his family, and then they played video games until bedtime.

Good night!

Now, here's the question. How many resources does Alonzo need to get through his day? The answer is: more than we can count!



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What Are Resources?

A resource is a material, a good, or an asset that offers a benefit. The benefit may be to satisfy a need or a want. It may be to provide wealth, enhance well-being, or help a system run smoothly.

If you need or want something, a resource will take care of it. Are you thirsty? Drink a glass of water. The water and the cup are resources. Are you cold? Put on a jacket or turn on the heater. The jacket and heater as well as the gas that runs the heater are resources, too.

Each day, we use many different things in different ways. We use water for drinking, taking showers, and cleaning clothes. We use clothes to stay warm and protect our bodies. We use cars, buses, trains, and planes for transportation. We use telephones and televisions, computers and DVD players. We live in houses, shop in stores, and eat in restaurants. All these things are resources.



Materials

All resources are made from one or more materials. Think of a car. It has hundreds of parts made of glass, plastic, fiber, rubber, and metals. It runs on gasoline, water, and motor oil. All these materials are resources, too.

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Three Important Things

Every resource has three important characteristics: *utility* (its ability to satisfy a need or want), *availability* (how much there is), and *potential* (the possibility that it will get used up).





potential





availability



utility

Freshwater is a resource we all need to live. The total amount of freshwater on Earth if it were rolled into a giant ball would be nearly 56 kilometers (34.8 miles) in diameter!

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Humans Need Resources

Every person on the planet needs resources to live. Even the most basic lifestyle still needs resources. People need water to drink. We need food to eat. We need clothing to stay warm. We need shelter for protection. We need air to breathe, too. These resources are needed just to stay alive.

More **complex** societies use more resources. The amount of resources that a society can access and use determines how complex the society can be. In early days, people spent their time gathering and hunting food just to stay alive. As they developed easier ways to find, grow, and make food, they had more time available to get and use more resources. These societies developed and grew because they had more resources to use.



European Exploration

From about 1500 to 1800, European explorers traveled the world in a great age of exploration. Their main mission was to trade and find resources.

People began to travel the world, exploring and collecting resources. Often, they tried to use those resources to advance society. Unfortunately, sometimes they took what wasn't theirs to take.



Spices are resources that were sought by early explorers.

Biological Value

Living things need resources with **biological** value. That means the resource fulfills a basic need of the living things, such as food or water.

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Think Like a Scientist

What are the effects of overexploitation? Experiment and find out!

What to Get

- bowls
- popped popcorn

