

Writing About the Book

On a separate sheet of paper, write the answer to each of the following questions.

Extending the Story

1. Rachel Carson based her novel on evidence collected during the 1950s. Unfortunately, many other episodes of humans interfering with the balance of nature have unfolded since that time. Write an epilogue to the novel which details one such episode.

Thinking about Assumptions

2. The idea that humans can “control nature” is based upon certain assumptions. In the last chapter of the novel, the author details her very strong feelings about these assumptions. Do you agree with her position? Explain why or why not.

Responding to a Review

3. It has been said that *Silent Spring* is a “courageous revelation of the forces that modern man has brought into being in his ruthless war on life, a protest on behalf of the unity of all nature, a protest on behalf of life”. Write an essay in which you react to this statement. Do you think that humanity’s war on life continues today? Be sure to use specific references to support your answer.

Evaluating a Character

4. Rachel Carson wrote that this book was “an attempt to explain what has already silenced the voices of spring in countless towns in America”. Do you think Carson was successful in her attempt? Explain why.

Writing a Journal Entry

5. Imagine that you are gathering additional evidence of how humans interfere with the balance of nature. Write an entry in your field journal describing evidence of the disruption you observe in your own town.

Analyzing the Cause

6. If you had been Rachel Carson, what would you have done after writing this book to continue educating the general public about the dangers of pesticides? Write an essay in which you clearly describe three different actions you would take. Explain your reasons for each.

Silent Spring

Testing on the Book

On a separate sheet of paper, write the answer to each of the following questions.

Critical Thinking and Writing

1. Albert Schweitzer is quoted in the text as stating, “Man has lost the capacity to foresee and forestall. He will end by destroying the earth.” Does the theme of *Silent Spring* support this statement? Explain how.
2. The use of insecticides in Clear Lake was based upon erroneous assumptions. Identify these assumptions and describe their results.
3. Throughout the novel, Carson describes ironic situations in which the predicted outcome of an action was just the opposite of what actually occurred. Describe one such situation. Be sure to clearly describe what professionals believed would occur and what actually happened.
4. Pretend that you are the author. Are you a proponent of nuclear energy or are you against this alternative energy source? Write an essay in which you state your opinion. Be sure to give reasons for your stand on the issue.
5. Farmers use pesticides to increase the yield of their crops. Greater yield means lower prices for the consumer. Would you be willing to pay higher prices for fruits and vegetables that are grown in “pesticide-free” environments? Explain why.

