



To Drill or Not to Drill? More Valuable Than Gold

Key Question: *Do the benefits of extracting natural resources outweigh the costs?*

Question Set 1 (Nonfiction)

To Drill or Not to Drill? **W**

How does the land in a wildlife refuge benefit animals and plants that inhabit it? (Level 3)

Wildlife refuges provide a natural setting for plants and animals to live without interference from humans. Refuges can also be helpful to scientists who want to study wildlife in a natural environment to learn more about them.

What are the major points people cite in support of ANWR drilling? (Level 2)

Oil from ANWR may help with American oil independence. It would create jobs for the United States. Drilling science has reduced the footprint related to oil drilling. Some animals are thriving in areas where drilling already happens, and there are laws to protect the environment from harm.

What are the major points people cite in opposition to ANWR drilling? (Level 2)

ANWR oil accounts for only a small percentage of overall American oil consumption, and it would take years before any impact could be felt. Sometimes rules set to protect the environment do not work. The ANWR footprint may potentially disrupt wildlife. Reducing the size of ANWR might impact what scientists are able to study.

Question Set 2 (Nonfiction)

More Valuable Than Gold **U**

How is gold mined in the Amazon? What problems does the author identify about this way of mining? (Level 2)

Most gold in the Amazon is mined illegally. Prospectors burn trees in an area, dig a pit, and then mix the mud from the pit with mercury to remove the gold. The mercury is often burned off. This approach causes deforestation, and the mercury poses health hazards.

What reasons does the author give for not mining in the Amazon? (Level 2)

The author points out that deforestation may contribute to global climate change, since fewer trees are available to consume atmospheric carbon dioxide, and that there are many undiscovered or unstudied species in the Amazon that many prove beneficial to humans. The author also notes the negative impact that mercury has on the mineworkers and the surrounding environment.

How should governments that want to protect the Amazon respond to illegal mining? (Level 3)

Governments should continue to crack down on illegal mining, but they should also work to improve economic conditions so that gold mining is less tempting for those who are struggling to survive.

How do actions in the Amazon impact everyone? (Level 3)

Amazon mining is related to global climate change, as well as scientists' ability to study new animal species. However, without Amazon mining, less gold may be available, which would make the price of gold rise.

Cross-Text Activities

Graphic Organizer

Have students complete the graphic organizer collaboratively. Then discuss students' responses as a class.

Name _____ Reading A-Z

Directions: Compare the costs and benefits associated with ANWR drilling and Amazon mining. For costs, be sure to include economic, social, and environmental costs. For benefits, include both direct and indirect benefits. Then evaluate each issue to decide which side of the issue you support more.

	ANWR Drilling	Amazon Mining
Costs	Environmental Costs	Destroys unspoiled wilderness
	Health Costs	Workers suffer mercury poisoning
	Economic Costs	
Benefits	Direct Benefits	May help with American oil independence
	Indirect Benefits	May keep price of gold lower
Overall Evaluation		

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Response to Reading

Have students cite specific evidence from the books to answer the key question in writing.

Key Question: *Do the benefits of extracting natural resources outweigh the costs?*

There are short-term economic benefits for using oil and gold, but they come at significant long-term costs. ANWR oil would help Americans be more energy independent and only affects a small section of the wildlife refuge, but may have environmental consequences such as the impact of the development of the oil rigs and the risk for spills, as well as the damage done to a pristine environment. Gold from the Amazon helps keep world gold prices down, but impacts the environment by burning sections of the rainforest. The mercury used also negatively impacts the health of miners.

Name _____

Instructions: Review the costs and benefits associated with ANWR drilling and Amazon mining. For costs, be sure to include economic, health, and environmental costs. For benefits, include both direct and indirect benefits. Then evaluate each issue to decide which side of the issue you agree most with.

		ANWR Drilling	Amazon Mining
Costs	<i>Environmental Costs</i>	Destroys unspoiled wilderness	
	<i>Health Costs</i>		Workers suffer mercury poisoning
	<i>Economic Costs</i>		
Benefits	<i>Direct Benefits</i>	May help with American oil independence	
	<i>Indirect Benefits</i>		May keep price of gold lower
Overall Evaluation			

Name _____

Instructions: Write key points and interesting vocabulary from the discussion of each book in the spaces below.

Key Question: _____

Book 1

Title _____

Key points

Interesting vocabulary

Book 2

Title _____

Key points

Interesting vocabulary