

Name _____



Vanishing Home

In *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, the destruction of the Truffula Trees has a terrible effect on the creatures that once lived in the beautiful forest. When the Once-ler first arrives, the land is full of life. The soft, colorful Truffula Trees provide food, shade, and homes for many animals. The Bar-ba-loots, small bear-like creatures, play happily in the Truffula groves, munching on the trees' fruit. Swomee-Swans sing sweet songs as they fly through the clean air, and the Humming-Fish swim freely in the crystal-clear water. Everything in the environment is in perfect balance—until the Once-ler begins chopping down trees.

The Once-ler sees the Truffula Trees as a way to make money. He uses them to create Thneeds, a product he believes "everyone needs." But as he cuts down more trees to grow his business, the animals begin to suffer. The Bar-ba-loots lose their food supply, and their once-joyful home becomes empty. Weak and hungry, they are forced to leave and search for food elsewhere.

As the factories grow, so does pollution. Thick smoke fills the sky, covering the land in dark, dirty air. The Swomee-Swans, who once filled the forest with their songs, can no longer breathe properly. Their voices are silenced, and they, too, must leave their home.

The destruction doesn't stop there. The Once-ler's factory dumps waste into the river, turning the clear water into a polluted mess. The Humming-Fish, who once swam happily, can no longer survive in the toxic water. One by one, the creatures that once thrived in the Truffula forest disappear.

Even as the Lorax warns the Once-ler of the damage he is causing, the greedy businessman refuses to stop. He keeps cutting trees until the very last Truffula falls. Without trees, the factory shuts down, the workers leave, and the land becomes a barren wasteland. The Lorax, heartbroken, lifts himself into the air and vanishes, leaving only the word UNLESS carved into the ground.

Through this story, Dr. Seuss shows how greed and carelessness can destroy an entire ecosystem. The Once-ler finally realizes his mistake, but by then, it is too late. Now, the future of the Truffula Trees and the animals that depended on them rests in the hands of those who are willing to care.