

Name _____



Greedy Mistakes

In *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, the Once-ler's greed leads to the downfall of the beautiful Truffula Forest. When he first arrives, the land is filled with colorful Truffula Trees, playful Bar-ba-loots, singing Swomee-Swans, and happy Humming-Fish. The Once-ler, however, does not see the beauty of the land—he only sees an opportunity to make money.

The Once-ler discovers that the soft tufts of the Truffula Trees can be used to make a product called a Thneed. He believes that "a Thneed's what everyone needs," so he chops down a tree to make one. When people rush to buy Thneeds, he realizes he can sell even more if he produces them faster. Ignoring the warnings of the Lorax, who speaks for the trees, the Once-ler expands his business. He builds a factory, hires workers, and cuts down trees at an alarming rate.

As the factory grows, the forest begins to disappear. The Bar-ba-loots, who once relied on the Truffula Trees for food, are forced to leave because they have nothing to eat. Thick smoke fills the air, making it difficult for the Swomee-Swans to breathe. The river, once crystal clear, turns dark with factory waste, and the Humming-Fish must swim away to find clean water. The Once-ler, blinded by greed, refuses to stop—even as he watches the land become polluted and lifeless.

Eventually, the Once-ler cuts down the very last Truffula Tree. Without trees, his factory cannot produce Thneeds, and his business collapses. The workers leave, and the Once-ler is left alone in the barren wasteland he created. The Lorax, heartbroken, leaves, but not before carving one final word into the ground: UNLESS.

At first, the Once-ler does not understand the message, but as he sits in his empty factory, he realizes what he has done. His greed destroyed the very thing that made his business possible. The word UNLESS is a warning—unless people start caring about the environment, the world will suffer just like the Truffula Forest. In the end, the Once-ler gives the last Truffula seed to a child, hoping they will bring back the trees and undo his mistakes.