

# The Lorax

by Dr. Seuss

(Available in U.S. and Canada from Random House, 1971)

## Summary

*In the midst of a dying and polluted town, a young boy searches for the reasons a creature named the Lorax was mysteriously lifted away so many years ago. He finds the answers from the old Once-ler, who tells a tale of greed and environmental death. The Lorax tried to stop the slow, steady destruction of the land around him, could not, and left. But, there is hope for the future, a future in which the young boy can play a major part. This is a poignant tale, pointing out the need to be ecologically aware.*

### Before Reading the Book

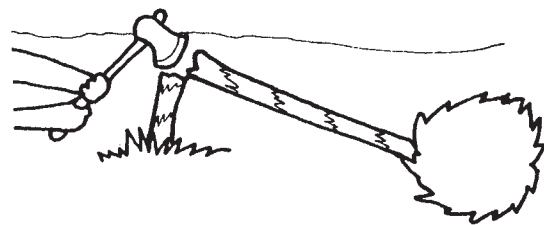
- Describe what you think a Lorax might be. You may use words and/or pictures.
- Brainstorm the ways trees can be used.
- Draw a picture of a brand new type of tree. Describe its special characteristics.
- Discuss ways people can harm and help Earth.

### While Reading the Book

- Make a forest of Truffula Trees. (page 47)
- Have a “softness” display. Invite students to decide which of several materials is the softest. What do they think the tufts of the Truffula Tree would feel most like?
- Brainstorm Earth-friendly alternatives for Thneeds. (page 48)
- Draw the whole body of the Once-ler. (page 49)
- Compile a list of all the changes the Once-ler caused to happen in the world of the Lorax.
- Discuss the meaning of “UNLESS.”

### After Reading the Book

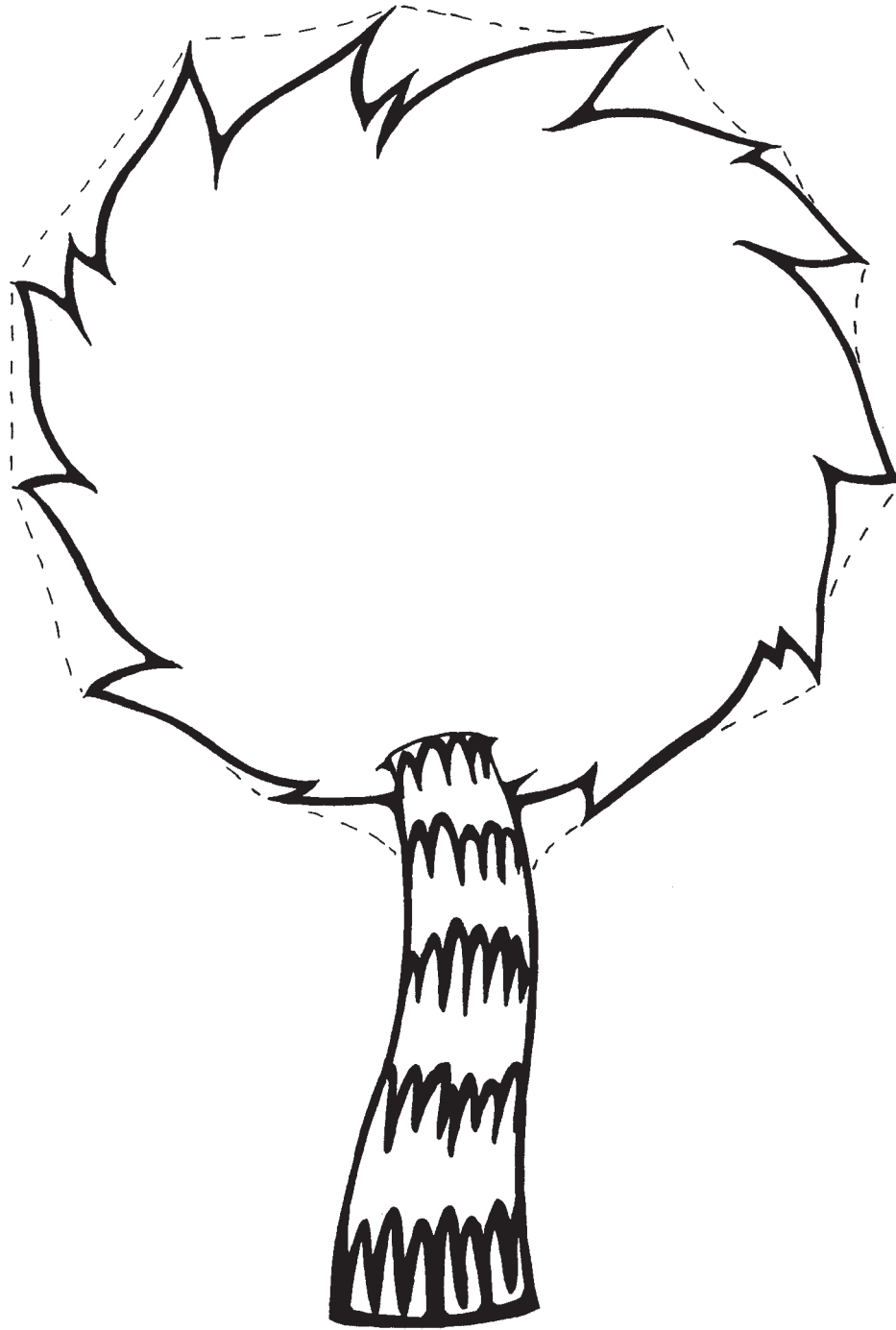
- Ask critical thinking questions, such as these:
  - “Why did the old Once-ler give the seed to the little boy?”
  - “Where did the Lorax go?”
  - “Do you think what the Once-ler family did was right?”
- What do you think might happen in the future if the story were to continue? Work in groups to create Part II.
- Compare the story with events that are occurring today in our world. (page 50)
- Read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry. (HBJ, 1989)
- Compare the similarities and differences of the stories.
- What can you do to be ecologically aware? (page 51)



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# A Forest of Truffula Trees

Make a forest of Truffula Trees for your classroom. Use the pattern on this page to help you.



You can help create a forest of real trees, too. Contact your local parks department for places where kids are needed to help plant trees.

# Thneed's

According to the Once-ler,

*“A Thneed’s a Fine-Something-That-All-People-Need!  
 It’s a shirt. It’s a sock. It’s a glove. It’s a hat.  
 But it has other uses. Yes, far beyond that.  
 You can use it for carpets. For pillows! For sheets!  
 Or curtains! Or covers for bicycle seats!”*

Speak for the trees, as the Lorax does. Work by yourself, in groups, or as a class to brainstorm Earth-friendly alternatives for Thneeds.



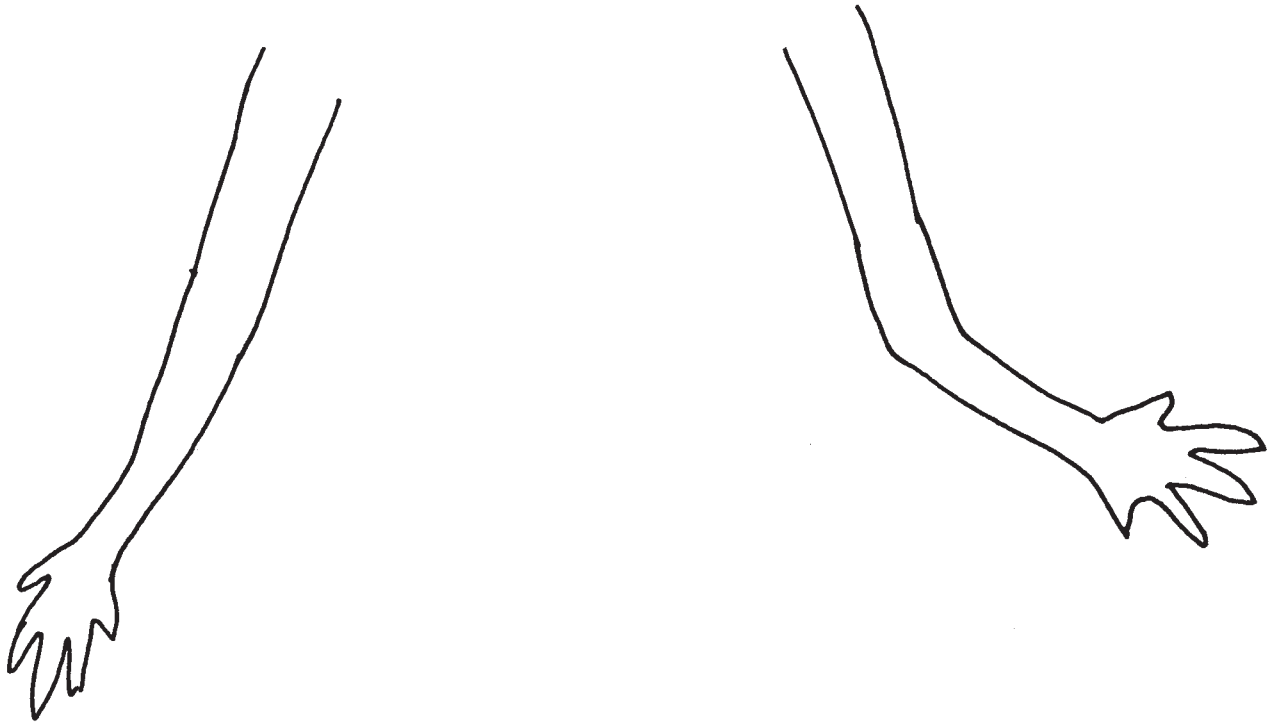
<b>Thneed Use</b>	<b>Alternative for Thneed</b>
shirt	
sock	
glove	
hat	
carpets	
pillows	
curtains	
sheets	
covers for bicycle seats	

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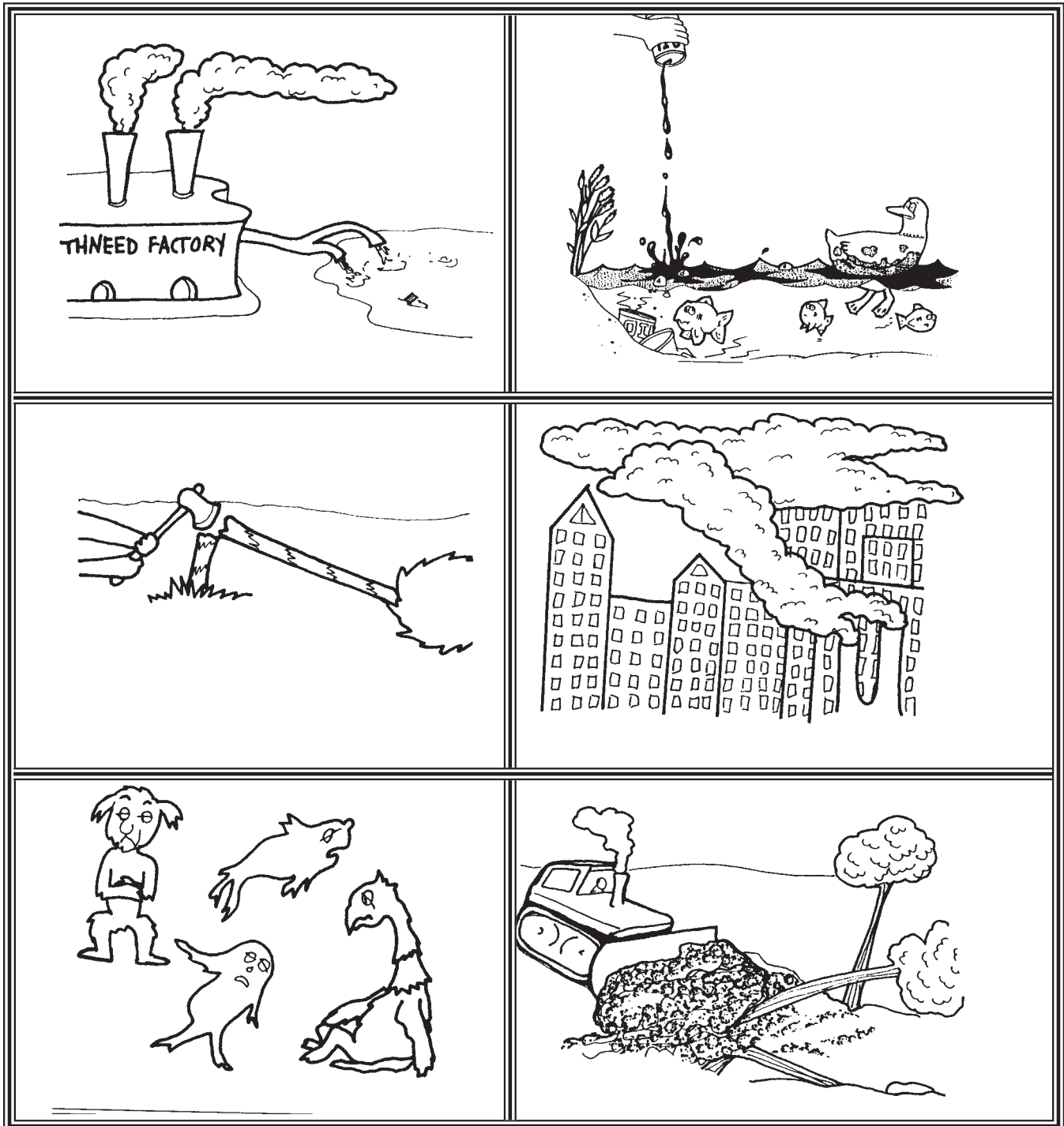
# So This is a Once-ler!

While you were reading *The Lorax*, did you ever wonder what the rest of the Once-ler looked like? Use this space to draw what you imagine the whole body of the Once-ler might look like.



# Fantasy and Reality

Some parts of *The Lorax* may remind you of things that you've seen or heard are going on in our world today. Draw lines to match the fantasy ideas of Dr. Seuss with the reality we know. Discuss the matching pairs in class.



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# What Can You Do?

*“Now that you’re here,  
the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear.  
UNLESS someone like you  
cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better.  
It’s not.”  
– Dr. Seuss*

What can you do to help the environment? Brainstorm with your class for a list of ideas. Add them to the ones on this page. Then, working by yourself, with a partner, or as a class, choose an area, present an explanation of how doing this can help save Earth, plan a course of action, and do it!

- Recycle clear and colored glass.
- Do not buy overpackaged items.
- Make bird houses and feeders.
- Hang on to your helium balloons.
- Use scissors to snip six-pack rings.
- Water the yard efficiently.
- Use your own grocery bag.
- Wear a sweater inside when it’s cold.
- Adopt an animal.
- Walk or ride a bike when possible.
- Decide what you want . . .
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Buy toys that last.
- Recycle aluminum cans.
- Have a garage sale.
- Adopt a stream.
- Pick up litter.
- Plant a tree.
- Use cloth towels.
- Appreciate bugs.
- Create wildlife habitats.
- Turn off the lights.
- Save paper.
- Stop water leaks
- Share what you learn about ecology.

Many books have great ideas for ways kids can be involved in ecological issues. One great resource is *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* by John Javna. (Andrews and McMeel, 1990)