



What is the EPA?

The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to protect human health and the environment. The two main tasks of the EPA are to ensure that federal laws protecting human health and the environment are enforced fairly and effectively and to lead national efforts to reduce environmental risk.¹

Conversation Questions

1. What is our responsibility as a country, as a community, and as individuals to protect the environment?
2. To what extent should a new administration be able to quickly change existing environmental regulations enacted by previous administrations?

Key Definitions *(from Merriam-Webster Dictionary)*

- *Regulation* – a rule or order issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a government and having the force of law
- *Emissions* – substances discharged into the air
- *Climate Change* – changes in the Earth's weather patterns

Core Resources

- "EPA Strategic Plan 2014-2018"
<https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>
- "The Origins of EPA" <https://goo.gl/SqC9Yr>
- "How the EPA Works"
<http://people.howstuffworks.com/epa.htm>

Explore

"What Cities Looked Like Before the EPA" by Andrew Small

<https://goo.gl/Zj5Tkj>

City Lab, an online news source covering emerging issues, focuses on "the five areas of urban coverage—design, transportation, environment, equity, and life."

¹ From "About EPA: Our Mission and What We Do,"
<https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/our-mission-and-what-we-do>





Listen

Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet by Jeffrey D. Sachs; read by Malcom Hillgartner

Adult Audiobooks – Nonfiction 338.9 S

Hear Sachs' critically acclaimed take on why we need to create a global framework to combat the environmental damage done by the planet's overwhelming population.

Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver

Adult Audiobooks – Fiction KIN

This novel is about nature and the different roles humans have in cultivating or destroying it. Told from several different points of view, the story takes place in southern Appalachia.

Read

“Why We Need the EPA” by Brian Palmer

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/why-we-need-epa>

This National Resources Defense Council policy primer discusses what America looked like before the EPA.

“EPA Delay Imperils Communities of Color Near Chemical Plants” by Keith Rushing

<https://goo.gl/ZUpPqH>

This article from Earthjustice, the largest nonprofit environmental law organization, explores the current administration's efforts to undermine policies previously set to prevent accidental chemical release emergencies and how this affects communities of color in particular.

