

Geography and Math



Earth Day: Every Day for Everybody

Below is a table detailing the forest cover of selected countries. Look over the data and try to answer the questions below.

| Forest area | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| | Forest area in 1990 | Forest area in 2000 | % change since 1990 | % of land area covered by forest in 1990 | % of land area covered by forest in 2000 |
| | km ² | km ² | % | % | % |
| Australia | 1 573 590 | 1 545 390 | -1.8 | 20.5 | 20.1 |
| Bolivia | 546 790 | 530 680 | -2.9 | 50.4 | 48.9 |
| Brazil | 5 669 980 | 5 439 050 | -4.1 | 67.0 | 64.3 |
| Cameroon | 260 760 | 238 580 | -8.5 | 56.0 | 51.3 |
| Canada | 2 445 710 | 2 445 710 | 0.0 | 26.5 | 26.5 |
| China | 1 454 170 | 1 634 800 | 12.4 | 15.6 | 17.5 |
| Colombia | 515 060 | 496 010 | -3.7 | 49.6 | 47.8 |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 1 405 310 | 1 352 070 | -3.8 | 62.0 | 59.6 |
| Egypt | 520 | 720 | 38.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Ethiopia | 49 960 | 45 930 | -8.1 | 4.5 | 4.2 |
| France | 147 250 | 153 410 | 4.2 | 26.8 | 27.9 |
| Germany | 107 400 | 107 400 | 0.0 | 30.7 | 30.7 |
| Guatemala | 33 870 | 28 500 | -15.9 | 31.2 | 26.3 |
| Honduras | 59 720 | 53 830 | -9.9 | 53.4 | 48.1 |
| India | 637 320 | 641 130 | 0.6 | 21.4 | 21.6 |
| Indonesia | 1 181 100 | 1 049 860 | -11.1 | 65.2 | 58.0 |
| Japan | 240 470 | 240 810 | 0.1 | 63.9 | 64.0 |



| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|------|------|
| Mexico | 615 110 | 552 050 | -10.3 | 32.2 | 28.9 |
| Nicaragua | 44 500 | 32 780 | -26.3 | 36.7 | 27.0 |
| Nigeria | 175 010 | 135 170 | -22.8 | 19.2 | 14.8 |
| Paraguay | 246 020 | 233 720 | -5.0 | 61.9 | 58.8 |
| Peru | 679 030 | 652 150 | -4.0 | 53.0 | 50.9 |
| Philippines | 66 760 | 57 890 | -13.3 | 22.4 | 19.4 |
| Spain | 135 100 | 143 700 | 6.4 | 27.0 | 28.8 |
| Thailand | 158 860 | 147 620 | -7.1 | 31.1 | 28.9 |
| United Kingdom | 26 240 | 27 940 | 6.5 | 10.9 | 11.6 |
| United States | 2 221 130 | 2 259 930 | 1.7 | 24.3 | 24.7 |
| Venezuela | 516 810 | 495 060 | -4.2 | 58.6 | 56.1 |

Data come from the [United Nations Statistics Division](#). Negative numbers indicate a loss of forest area.

Questions for discussion

1. What was the total amount of forest area within the listed countries in 1990? What was it in 2000? Did it rise or fall?
2. Which five countries have the greatest percentage of land covered by forest? Which five countries have the smallest percentage of land covered by forest?
3. Based on the data, can you make any generalizations about the location of forest growth and forest loss? In what areas of the world is forest area more likely to grow and in what areas is it more likely to shrink? Why might this be? Can you tie it to economic issues?
4. Which five countries lost the most total forest area? Which five countries gained the most forest area?
5. Why is deforestation harmful for the Earth? Why does deforestation occur and how does it impact humans and the environment? For instance, might deforestation have an impact on global warming? Why are forests important for soil?
6. Have a park or forest official visit your class to talk about deforestation and the importance of forests to the global ecosystem. Also talk about forest area in or around your community and how it is used and protected by government policies. Your class may want to get involved in protecting local forests once you learn how valuable they are to people and the environment!

