

# Healing the Planet

Paula Alfes

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Is there anything about the pandemic that could be “healing” for the planet? What?

Obviously, Covid-19 has many negative effects on human life: We cannot live life in a normal way. We cannot go to work or school or be with other people. People are dying and everyone in this world is scared right now. You can’t say there is a “bright side” to the pandemic, but it is teaching

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For example, the pandemic is giving our planet a chance to recover. Our planet has suffered because humans create a lot of pollution, which damages the atmosphere.

Because of the coronavirus, people are traveling less and some factories are closed. There are fewer planes in the sky and cars on the road. There are not as many cargo ships in transit. There is less carbon going into the atmosphere. In China, scientists documented a serious drop in carbon dioxide production: “Carbon emissions were down an estimated 18 percent between early February and mid-March due to falls in coal consumption and industrial output, according to calculations first published by climate science and policy website CarbonBrief.”<sup>1</sup> Also, in U.S. cities like Los Angeles, the skies have less smog and they look much cleaner. According to the *LA Times* the biggest pollution declines in the U.S. were seen in California and Washington, where emissions plunged more than 40%.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing that excuses the high number of deaths in the whole world, however we are learning what could happen if we all consume



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less. For one thing, there would be less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and the earth could start to heal.

**Sources:** 1. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/04/coronavirus-causing-carbon-emissions-to-fall-but-not-for-long/>; 2. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-05-19/study-world-carbon-pollution-falls-17-during-pandemic-peak>

## AFTER YOU READ:

1. State the main idea in one sentence.
2. What questions do you have after reading this article? Develop a list and then try to re-search the answers.
3. What sources does the author use? Are they sources you would trust? Why or why not?
4. Read the article on p. 12 and do the activities.