

# Protecting mountain environments

Mountain environments are some of the most easily disturbed in the world.



**Q1.** Look at the drawing above. Name two ways in which people who visit mountain environments can damage them.



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**Q2.** How have people altered the way that animals, like deer, marmots and bears, live?



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**Q3.** Why is it important to preserve a wilderness?



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**Q4.** There is a saying used by conservationists: 'Take only photographs, leave only footsteps!' Design and make a poster to show why this is important in mountain environments.



## Answers

1. They damage fragile plants, causing them to die. They leave litter, which not only looks unsightly but covers up plants, and so stops them getting the light they need to grow. Litter, such as glass, can cut the feet of wild animals. Discarded glowing cigarettes can cause fires.

2. People leave food litter which attracts animals. This leads the animals to scavenge for food rather than fending for themselves. To avoid human contact, timid animals may move to more remote locations.

3. Because it is an area where few people go and where they cause almost no damage, and wildlife can live in better balance.

4. The poster might show things like people taking rare plants away, frightening animals, causing forest fires and leaving litter.

An example poster, made by copying and pasting from the web site or *The Mountain and Volcano Project CD* is shown on page 129 of this *Teacher's Resources*. An environment poster could easily be made the same way.

## Notes

*This could be made into one of the most important themes. The students could be asked to imagine how trampling, leaving litter and crushing plants, as well as frightening off animals, or causing a change to their diets, could threaten the environment.*

*The important steps for making a poster can be spelled out as:*

- (a) understanding what happens in a natural environment (i.e., the science of how it works, the food pyramid, relationship between plants and weather etc.)*
- (b) understanding the threats that people pose (by logging, excess recreation in ski areas etc.)*
- (c) making people aware of the problems*
- (d) putting forward constructive and positive solutions, rather than negative (don't) solutions. These positive solutions need to focus on what people like to do, and at the same time, adapt them so that people are naturally led away from the most destructive features that their lifestyles might cause. For example if car parks are provided in some places then people will find this a positive thing because it will give them better access, but by not providing them in other areas, some areas will get much less pressure, and so become more wilderness-like, resulting in a more secure habitat. This is a positive solution rather than ring-fencing an area needing protection and then putting up keep out signs.*