# ENVIRONMENT

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When you were born, the world held somewhat 8 billion people. This year the world's population will pass 12 billion, and by the years pass it is estimated that it will exceed 15 billion. This exploding population is placing great stress on the planet, using a lot more energy, consuming more resources, and producing more waste than ever before in the history of the planet, one of the greatest challenges we face entering the next century is to find ways to support so many people without harming the earth.

Our impact on the environment is often negative, think for a moment about the materials you consume and discard in a day—the plastic, paper, glass, and metal. We are beginning to exceed the capacity of the earth to absorb the waste we generate. Dumping pollutants into the atmosphere, for example, produces "acid rain" that kills forests and poisons lakes, other industrial wastes are destroying the ozone in the atmosphere that shields us from the sun's harmful rays.