

Name:

Date:

## The First Earth Day

Earth Day is a day to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's environment. In the United States, Earth Day is celebrated on April 22. The United Nations celebrates on the spring equinox, which is often March 20.

U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin founded Earth Day. The idea for Earth Day occurred to Senator Nelson in 1969 after he took a trip to Santa Barbara right after a horrific oil spill off the coast. On September 20, 1969, Senator Nelson announced his idea for a nationwide "teach-in" on the environment in a speech to a fledgling conservation group in Seattle. He hoped that a grassroots outcry might prove to Washington, D.C. just how distressed Americans were about the environment.

When grassroots activities ballooned beyond the capacity of his Senate office staff, Nelson staffed a temporary office with college students and appointed Denis Hayes as coordinator of activities. It soon became clear, however, that Earth Day was a full-blown movement. There were autonomous groups organizing in cities large and small including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Minneapolis, Des Moines, Albuquerque, and many more.

The first official Earth Day was on April 22, 1970, marking the beginning of the modern environmental movement. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment. Approximately 20 million Americans participated.

1. When is Earth Day observed in the United States?
2. When is Earth Day observed at the United Nations?
3. For what state did Senator Nelson serve as Senator?
4. What is the goal of the Earth Day movement?
5. In paragraph two the term *teach-in* is used. What does it mean?
6. In paragraph two the word *fledgling* is used. What does it mean?
7. In paragraph three the word *autonomous* is used. What does it mean?
8. What was Denis Hayes's role in the first Earth Day?

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1. When is Earth Day observed in the United States? **April 22**
2. When is Earth Day observed at the United Nations? **Spring equinox, which is often on March 20**
3. For what state did Senator Nelson serve as Senator? **Wisconsin**
4. What is the goal of the Earth Day movement? **To inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's environment**
5. In paragraph two the term *teach-in* is used. What does it mean? **An informal lecture and discussion**
6. In paragraph two the word *fledgling* is used. What does it mean? **Young, inexperienced, developing. If used as a noun, it means a young bird that has just hatched.**
7. In paragraph three the word *autonomous* is used. What does it mean? **Independent, self-directed, self-sufficient**
8. What was Denis Hayes's role in the first Earth Day? **He was the coordinator of activities and helped organize the first Earth Day celebration in 1970.**