

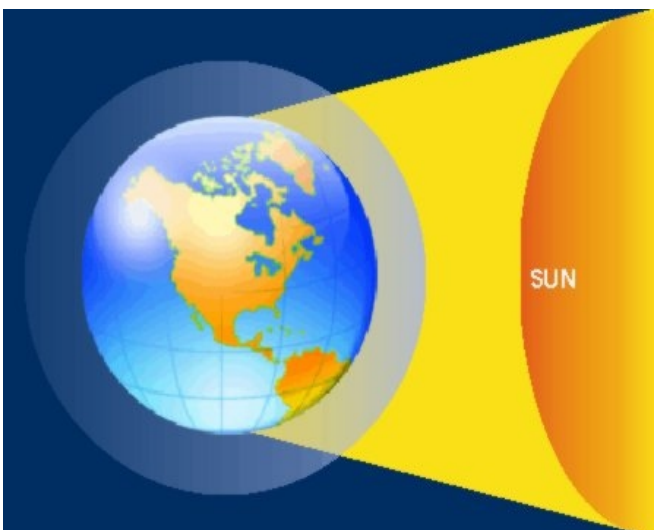
OZONE: THE SAVIOR TO BE SAVED BY US

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Have you ever wondered why the windows in a high-up international flight are never opened? Is it because at the height in which the flight is, there is almost no air and also a gas which protects us albeit harming the lungs if inhaled, ozone.

In collaboration of the World Ozone Day, I am writing this essay to highlight on the fact of the necessity of preserving our ozone layer. However, I do believe I should describe ozone first. A rare form of oxygen, it has the chemical formula O_3 . Spread throughout the atmosphere, it protects us like a shield from the harmful UV rays the Sun emits. It is 'good high up, bad low', as stated by ozone from polluted smog can harm us more than the good ozone does, not being able to hold back as much UV rays and damaging the lungs more.

Along with what it does, I believe that without knowing what is happening to the ozone layer, we cannot make an effort to save it. If all the ozone in the world were to be gathered together, it would form a layer around the Earth as thick as 2 pennies stacked together (0.3 cm). In the olden days, the ozone layer had no problems, and the ozone broke down into oxygen normally, which is part of an environmental cycle. However, recently, it has been noticed that the ozone layer is breaking down faster than normal. This formed a 'hole', which thinned part of the ozone layer. However, it is just a part of the ozone layer with reduced ozone.



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The ozone hole was first noticed in 1985 above Antarctica by Joseph Farman and his colleagues at the British Antarctic Survey. By observing radiation from the Sun and increased UV radiation, they deduced that there was a hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica. Afterwards, other people found more minor holes above other parts of the world, leading to a somewhat 'thinned' ozone layer. The major cause was due to the CFC emissions from sources like refrigerators, air conditioners and other electronic appliances, as well as aerosol sprays. UV rays hitting CFC molecules made the chlorine atoms separate and, in turn, destroy tens of thousands of ozone molecules before they are removed from the stratosphere. As a result, more UV rays reached the Earth, leading to increased skin cancer rates and also destruction of plants and other living creatures.

As time went by, more people began to realize the importance of the ozone layer and they decided to do something to protect it. (One of the first steps taken to conserve the ozone layer was the Montreal Protocol, in which many countries that were apprehensive about the depletion of the ozone layer). Ever since then the amount of CFC's released have been greatly reduced, but it would take a long time for the ozone layer to be fully restored. We still have a lot to do in order to keep up this pace of healing. For the one thing, we should bring a stop to using CFC products since it is what has caused all this harm to the ozone layer. Additionally, we should plant more trees which can produce oxygen. Furthermore, we should reduce high-altitude aircraft flights and rocket flights. We should also stop the release of high-pressure steam to the atmosphere. If we can keep this up, God willing, the ozone layer will be restored by 2050.

This conclude, in conjunction with the World Ozone Day. I implore every person, be they old or young, man or women, child or elder, poor or wealthy to work in order to conserve our ozone layer. Our planet- our responsibility, and we should be the ones who look after it and preserve it for the generations to come.

