

Environmental issue essay sample

[Environment](#), [Climate](#)



Environmental issues are harmful effects of human activity on the biophysical environment. Environmentalism, a social and environmental movement that started in the 1960s, addresses environmental issues through advocacy, education and activism. The carbon dioxide equivalent of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere has already exceeded 400 parts per million (NOAA) (with total “ long-term” GHG exceeding 455 parts per million). (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report) This level is considered a tipping point. “ The amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere is already above the threshold that can potentially cause dangerous climate change. We are already at risk...It’s not next year or next decade, it’s now.” Report from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):[1] “ Climate disasters are on the rise.

Around 70 percent of disasters are now climate related – up from around 50 percent from two decades ago. These disasters take a heavier human toll and come with a higher price tag. In the last decade, 2.4 billion people were affected by climate related disasters, compared to 1.7 billion in the previous decade. The cost of responding to disasters has risen tenfold between 1992 and 2008. Destructive sudden heavy rains, intense tropical storms, repeated flooding and droughts are likely to increase, as will the vulnerability of local communities in the absence of strong concerted action.” (OCHA) “ Climate change is not just a distant future threat. It is the main driver behind rising humanitarian needs and we are seeing its impact. The number of people affected and the damages inflicted by extreme weather has been unprecedented.” Types

Main articles: List of environmental issues and List of environmental disasters Major current environmental issues may include climate change, pollution, environmental degradation, and resource depletion etc. The conservation movement lobbies for protection of endangered species and protection of any ecologically valuable natural areas. Scientific grounding

The level of understanding of Earth has increased markedly in recent times through science especially with the application of the scientific method.

Environmental science is now a multi-disciplinary academic study taught and researched at many universities. This is used as a basis for addressing environmental issues. Large amounts of data have been gathered and these are collated into reports, of which a common type is the State of the Environment publications. A recent major report was the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, with input from 1200 scientists and released in 2005, which showed the high level of impact that humans are having on ecosystem services. Organizations

Main article: Environmental organization

Environmental issues are addressed at a regional, national or international level by government organizations. The largest international agency, set up in 1972, is the United Nations Environment Programme. The International Union for Conservation of Nature brings together 83 states, 108 government agencies, 766 Non-governmental organizations and 81 international organizations and about 10, 000 experts and scientists from countries around the world.[2] International non-governmental organizations include Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and World Wide Fund for Nature.

Governments enact environmental policy and enforce environmental law and this is done to differing degrees around the world. Solutions

Sustainability is the key to prevent or reduce the effect of environmental issues. There is now clear scientific evidence that humanity is living unsustainably, and that an unprecedented collective effort is needed to return human use of natural resources to within sustainable limits.[3][4] For humans to live sustainably, the Earth's resources must be used at a rate at which they can be replenished. Concerns for the environment have prompted the formation of Green parties, political parties that seek to address environmental issues. Initially these were formed in Australia, New Zealand and Germany but are now present in many other countries. Film and television

Main article: Environmental issues in film and television

There are an increasing number of films being produced on environmental issues, especially on climate change and global warming. Al Gore's 2006 film *An Inconvenient Truth* gained commercial success and a high media profile.

List of environmental issues

This is an alphabetical list of environmental issues, harmful aspects of human activity on the biophysical environment. As such, they relate to the anthropogenic effects on the natural environment, which are loosely divided into causes, effects and mitigation, noting that effects are interconnected and can cause new effects. Causes[edit] Human overpopulation —

Biocapacity • Carrying capacity • Exploitation • Industrialisation • I = PAT • Land degradation • Land reclamation • Optimum population • Overshoot

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(population) • Population density • Population dynamics • Population growth

- Projections of population growth • Total fertility rate • Urbanization •

Waste • Water conflict • Water scarcity • Overdrafting Hydrology –

Environmental impacts of reservoirs • Tile drainage • Hydrology (agriculture)

- Flooding • Landslide • Intensive farming — Environmental effects of meat production • Intensive animal farming • Intensive crop farming • Irrigation •
- Monoculture • Nutrient pollution • Overgrazing • Pesticide drift •
- Plasticulture • Slash and burn • Tile drainage

Land use — Built environment

- Desertification • Habitat fragmentation • Habitat destruction • Land degradation — Land pollution • Lawn-environmental concerns • Urban heat island • Urban sprawl

Nanotechnology —

- Implications of nanotechnology

Nuclear issues —

- Nuclear fallout • Nuclear meltdown • Nuclear power •
- Nuclear weapons • Nuclear and radiation accidents • Nuclear safety • High-level radioactive waste management • Effects

Climate change —

- Global warming • Global dimming • Fossil fuels • Sea level rise • Greenhouse gas • Ocean acidification • Shutdown of thermohaline circulation • Environmental impact of the coal industry • Urban Heat Islands • Flooding

Environmental degradation —

- Habitat destruction • Invasive species

Environmental health —

- Air quality • Asthma • Birth defect • Developmental disability • endocrine disruptors • Environmental impact of the coal industry • Environmental impact of nanotechnology •

Electromagnetic fields • Electromagnetic radiation and health • Indoor air quality • Lead poisoning • Leukemia • Nanotoxicology • Nature deficit disorder

- One Health • Sick Building Syndrome • Environmental impact of hydraulic

fracturing Environmental issues with energy — Environmental impact of the coal industry • Environmental impact of the energy industry • Environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing

• Environmental issues with war - Agent Orange • Depleted Uranium • Explosive remnants of war • Military Superfund site (Category only) • Scorched earth • War and environmental law • Unexploded ordnance Overpopulation — Burial • Overpopulation in companion animals • Tragedy of the commons • Gender Imbalance in Developing Countries • Sub-replacement fertility levels in developed countries • Genetic engineering — Genetic pollution • Genetically modified food controversies Pollution — Nonpoint source pollution • Point source pollution • Air pollution — Environmental impact of the coal industry • Environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing • Indoor air quality • Smog • Tropospheric ozone • Volatile organic compound Atmospheric particulate matter CFC • Biological effects of UV exposure Light pollution • Visual pollution

Noise pollution

Soil pollution — Alkali soil • Brownfield • Residual Sodium Carbonate Index • Soil conservation • Soil erosion • Soil contamination • Soil salination • Superfund • Superfund sites Space debris • Interplanetary contamination * Ozone depletion Water pollution — Acid rain • Agricultural runoff • Algal bloom • Environmental impact of the coal industry • Eutrophication • Environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing • Eutrophication • Fish kill • Groundwater contamination • Groundwater recharge • Marine debris • Marine pollution • Mercury in fish • Microplastics • Ocean acidification • Ocean

dumping • ocean pollution • Oil spills • Soda lake • Ship pollution • Thermal pollution • Urban runoff • Wastewater • Resource depletion — Exploitation of natural resources • Overdrafting (groundwater) • Overexploitation
Consumerism — Consumer capitalism • Planned obsolescence • Overconsumption
Fishing — Blast fishing • Bottom trawling • Cyanide fishing • Ghost nets • Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

• Overfishing • Shark finning • Whaling
Logging — Clearcutting • Deforestation • Illegal logging
Mining — Acid mine drainage • Environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing • Mountaintop removal mining • Slurry impoundments
Water (depletion) — Anoxic waters • Aral Sea • California Water Wars • Dead Sea • Lake Chad • Water scarcity
Toxicants — • Agent Orange • Asbestos • Beryllium • Bioaccumulation • Biomagnification • Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) • Cyanide • DDT • Endocrine disruptors • Explosives • Environmental impact of the coal industry • Herbicides • Hydrocarbons • Perchlorate • Pesticides • PBDE • Persistent organic pollutant • PBBs • PBDEs • Toxic heavy metals • PCB • Dioxin • Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons • Radioactive contamination • Volatile organic compounds
Waste — Electronic waste • Great Pacific Garbage Patch • Illegal dumping • Incineration • Litter • Waste disposal incidents • Marine debris • Medical waste • Landfill • Leachate • Toxic waste • Environmental impact of the coal industry • Exporting of hazardous waste
Mitigation[edit]

Conservation

Ecosystems — Anoxic waters • Biodiversity • Biosecurity • Coral bleaching • Edge effect • Habitat destruction • Habitat fragmentation • In-situ leach

Fishing — Blast fishing • Bottom trawling • By-catch • Cetacean bycatch • Gillnetting • Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing • Environmental effects of fishing • Marine pollution • Overfishing • Whaling Forests — Clearcutting • Deforestation • Illegal logging Natural resources — Resource depletion • Exploitation of natural resources Species — Endangered species • Genetic diversity • Habitat destruction • Holocene extinction • Invasive species • Poaching • Pollinator decline • Species extinction • Threshold host density • Wildlife trade • Wildlife disease Energy conservation • Efficient energy use •

Renewable energy • Renewable energy commercialization • Environmental law – Environmental crime • Environmental justice • Polluter pays principle • Precautionary Principle • regulatory capture