

Global warming and human influence assignment



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Global Warming and Human Influence Global warming can be defined as; “An increase in the earth’s atmospheric and oceanic temperatures widely predicted to occur due to an increase in the greenhouse effect resulting especially from pollution” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008).

According to University of Phoenix Global Warming (2008), the data accumulated from daily measurements indicate that the Earth’s average surface temperature in 2005 was the third highest since the mid-1800s. Apparently the last two decades of the 20th century were its warmest. Humans have mostly contributed to the cause of global warming.

Burning carbon-containing fossil fuels accounts for most human-made CO₂. Land conversion, like when tropical forests are logged or burned, also releases CO₂. By 2050 the concentration of atmospheric CO₂ may be double what it was in the 1700s (University of Phoenix, 2008, para 4). Gasoline is a perfect example of a product that we purchase that affects global warming. The combustion of the gasoline in your car’s engine releases not only CO₂ but also nitrous oxide, which triggers the production of tropospheric ozone. Other industrial processes, land-use conversion, and the use of fertilizers also produce nitrous oxide.

Global warming occurs because these gases absorb infrared radiation-that is, heat energy-given off by Earth’s surface. This absorption slows the natural flow of heat into space, warming the lower atmosphere. Some of the heat from the lower atmosphere is transferred to the ocean and raises its temperatures as well (University of Phoenix, 2008, para. 5-6). There are a many nonliving and living factors that global warming and climate changes contribute to. Scientists suspect a link between climate change and the

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1993-1994 hantavirus outbreaks. Hantavirus is a very deadly disease that affects the lungs and is spread by carriers like deer mice.

People contract the disease by breathing in the virus that has gotten into the air through rodent droppings and urine. Six years of drought followed by heavy spring rains in 1993 produced a burst of plant growth (Environmental Defense Fund, 2008). " This disease was virtually unknown in the United States before 1993. By February 2006, 416 cases of hantavirus had been found in a number of states as far-flung as Florida and New York"

(Environmental Defense Fund, 2008). Apparently, climate change effects how far many diseases spread in other countries too. In the U. S. a warmer climate and the heavy, extended rains it brought likely helped spread the hantavirus. However, in other places, a warmer world is helping expand the ranges of insects that carry diseases like dengue and yellow fever (Environmental Defense Fund, 2008). As for the world it self as a whole, temperature changes may have more effect then we know it today. If temperatures rise by 1? C, sand dunes spread across Nebraska as a major drought hits the Great Plains, Kilimanjaro loses the last of its snow, and tropical coral reefs will be mostly wiped out by hotter oceans. If temperatures rise by 2?

C the marine food chain will be threatened as the ocean acidity rises due to absorption of CO₂, summer heat waves will routinely match 2003 levels that killed 30, 000 people in Europe and Greenland's ice sheet is doomed to melt away (Jennings, 2008). Many more major world catastrophes will happen if the world's internal temperature rises any higher. At a rise of 3? C, there will be a disappearance of the Artic ice cap; even at the north pole. Along with <https://assignbuster.com/global-warming-and-human-influence-assignment/>

this, category 6 hurricanes will attack tropical coasts worldwide and the Amazon rain forest is replaced with desert and savannah.

Basically by the time temperatures rise 6°C, sea level oceans will flood coastal cities worldwide, new deserts will spread in southern Europe and the last glaciers vanish from the Alps. Not only will these catastrophic horrors appear but the Arctic Ocean will become as warm as the Mediterranean, all mountain glaciers will disappear, almost all of the world will be uninhabitable, human civilization will collapse due to conflict over diminishing resources and finally last but not least there will be mass extinctions of all life forms (Jennings, 2008).

One potential new way of helping fight global warming is by trapping carbon dioxide. “ Carbon capture and storage will be a vital new technology in reducing carbon emissions around the world. ” (Knowles, 2008, para. 3) They say that ‘ carbon capture’ covers a range of chemical biological and geological technologies designed to trap carbon dioxide from large, concentrated sources such as power stations, in order to reduce the carbon emissions that cause global warming.

In the future, if efforts to reduce carbon dioxide do not move fast enough to avoid the risk of dangerous climate change, they say it may be necessary to remove CO₂ from mobile sources and even the air itself (Knowles, 2008).

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, explains that carbon capture and storage is currently the only technology that can reduce carbon emissions from the burning fossil fuels (Knowles, 2008). Some geological options for storing CO₂ were mentioned, such as

empty oil wells, mineral formations or unmineable coal deposits (Knowles, 2008).

Scientists are also saying that in order for us to avoid the worst impacts of global warming; we have to reduce global warming pollution by 80% by 2050. The goal to do that is by reducing global warming pollution by 2% every year for the next 40 years. One federation is working towards that goal by demanding climate change in legislation. This federation is well known as the National Wildlife Federation. Along with changing legislation, the National Wildlife Federation wants to include a cap-and-trade system and use dedicated funding to address the impacts of global warming on America's natural resources.

Currently the senate is debating the Climate Security Act, with an expected vote on Friday, June 6 at 10 a. m. Most people today are contacting their senators and asking them to pass and strengthen the Climate Security Act. This is one great way to help stop global warming and protect our wildlife (National Wildlife Federation, 2008). My plan to help sustain the fight for global warming and to sustain the earth's longevity is a great one. On fightglobalwarming.com there is a test you can take to see how you singly; or your family household contributes to global warming.

I took the test for my entire household. The questions included what kind of home you live in, what size cars you drive including how many miles you drive yearly. It also asks how many flights your family takes together verses how many flights you take singly per year. My household compares very close to the average 2-person American household. The average household

releases 25.3 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂). In my household, we create 28.8 tons of (CO₂). 61.2% of the carbon we release is from the type of home we live in. 6.8% is from the size of cars we drive and the last 2% is from the amount of flights we take a year. The results said that in my home we could compare it to releasing the same amount of carbon pollution by cutting and burning all the trees in a section of the Amazon rainforest the size of 3.5 football fields. After taking this test, I realized that there are many things I can do to sustain the fight for global warming in my home and in my community. Burning fossil fuels to power homes and run our cars creates global warming.

I would like to suggest to my family, friends and the community a few simple ways to help fight global warming. A lot of these simple tasks involve our home and household choices. Home energy accounts for 21 percent of America's global warming (Environmental Defense Fund, 2008). Ways that we can help in our homes are by changing the light bulbs in our homes to energy-saving lights. Traditional incandescent bulbs are actually small heaters that produce a little light ??? and waste a lot of energy making heat (Environmental Defense Fund, 2006).

If America switched just five bulbs from standard incandescent to energy-saving compact fluorescents (CFLs) it would be like taking eight million cars off the road. CFLs have come a long way and now come in a variety of styles that fit in regular sockets and give off the same warm light as old-fashioned light bulbs. The bulbs may be more expensive up front, but they last much longer, will save you money on your monthly utility bill (Sierra Club, 2007).

Along with changing bulbs, here are some other things I would like to present to the community to help reduce global warming.

The population of the city that drives can purchase hybrid or other highly efficient vehicles. These types of vehicles emit as little as one third as much CO₂ as a large utility vehicle does. Making sure that their vehicle is well-tuned and car pooling are other ways to cut CO₂ emissions as well. The Environmental Defense Fund (2006) stated, " If every household in the U. S. made energy-efficient choices, we could save 800 million tons of global warming pollution??? more than the heat-trapping emissions from over 100 countries.

That would go a long way toward stabilizing our climate" (para. 4). Another thing that I would like to stress to my community is to use green power. The term " green power" generally refers to electricity supplied in whole or in part from renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, geothermal, hydropower, and various forms of biomass (U. S. Department of Energy, 2007). Today, about 75 million electricity customers in 42 states have the option to buy green power through their utility supplier (Environmental Defense Funds, 2008, para. 1) Green electricity comes from harnessing wind, sunlight, plant matter or heat from the Earth's core. Electricity demand is based on consumer choices and the community should come together to demand we use green power. Buying green power goes a long way towards cutting heat-trapping emissions. Clean energy resources emit little or no carbon dioxide pollution. Green power can be a little more expensive, but the benefits are plentiful! Green power actually reduces smog, soot, mercury and acid rain pollution.

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Along with that, green power also helps reduce financial danger because regulations could change, not to mention price fluctuations of fossil fuels that could potentially increase the cost of energy even more. One last great reason I want to add green power to our homes; it creates new jobs and helps generate income. Green power sources tend to rely on labor, land and resources, especially in rural communities (Environmental Defense Fund, para. 8). One last thing that I would like to add to my sustainability plan would be to encourage my community to take the Good Neighbor Pledge.

The Good Neighbor Pledge is a pledge to do your part in your home to reduce global warming. You can do this by signing up with an email address at www.nwf.org. After you reach 20 points and complete the pledge, you receive great benefits and are even receive an award (National Wildlife Federation, 2008). Benefits and challenges of my plan might include the cost of green power. Here in Missouri a new utility company made green power available in 2007 at its lowest cost since 2000. Green power went from 5.0¢ / kWh. (5¢ per kilowatt) to 2.0¢ – 3.5¢ /kWh in 2003, to it's lowest now which is 1. ? /kWh. Electricity customers of AmerenUE, the company responsible for the lowest price for green power in Missouri, started offering the new option of 1, 000 kWh blocks at \$15 per block. This block option allows for participation at a lower monthly cost than previously available with the usage rates. The block option also provides a solution to customers seeking a fixed renewable energy premium each month (U. S. Department of Energy, 2007). I feel that if I can present this information to the community that they will see how the rates have reduced significantly since the year 2000 and 2005.

I also think this can be labeled as a benefit and a challenge all in one. Finally, global warming is a terrible atmospheric issue and we can do many things to help this damage end. Trapping carbon, changing light bulbs and even unplugging electrical items at night are easy ways to fight global warming. We also need to stop burning fossil fuels. We should start walking more to prevent more CO₂ emissions from our motor vehicles and buy green power to fuel our homes. All in all, global warming is one issue we cannot avoid; for it we do, it may end the world as we know it.