
Are We Doomed?

Segment Length: 5:45 minutes

Lesson Description:

Are we killing the earth? Are we really in the beginning of a mass extinction? Or is global warming just another of the many overblown scares we've faced? This video explores the debate—and lack of debates—over global warming

Concepts & Key Terms:

Alarmist – (noun) someone who is considered to be exaggerating a danger and so causing needless worry or panic. In context of the video, the people who use scare tactics to bring attention to their concerns.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- identify some people who could be considered alarmists.
- list past scares and the consequences we were warned about.
- hypothesize why global warming activists would not show up to debate climatologists who didn't share their opinions.
- explain potential positive and negative consequences of believing either side in the climate change debate.

Preview Activity and Questions:

Distribute copies of the K-W-L worksheet to the class. Have students fill in the K and W sections. After showing the video, have students complete the L section and answer the question at the bottom of the worksheet.

Viewing Guide:

We recommend that teachers show the video segment twice: once to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and once to allow them time to complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs sharing and verifying answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide

1. terrible
2. crashes
3. twelve
4. hurricane
5. feed
6. molecule

Are We Doomed?

Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, answer the following questions or fill in the blanks.

1. We're going to run out of oil. Nuclear power will give us cancer, killer bees "swarm ever closer," bird flu, flesh-eating bacteria.... The list of _____ things that were going to get us is long, yet we're living longer than ever. None of those scares turned out to be as frightening as the warnings.
2. It's warmed up around one degree Celsius since 1900, and life expectancy doubled [in] the industrialized democracies, and yet that temperature ticks up another half a degree, and the entire system _____?
3. The world is going to end in _____ years if we don't address climate change.
4. There is no relationship between _____ activity, and the surface temperature of the planet.
5. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas. But it also helps _____ the world.
6. Carbon dioxide becomes that _____ by which we can take control of your lives, of your efforts, and everything that goes on.

Now, take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer the question below:

In your view, what was the main point John Stossel was trying to make in this video? _____

What did you learn about the climate change debate that challenged your current knowledge or beliefs on the subject? _____

Discussion & Analysis:

1. Why did Greta Thunberg say, “You have stolen my dreams and my childhood”? Have they been stolen or is she exaggerating? How about when she said, “We are in the beginning of a mass extinction”? Does that seem truthful or exaggerated? What about when Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said, “The world is going to end in 12 years if we don’t address climate change.” Do you believe all these statements, or do you think they are exaggerations?
2. Why does John Stossel seem skeptical that climate change is a catastrophe? How does he justify that skepticism?
3. When people exaggerate, are you more or less likely to believe them? Are exaggerations and scare tactics effective or ineffective? Explain.
4. Why do you think the climate change activists refuse to debate?
5. Why did John Stossel tell us that David Legates is a professor of climatology at the University of Delaware, Pat Michaels is former president of the American Association of State Climatologists, and Willie Soon is an astrophysicist? What about Greta Thunberg, Al Gore, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez? What are their backgrounds?
6. One side says that hurricanes and other storms are getting worse and the other side says that’s not true and that there is no relationship between hurricane activity and the surface temperature of the planet. Who are we supposed to believe? What would convince you that either side is right?
7. The same with other claims: Greta Thunberg claimed we are at the beginning of a mass extinction while Pat Michaels claimed that there are places on Earth where it is greening up like crazy. What’s missing?
8. A decade ago, the Environmental Protection Agency declared carbon dioxide to be a pollutant. We know carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, but it’s also necessary for life to exist. Does it seem that government controlling carbon dioxide would involve government controlling many aspects of our economy and our lives?
9. David Legates said, “Governments like control. Most governments want to keep control, and most governments get bigger and bigger over time.” Is he right? What evidence do you have to support or refute his statement?
10. Why do you think this video was titled “Are We Doomed?”
11. Based on your own observations, does it seem like climate change is a generational issue? If yes, why might that be? If no, does any demographic (segment of the population) seem to be more or less willing to accept the climate change narrative?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. How dare you. You have stolen my dreams and my childhood.

2. The list of terrible things that were going to get us is long, yet we're living longer than ever. None of those scares turned out to be as frightening as the warnings.
3. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction.
4. The world is going to end in 12 years if we don't address climate change.
5. It's warmed up around one degree Celsius since 1900, and life expectancy doubled [in] the industrialized democracies. And yet that temperature ticks up another half a degree, and the entire system crashes? That's the most absurd belief.
6. Climate alarmists never agree to debate.
7. Yes, the water has been rising for approximately 20,000 years, and probably will continue.
8. We can measure their power, and we can add up their power, and there is no significant increase whatsoever. There is no relationship between hurricane activity, and the surface temperature of the planet.
9. A lot of people pretend to know about climate, pretend to have studied it, pretend to come up with these answers, and then make these proclamations to scare you so that you'll do what we want you to do.
10. Carbon dioxide becomes that molecule by which we can take control of your lives, of your efforts, and everything that goes on.

Quotes for Discussion:

Skepticism: the mark and even the pose of the educated mind. – John Dewey

Dear Children, I'm sorry adults have frightened you about climate change and how it might affect your future. You might be less afraid if you knew some facts that adults intentionally do not explain to you. – Scott Adams

If you are worried about rising sea levels, don't be. The smartest and richest people in the world are still buying property on the beach. They don't see the problem. And if sea levels do rise, it will happen slowly enough for people to adjust. – Scott Adams

We're running the most dangerous experiment in history right now, which is to see how much carbon dioxide the atmosphere...can handle before there is an environmental catastrophe. – Elon Musk

The warnings about global warming have been extremely clear for a long time. We are facing a global climate crisis. It is deepening. We are entering a period of consequences. – Al Gore

The urge to save humanity is almost always a false front for the urge to rule. – H. L. Mencken

The whole climate crisis is not only Fake News, it's Fake Science. There is no climate crisis, there's weather and climate all around the world, and in fact carbon dioxide is the main building block of all life. – Patrick Moore

The threat posed by humans to the natural environment is nothing compared to the threat to humans posed by global environmental policy. – Fred L. Smith

Ideology on which the Kyoto Protocol is based, is a new form of totalitarian ideology, along with Marxism, Communism and socialism. – Andrey Illarionov

It doesn't matter what sort of adverse weather comes in whatever part of the Earth, which has happened since the beginning of time, the alarmist fakers will blame it on CO2. Heat, cold, drought, flood, fire, ice, tornado, hurricane, etc. When in fact it is all quite normal. – Patrick Moore

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed—and hence clamorous to be led to safety—by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary. – H. L. Mencken

Twenty-five years ago people could be excused for not knowing much, or doing much, about climate change. Today we have no excuse. No more can it be dismissed as science fiction; we are already feeling the effects. – Desmond Tutu

We are the first generation to feel the sting of climate change, and we are the last generation that can do something about it. – Jay Inslee

Activities:

1. Have students finish the K-W-L chart in class or for homework.
2. Pair students homogeneously and, using the accompanying Quotes Activity, distribute a quotation to each pair of students. Have them read, develop, and write an explanation, evaluation, or comment about the quote they are given. Quotations vary in complexity and should be assigned based on student capabilities. This activity can be used as an exit ticket.
3. Show students one of the following comedic videos and then have the class discuss it.

If We Had Some Global Warming

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJUFTm6cJXM&feature=youtu.be>

Imagine There's No Global Warming

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TF5F6eYho8U>

Chicken Little "The Globe Is Warming!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWnMIUPqnas>

4. Produce a “man-on-the-street” video in which you ask people what they know about global warming / climate change and the consequences of it.
5. John Stossel has covered many scares throughout his years of reporting. Among them were killer bees, bird flu, flesh-eating bacteria, that we are running out of oil, nuclear power will give us cancer, and shown on screen were these supposed causes of cancer:

Red Dye #2, saccharin, electric power lines, alar on apples, and even cell phones.
Research and report on one or more of these past scares.

6. Create a 30-60 second public service announcement (PSA) that supports your conclusions on climate change.
7. Conduct a classroom debate on the topic of climate change.
8. Research past claims about climate change and verify if the predictions came true. Present your findings via a slide show.
9. Interview people from various generations, occupations and levels of education about climate change. Evaluate & categorize their responses. Summarize your findings across generational, educational and occupational lines. Present your findings via a slide show.
10. Write a persuasive essay in which you explain the debate over climate change and then take and defend a position.
11. Research and write a biography of either Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Al Gore, David Legates, Pat Michaels, Willie Soon, or Greta Thunberg.
12. Research the history of climate change from the ice age until now. Develop a timeline on poster board. What conclusions can you draw based on that research? How does that affect your view about global warming?
13. In his book, *Vision of the Anointed*, Thomas Sowell observed that there are several key elements that “ideological crusaders” have in common:
 - A. Assertion of a great danger to the whole society, a danger to which the masses of people are oblivious.
 - B. An urgent need for action to avert impending catastrophe.
 - C. A need for government to drastically curtail the dangerous behavior of the many, in response to the prescient conclusions of the few.
 - D. A disdainful dismissal of arguments to the contrary as either uninformed, irresponsible, or motivated by unworthy purposes.

Apply Sowell’s observations to global warming and the way those calling for government action are pursuing their agenda. This can be a group project, in which each student in a group of four researches and reports on one of the elements.

14. Research the Heartland Institute. What is it? What is its focus? Who supports it? Who opposes it?
15. In an article on the internet, Al Gore said, “Nobody is interested in solutions if they don't think there's a problem. Given that starting point, I believe it is appropriate to have an over-representation of factual presentations on how dangerous it is, as a predicate for opening up the audience to listen to what the solutions are, and how hopeful it is that we are going to solve this crisis.” Review the interview and explain what he means by “it is appropriate to have an over-representation of factual presentations on how dangerous it is.” You could write a persuasive essay in which you take a position on the quote.

<http://grist.org/article/roberts2/>

16. In 2007, a judge in Britain limited the showing of Al Gore's video, *An Inconvenient Truth*, in public schools. Research and write a report about this ruling and the reasons for the judge's decision.
17. Use the internet to look up this headline: "31,000 scientists reject 'global warming' agenda." Research this issue and make an oral report or write an essay explaining its significance.

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Per _____

Teacher _____

Are We Doomed? K-W-L Chart

Directions: Complete the **K** and **W** sections prior to watching the video. After you have seen the video, complete the **L** section and answer the two questions below the K-W-L chart.

K	W	L
What I know about the climate change debate:	What I want to know about the climate change debate:	What I've learned about the climate change debate:

After watching this video and discussing it, my view of climate change: _____ stayed the same _____ changed

Why? _____

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

A: *We simply must do everything we can in our power to slow down global warming before it is too late. The science is clear. The global warming debate is over.*
– Arnold Schwarzenegger

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

B: *The threat posed by humans to the natural environment is nothing compared to the threat to humans posed by global environmental policy.* – Fred L. Smith

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

C: *The warnings about global warming have been extremely clear for a long time. We are facing a global climate crisis. It is deepening. We are entering a period of consequences.* – Al Gore

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

D: *I'd say the chances are about 50-50 that humanity will be extinct or nearly extinct within 50 years. Weapons of mass destruction, disease, I mean this global warming is scaring the living daylights out of me.* – Ted Turner

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

E: *The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed—and hence clamorous to be led to safety—by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.* – H. L. Mencken

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

F: *As someone who lived under communism for most of his life, I feel obliged to say that I see the biggest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity now in ambitious environmentalism, not in communism. This ideology wants to replace the free and spontaneous evolution of mankind by a sort of central (now global) planning.* – Vaclav Klaus

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

G: *Is there climate change? I live in the shadow of some of the greatest climate change the world has ever seen. It's called the Rocky Mountains. When the glaciers went back.* – Scott Tipton

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

H: *The urge to save humanity is almost always a false front for the urge to rule.*
– H. L. Mencken

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

I: *Our world faces a true planetary emergency. I know the phrase sounds shrill, and I know it's a challenge to the moral imagination.* – Al Gore

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

J: *A majority of American citizens are now becoming skeptical of the claim that our carbon footprints, resulting from our use of fossil fuels, are going to lead to climatic calamities. But governments are not yet listening to the citizens.*

– John Coleman

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

K: *We have no reason to think that climate change is harmful if you look at the world as a whole. Most places, in fact, are better off being warmer than being colder. And historically, the really bad times for the environment and for people have been the cold periods rather than the warm periods.* – Freeman Dyson

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

L: *Climate change is a terrible problem, and it absolutely needs to be solved. It deserves to be a huge priority.* – Bill Gates

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

M: *Nevertheless, there is another threat on the horizon. I see this threat in environmentalism which is becoming a new dominant ideology, if not a religion. Its main weapon is raising the alarm and predicting the human life endangering climate change based on man-made global warming.* – Vaclav Klaus

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

N: *It's obvious nonsense, but it makes nice people feel good about themselves to do their bit for the planet. It's vanity of a grotesque kind to believe that mankind, and our 'carbon footprint', has more impact on the future of Earth than Nature, which bends our planet to its will, as it sees fit.* – Charles Saatchi

Names: _____ and _____

Read the quote below. Discuss the quote with your partner, and write your explanation, evaluation, or comment.

O: *The clear and present danger of climate change means we cannot burn our way to prosperity. We already rely too heavily on fossil fuels. We need to find a new, sustainable path to the future we want. We need a clean industrial revolution.*
– Ban Ki-moon
