

Activity 4 Reading about Climate Change

(Extension Activity—Revised 2005)

Description

In groups, students examine current climate change issues described in several media pieces, followed by a class discussion about what individuals, communities, organizations and governments are doing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Planning Notes

1. Download articles from the URLs below and photocopy them with accompanying task sheets for each group.
2. Make an overhead of Appendix 4.6 *What are Canadians doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?* for the class discussion.

Resources

- ▶ Indepth: Kyoto – Kyoto Protocol FAQs.” *CBC News Online*. April 13, 2005.
www.cbc.ca/news/background/kyoto/
- ▶ Bob Weber, “Studies Show Climate Change Melting Permafrost under Roads, Runways in N.W.T.” *Macleans*. June 5, 2005.
www.macleans.ca/topstories/news/shownews.jsp?content=n060506A
- ▶ Danylo Hawaleshka, “Power Hungry.” *Macleans*. February 25, 2005.
www.macleans.ca/topstories/politics/article.jsp?content=20050228_95663_95663
- ▶ “Indepth: Kyoto – A British Example.” *CBC News Online*. April 13, 2005.
www.cbc.ca/news/background/kyoto/uk.html
- ▶ Danylo Hawaleshka, “The Other Low-Carb Life.” *Macleans*. June 21, 2004.
www.macleans.ca/topstories/environment/article.jsp?content=20040621_82822_82822

Teaching/Learning Strategies

Activity 4a Article analysis

1. Divide students into small groups.
Group members should each receive a copy of the article and task sheet assigned for their group.
2. Following their analysis of the article, groups briefly present their findings.

Activity 4b – Class Discussion –

What are Canadians doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

1. Use the overhead of Appendix 4.6 *What are Canadians doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?* to guide a discussion of the Kyoto Protocol, its strengths and weaknesses, and what Canadians can do to reduce greenhouse gases.
2. Students summarize the discussion in their notebooks, as a concept web or in point form.

Appendices

4.1 “*Kyoto Protocol FAQs*” task sheet

4.2 “*Studies Show Climate Change Melting Permafrost under Roads, Runways in N.W.T.*” task sheet

4.3 “*Power Hungry*” task sheet

4.4 “*Kyoto – A British Example*” task sheet

4.5 “*The Other Low-Carb Life*” task sheet

4.6 *What are Canadians doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?* overhead

Appendix 4.1 “Kyoto Protocol FAQs” task sheet

Bibliographic entry _____

Author _____

Title _____

Source _____

Website _____

1. This article provides some background information on climate change.
 - a) What is the IPCC?
 - b) Summarize the IPCC’s conclusions regarding climate change.

2. Not everyone agrees on the details of climate change.
 - a) What do scientists agree about?
 - b) What do scientists disagree about?

3. The Kyoto Protocol
 - a) What is the Kyoto Protocol?
 - b) What is Canada’s commitment under this agreement?
 - c) Which country refuses to ratify this agreement and why?
 - d) Summarize various strategies countries can use to meet their emissions targets.

Appendix 4.2 *“Studies Show Climate Change Melting Permafrost under Roads, Runways in N.W.T.” task sheet*

Bibliographic entry _____

Author _____

Title _____

Source _____

Website _____

1. Read the article – locate the area in question on the map of Canada.
2. What is permafrost, and why is it melting?
3. Describe the impact of the permafrost melting on the built environment.
4. Although the article does not discuss the impact of climate change on the ecosystem, what predictions can you make about how melting permafrost might affect plants and animals?
5. What do you think might be the long-term effects of climate change on the communities of the N.W.T.?
6. What is already being done and what is planned to try and deal with this problem?

Appendix 4.3 *“Power Hungry” task sheet*

Bibliographic entry _____

Author _____

Title _____

Source _____

Website _____

1. Make a table listing the alternative energy sources mentioned in the article.
 - a) list the benefits of each source of energy
 - b) list the drawbacks of each source of energy
2. Summarize the alternative energy examples being implemented in different provinces.
3. The article suggests that Ontario might soon be facing an energy crisis:
 - a) Why?
 - b) What are Ontario’s options for resolving the crisis without increasing greenhouse gas emissions?
 - c) Describe any potential problems associated with the options.

Appendix 4.4 “Kyoto – A British Example” task sheet

Bibliographic entry _____

Author _____

Title _____

Source _____

Website _____

1. Summarize the key features of the “zero emissions development” described in the article by listing them, or by drawing out a sketch or plan of how you picture this housing development.
2. Why are plans to meet Kyoto commitments finding less resistance in Britain?
 - a) What is Britain’s approach?
 - b) Could this work in Canada?
3. Could switching over to more efficient cars have any negative environmental impacts?

Appendix 4.5 *“The Other Low-Carb Life” task sheet*

Bibliographic entry _____

Author _____

Title _____

Source _____

Website _____

1. The author is using a play on words to catch our attention with his title.
 - a) What is the usual meaning of the term “low-carb”? How is the author using the term in the context of this article?
 - b) What does “carbon-neutral” mean?
2. List the examples of people, bands and companies mentioned in the article and what they are doing to become carbon-neutral. If possible, check out the websites referred to in the article.
3. How can becoming carbon-neutral help to reduce your Ecological Footprint?
4. Make a list of the things you and your friends and families can do to go “low-carb.” What can you do to help offset the carbon emissions that you do produce?

