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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2006 Volume V: The Science of Global Warming

A Planet Worth a Thousand Words: An English Teacher's Guide to Global Warming

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In a time when climate change alters the face of the Earth — when melting ice caps are on almost everyone's tongue — it seems appropriate to integrate a global warming curriculum in an English classroom. Such a curriculum acknowledges the power of writing and verbal communication as a way to salvage science from the wreck of misinformation and deliberate ambiguity.

If students know how to write, they will understand how other writers use specific techniques to serve a purpose. They will also know how to use writing to process information, develop a greater understanding of topics such as global warming, and pass their knowledge to others.

Students will write poetry, a short story, and a speech while learning about climate, atmosphere, and fossil fuels. They will examine the consequences of global warming, the controversy surrounding the issue, and suggestions for mitigation. An overview of climate change and the greenhouse effect will enable students to conduct in-depth research. At the end of the unit, students will show how science and English can work together to improve our world.

(Developed for English, grade 12; recommended for English, grades 10-12)

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