Preventing for the Film

1. Our awareness of climate change and other ecological problems has increased in the time since Al Gore's film first appeared in 2006. What environmental concerns are most evident to you?
2. What changes have you and your friends made in your lives in response to the threats of global climate change?
3. Why might a film critic or ecologist claim that citizens "owe it" to themselves to see *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore's documentary film about the environmental crisis?

Reflecting on the Film

1. Why does the film open and close with serene images of nature: lush green leaves and a gently flowing river on a sunny day, followed by Al Gore’s voice-over about this peaceful place?
2. What is the intention of showing Gore delivering his slide show at town-hall-style meetings? How does Gore come across to the viewers as the camera follows him behind the scenes and on his tours?
3. What is the effect of Gore opening his presentation on a serious subject with self-irony: “I used to be the next president of the United States”? And after the audience laughs, Gore quips, “I don’t find that particularly funny.” Where else in this discussion of an environmental crisis do we see Gore’s humor?
4. In this film, Gore narrates a moment in 1989 when his six-year-old son dropped his father’s hand, ran into the street, and was severely injured. How does this personal story relate to Gore’s mission?
5. Gore also tells a story of his father’s tobacco farm and business and of his older sister Nancy who died of lung cancer. How is this personal history relevant to this film?
6. Because so much of the film consists of scientific facts and charts, you may have been challenged to record sufficient notes. Work with classmates to answer as many of the following questions as you can:
   - Why do we have global warming?
   - What is the relationship between carbon dioxide and temperature?
   - How does global warming (the increase in worldwide temperatures) contribute to an increase in the number and severity of storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and typhoons?
   - How can global warming cause both violent precipitation as well as droughts?
7. Explain the significance of each of these references from the film:
   - the findings of core drills
   - the thawing of the permafrost, the splitting of the Ward Hunt ice shelf, and the disappearance of the Larson ice shelf?
   - the Arctic ice cap disappearing
   - the image of a canary in a coal mine
   - the image of the frog in the cooking pot
8. Cite five ecological consequences of global warming in the animal and plant communities.
9. Explain the three factors that are causing “a collision between our civilization and the earth.”

10. Gore includes several resonant quotations from important authors and creates his own memorable claims as well. Explain how each of these is illustrated in the film:
   -- from Mark Twain: “What gets us into trouble is not what we don’t know; it’s what we know that just ain’t so.”
   -- from Winston Churchill in 1936: “The era of procrastination, of half-measure, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close. In its place, we are entering a period of consequences.”
   -- from Upton Sinclair: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.” Cite specific ways that this statement is illustrated throughout this film.
   -- from Stephen Pacala and Robert Socolow in Science magazine: “Humanity already possesses the fundamental scientific, technical, and industrial know-how to solve the carbon and climate problems.”
   -- from Al Gore: “We have everything we need save, perhaps, political will but in American, political will is a renewable resource.”

11. How does Gore counter the myth that scientists disagree with the fact that we are causing global warming and that it is a serious problem?

12. How does Gore expose the misconception that we have to choose between the economy and the environment?

13. What historical facts about the United States does Gore cite to oppose those who claim that global warming is too big of a problem to solve?

14. When Gore took his scientific evidence of global warming to Congress, he expected that this compelling information would “cause a real sea change” in the government. He saw global warming as a moral issue that needed to be acted on and not a political issue to be derided and dismissed. What specific evidence in the film demonstrates that special interests, political corruption, and denial have prevented some necessary reforms?

15. Explain the significance of the film’s title An Inconvenient Truth.

Writing about the Film

1. Write a focused character study of Al Gore, analyzing details from the film to support the inferences established in your thesis.

2. Using one of the specific quotations in question 10 above, write an essay explaining its meaning and illustrating its significance in the film.

3. Using specific support from the film, write an argument convincing a skeptic that global warming is a serious problem that we are causing and that we must change our habits and behavior.

4. To reflect your understanding of specific concerns in the film, write an analysis of changes that you have made or intend to make in your life.

5. Film critic Roger Ebert has written that in his entire career of reviewing movies, he has never before claimed that viewers "owe it" to themselves to see a film, as he does
for *An Inconvenient Truth*. Write an argument that supports the necessity for seeing this film.

Works Cited


**Select Film Reviews and Critical Analyses**


http://www.salon.com/2006/06/10/truths/

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