

## Call to Action: Investigate an Environmental Issue

In this assignment, you will research and evaluate an environmental issue, considering multiple perspectives and historical precedent. Using the provided list, you will select an issue that is of particular interest to you, research its components, and develop a blog post, podcast, or presentation that aims to educate other students about the issue at hand.

*First, select a potential topic from the list provided below:*

Environmental Issue	Geographic Area
Beach erosion, rising sea levels	Coastal
Car culture vs. public transportation, ride sharing, innovative commuting	All locations
Cattle farming, free range, methane pollution	California's Central Valley, Texas, Oklahoma, Wisconsin
Clean transportation	California, Pacific Northwest, South Central US, Gulf Coast, Chicago Hub, Florida, Southeast, Keystone, Empire, Northern New England
Climate change	NOAA, National Weather Service Florida, Gulf States
Dams and flood control	Western States, especially Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California Tennessee River Valley, including Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi Northwest, Columbia River Valley, Oregon, Washington
Dams and Hydro electric power	Western States, especially Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California Tennessee River Valley, including Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi Northwest, Columbia River Valley, Oregon, Washington Niagara and Upstate New York
Deforestation and the timber industry	Georgia, Louisiana, California and Oregon
Fertilizers, runoff, non-point source pollution, algae blooms, "dead zone"	Mississippi River Valley, Gulf states, Chesapeake
Food insecurity	Global
Green building technologies	South Boston, California
Green Lawns (fertilizers, insecticides, watering) vs. "natural" landscaping, "greenscapes"	Arizona (rock lawns, bans on lawn watering), Montgomery County, MD
Hydraulic fracturing ("Fracking")	Western Pennsylvania
Invasive species	Great Lakes
Irrigation and water use Reclamation	Western States, especially Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California

Irrigation and water use Reclamation, continued	Tennessee River valley, including Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi
Keystone Pipeline	Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Illinois
Landfills, garbage, recycling	New York, New Jersey
Mining and strip mining	Utah, Idaho, and West Virginia
Noise and light pollution	Any large city; Chicago
Nuclear power, nuclear waste	Nuclear plants, Utah and west
Ocean junk (post-Fukushima earthquake and tsunami)	Hawaii, Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington
Oil drilling in ecologically sensitive areas Offshore drilling	Alaska and the Gulf states
Oil spills, tankers	Gulf states, Alaska, California
Orbital space junk, near earth orbit as a site of pollution	Chabot (Oakland), Huntsville
Over-fishing	Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf, Great Lakes
Preserving the moon landing sites as historically significant heritage sites	Chabot (Oakland), Huntsville
Smog, air pollution	Southern California
Suburbanization, sprawl, new urbanism	All locations
Urban farming, micro-farms	New York City, Philadelphia
Urban renewal	Detroit, Oakland, Philadelphia
Wetland, estuary preservation	Florida Everglades, Louisiana Delta, Bay Area
Wind Energy (windmills)	Central Illinois, Altamont, CA
<i>Compiled by Eric Hintz, historian with the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the National Museum of American History</i>	

**As you select sources for your presentation, consider the following:**

**Currency:** When was the source published? Is it recent enough to still be credible?

**Authority:** What are the author’s credentials? Is the publisher well-established?

**Validity/Accuracy:** Is the information accurate or valid? How do you know?

**Audience:** Who might be the primary audience for this source?

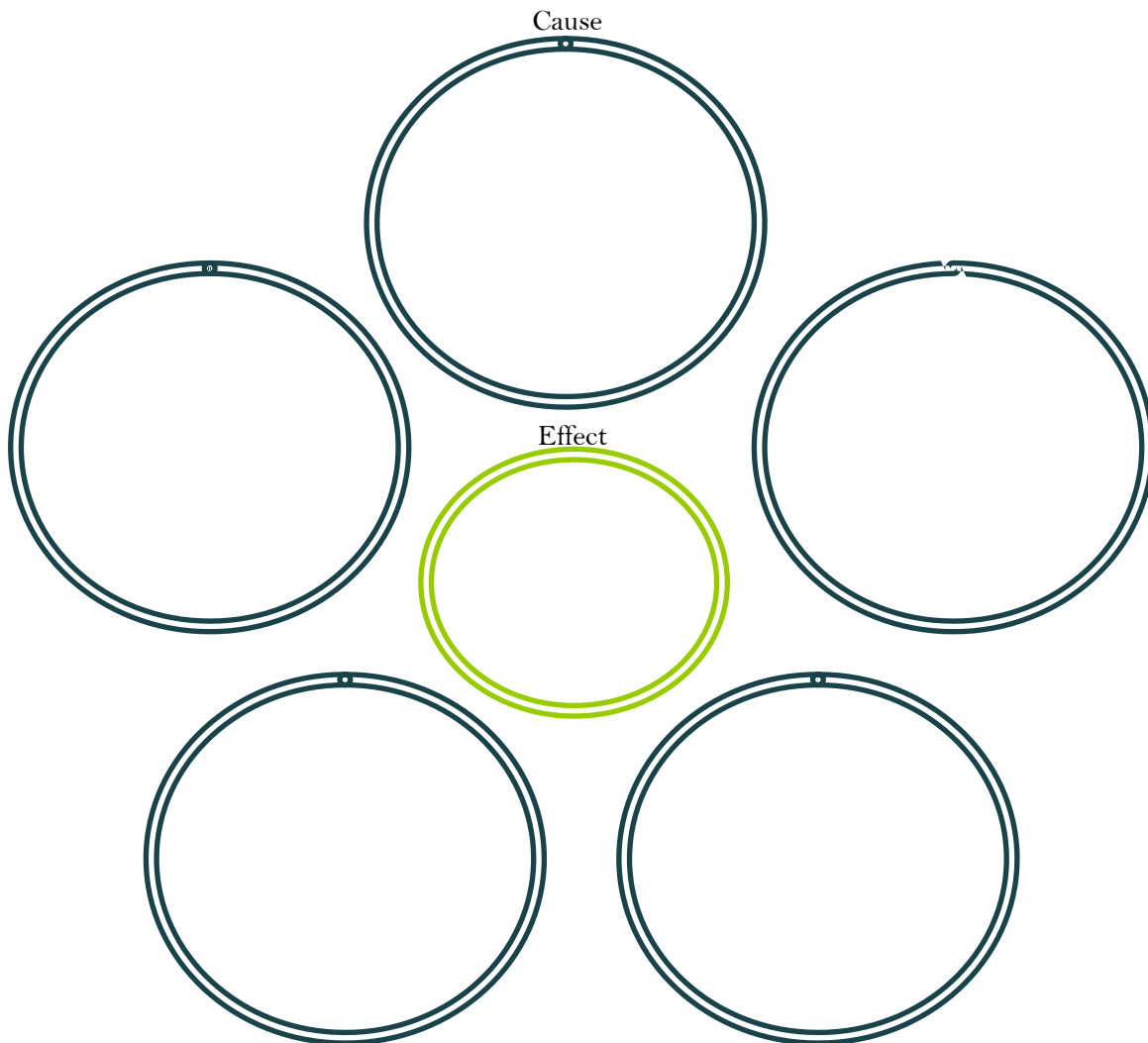
**Point of view:** Can you detect bias? If so, does the author provide a viable argument and support for his or her claims?

## Call to Action: *Historical Background*

In the template below, use credible sources to establish historical background for the issue you've chosen.

### Selected Issue:

Below, **identify one cause and up to five causes (negative or positive) of your issue.** For example, if you are researching the Dust Bowl, you may establish "deep plowing and removal of native grasses" as a cause for the Dust Bowl, while an effect might be "powerful and destructive dust storms." You may also want to think about social and cultural causes and effects, in addition to ecological and environmental points. You may also want to **include additional causes and effects on a separate sheet of paper.**



## Call to Action: *Historical Background*, continued

In the space below, **choose and describe at least two credible individuals** who have taken a stance on the issue you are addressing. Preferably, choose two individuals with opposing viewpoints.

Name: _____
Occupation: _____
Credentials: _____
_____
Summary of stance:
_____
_____
_____
_____
Key quote:

Name: _____
Occupation: _____
Credentials: _____
_____
Summary of stance:
_____
_____
_____
_____
Key quote:

2. Describe what social, political, or cultural events may have led to the problem you are addressing. Also, consider including related environmental issues. You may consult outside sources, like Worldwatch’s Environmental Milestones Timeline, found at <http://www.worldwatch.org/brain/features/timeline/timeline.htm>

3. Below, **list** (in chronological order) **at least 4 events related to your chosen issue**. Be sure to include specific dates.

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## Call to Action: *News Article Synthesis*

### *Article 1*

Refer back to your previous selection of two individuals who have contributed to your chosen topic. You will need to find at least two articles from credible sources that offer a viable point of view on your topic. Using the sheet below, analyze your chosen articles. Consider how these contribute to your understanding of the issue at hand, and how the author's credibility affects his or her views on the topic.

#### BEFORE READING

Title of Article: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Publication Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Based on any previewing information (photos, title/subtitle, charts, etc.), what are your **first impressions** of this piece?

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#### DURING READING

As you read the article, note **key points** in the bulleted list below:

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In a sentence or two, summarize the author's **argument**:

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**AFTER READING**

Was there an obvious inclusion of **bias** in the article? If you noticed this, identify it and describe why you think the author included this

bias. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name at least two questions you still have after reading the article

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## Call to Action: *News Article Synthesis*

### Article 2

#### BEFORE READING

Title of Article: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Publication Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Based on any previewing information (photos, title/subtitle, charts, etc.), what are your **first impressions** of this piece?

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#### DURING READING

As you read the article, note **key points** in the bulleted list below:

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In a sentence or two, summarize the author's **argument**:

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#### AFTER READING

Was there an obvious inclusion of **bias** in the article? If you noticed this, identify it and describe why you think the author included this bias. \_\_\_\_\_

Name at least two questions you still have after reading the article

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**For students who have completed the Persuasive Rhetoric lesson:**

In the table below, identify up to two examples each of **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos** in the article you chose. Be sure to include a direct quote from the article and an explanation as to why this argument appeals to the respective category.

	<b>EXAMPLE 1</b> <i>Direct quote and explanation</i>	<b>EXAMPLE 2</b> <i>Direct quote and explanation</i>
<b>ETHOS:</b> Appeal to ethics		
<b>PATHOS:</b> Appeal to emotions  <i>Be sure to note whether the author includes an appeal to fear, pity, or vanity</i>		
<b>LOGOS:</b> Appeal to logic		



## Call to Action: *Final Product*

Using the information you have researched, you will compose a blog post, podcast, or presentation (PowerPoint, Prezi, Animoto, etc.) that aims to educate other students about the issue. You should explain your point of view and describe a specific plan of action for the future.

Regardless of the format, your final product should include the following:

<b>DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION</b>	Define, in the most accessible way possible, the issue you are addressing. Do not assume that your audience has any prior knowledge about the subject. Give a brief chronological overview about the topic, and define any key terms that may be useful.
<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b>	Consider how the issue at hand has developed over the years. Plan to discuss how the issue has changed, what steps are being taken, and what the future of the issue looks like.
<b>VIEWPOINTS</b>	Discuss the varying viewpoints in the larger conversation about your topic. Think about supporters and detractors, and give specific pros and cons to support their points.
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Describe your personal opinion about the topic. Be sure to include specific and concrete evidence to back up your points, and use all three elements of persuasive rhetoric.
<b>OUTLOOK</b>	Propose a potential action plan for the future, or describe where you think the future of your issue is headed.

*Blog posts should not exceed 1000 words.  
Audio clips should not exceed 5-7 minutes*