

# Global Warming Essay

Write a short opinion essay that clearly states where you stand on the issue of possible human-caused global warming due to greenhouse gas emissions. The expected length of the essay is 500 to 750 words, which is 2 to 3 pages using double spacing, 12 point Times New Roman font, and 1 inch margins, MLA format. A suggested paragraph layout for an opinion paper is provided below. **Your paper is due in Google Classroom by 3:00pm March 8th, 2016.**

**Make sure you read and follow all the instructions provided on this assignment page before writing your paper.** You will need to consider the following general questions: *Do you think that human emissions of greenhouse gases are largely responsible for the recent, measured increase in global average temperature (based on a thoughtful consideration of available evidence)? Are you concerned about the possible consequences associated with increasing global average temperature, e.g., sea level rise? For this question, it is possible to be concerned even if you don't believe that the warming is caused by the increase in greenhouse gases. Should governments regulate companies and individuals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Are you willing to take personal action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?*

**The main idea of this essay is to express your opinion on the issue of possible climate changes due to greenhouse gas emissions and the reasons that motivate your stance on the issue. Your essay must address the five points/questions listed below. These items should be incorporated into a concise and well-written essay, not randomly discussed. I will check that you include each of these five items when grading your essay. The items need not be discussed in the order listed below, but all must be included.** For example, even if items 2 and 3 below do not influence your opinion on this issue much, it is important that you mention them in your paper because each is important to at least consider when forming an opinion.

Look over the attached articles “Global Warming summary sheet” and “Common attitudes toward global warming” before beginning to write your essay.

1. ***Your attitude toward the human-caused global warming issue must be clearly stated as well as the main reasons for your attitude.*** You may use the "Common attitudes toward global warming" link as a guide, but I want you to show me that you have thought about the issue. You must express why you feel the way that you do in your own words, i.e., do not just copy words or phrases from the common attitudes page. Be sure to state the most important reasons for your personal opinion. These reasons need not be scientifically based, e.g., perhaps you are most influenced by emotions.
2. ***Your interpretation of recent temperature changes measured on Earth. What do you make of the recently measured rise in global average temperatures, after 1900, but especially since 1980? Do you believe the temperature increase is mainly due to the increase in greenhouse gases? Or do you think it is a natural warming, not influenced much by greenhouse gas increases? Or do you think it is some combination of natural warming and greenhouse gas increases?*** I would like you to try to consider the recently measured rise in global average temperature with respect to longer time scale estimates of changes in global average temperature constructed from both measured and proxy records. Try to view the recent increase in temperature in comparison to past changes in temperature in making your interpretation.

3. ***Influence of the uncertainty concerning the possible connection between increasing greenhouse gases and measured warming over the last 100 years.*** At the moment we are unable to say for sure how much, if any, of the recent warming of global average temperature is due to increased greenhouse gases. We are also unable to predict precisely how climate will change in the future if we continue to add greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. For the most part we use computer models, global climate models, to make predictions of future climate changes. While the models are good tools, the complexity of the climate system and our limited understanding of climate processes make it impossible for climate models to provide exact answers or predictions. **How, if at all, does this uncertainty about the effects of increased greenhouse gases on climate change influence your views about global warming and what should be done?**
4. ***Do you think governments should regulate corporations and individuals in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? If so, should they be radical changes or just minor changes?*** Consider that there will be costs involved (both dollar costs and comfort costs) in enacting any policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Most greenhouse emissions are related to transportation and the generation of electricity from fossil fuels. So if you think governments should force compliance, you need to realize that the immediate effects will probably be more expensive and less convenient transportation (for both ground and air travel), loss of some personal comforts that require energy, and reductions in productivity. Also keep in mind that minor changes, which result in slight reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, will probably have very little overall impact on reducing the potential climate changes ... If the climate model projections are correct, then to make a significant difference the world must make large cuts in the emission of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.
5. ***Do you currently make personal choices or sacrifices based on concerns about global warming / climate change? What personal sacrifices, if any, would you be willing to make based on concerns about global warming / climate change?*** Think about what personal actions you would be willing to take for the purpose of reducing emissions. This does not mean "I ride a bicycle because I cannot afford a car," rather it means "I ride a bicycle because I am worried about global warming and I do not want to add CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere." Another example, would you consider not taking a plane flight because you are worried about the emission of greenhouse gases? This is not a choice made by many politicians or climate change scientists. Honestly, doing things like turning off unnecessary lights or recycling your plastic water bottles, will not make a huge impact in reducing emissions, although both are good choices.

Of course, your opinions cannot be wrong, but you must clearly state the reasons for your position. Remember that you are expected to specifically mention or discuss the 5 points listed above within your essay. Obviously, the first point above must be clear. Points 2 – 5 must be included even if they have little influence on your personal attitude toward possible climate changes from human emissions of greenhouse gases. Your coverage of each item need not be balanced, meaning you can concentrate more on points that shape your opinion. You may also need to discuss other points that shape your opinion if not listed above.

You may wish to web search how to write an opinion essay before writing your paper. Here are some general suggestions. The first paragraph should clearly state your opinion and a summary of the main reasons for your opinion. Be up front. You should not be saving your main opinions for later in the paper. In the body paragraphs you should expand on the reasons for your

opinions and provide more detail or arguments as needed. The final paragraph should be a concluding paragraph in which you restate your opinion and the main reasons for your opinion.

**Your grade for this paper will be largely based on two items: (1) content, i.e., did you include all the content described in the instructions? And (2) overall writing, i.e., how well is your essay written?** Your position should be clearly stated. The arguments or reasons that you give in support of your position should be clear and concise. Any recommendations for action should be consistent with your position. **You should concentrate on ideas that shape your opinion. Please do not provide both sides of each issue that you discuss. Discuss what you personally believe and why you believe it, not why someone else may disagree with you. In other words, I do not want you to go through all the possible interpretations of the temperature record as was done in the reading, just concentrate on what influences your view.** Take your time and write a good essay. Your ideas need to be clear to the reader. There should be a clear introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph that flow together. There will be little tolerance for grammar, wording, and spelling errors. Because this is an opinion paper, feel free to use the word “I” as necessary. Be concise. You are not required to do any additional research outside of the material presented in the class readings, but feel free to reference additional sources of information if you wish. If necessary, you must include a bibliography. **Your paper is due in Google Classroom by 3:00pm March 8th, 2016.**