Worksheet 17

GRADE   :   5th IB
TEACHERS :
Student´s name: Date: ,2020

Reading practice: Is Global warming real?

The 'controversy' behind global warming is understandable, given the effects that climate legislation would have on our carbon-based economy. But the science is incontrovertible.

By Robert LambPublished on 6/8/2010 at 4:38 PM

What do you think of when you hear the words "global warming?" You might [1]**envision** melting ice caps, drowning polar bears and shrinking coast lines. Or perhaps your mind turns to magazine covers, politicians and celebrity activists. Global warming has become a very [2]**divisive** term, but is it real?

The short answer, according to environmental scientist David Keith, is yes.

"There is no disagreement among really anybody who is scientific in any way that the world is a lot warmer than it was 100 years ago," Keith says. "If there are interesting disagreements, the disagreements are about whether this is the warmest it's been since the ice ages 10,000 years ago."

A recipient of honors that include MIT's prize for excellence in experimental physics, Keith has spoken to governments, corporations and media outlets about climate change. As he points out, scientists use various methods to [3]**measure** global warming; they produce varying answers.

"If all the scientists in the world believed there was only one answer, it would be right for all the rest of us to be [4]**skeptical**," Keith said. "There's nothing in the world that one ever measures with perfect accuracy."

Those measurements include thermostatic records and satellite images that document temperature increases over the past century. Additionally, paleoclimate databases suggest the current rate of increase is substantially higher than normal.

While global warming is certainly an important aspect of climate change, the term's use in mass media may actually serve to distract people from the real issues. Keith uses the example of a human patient [5]**hooked up** to a mercury drip to illustrate this point.

The hypothetical human will eventually die from mercury poisoning - it's the scientific reality of the situation. The media focus on year-by-year warming or cooling, he argues, is [6]**akin** to focusing on the patient's symptoms instead of the proven underlying condition and the cause behind it. In the case of climate change, elevated carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels are the deadly mercury drip.

"The core theory says if you double or triple CO_2 in the atmosphere, it's going to get warmer," Keith said. "This is something we've known from pretty basic physics and proved with a lot of good science for more than 100 years. That's the reason to worry, not the warming over the last few decades."

Scientists first raised concerns over the warming effects of CO_2 in the atmosphere in the 1960s, when the climate was actually cooling. While there's nothing [7]**overtly** problematic about natural climate change, it's the rate of change that worries experts.

Approximately 55 million years ago, the climate was warm enough to support alligators in the high Arctic. It took 10 million years for those CO_2 levels to decrease to the current level. At humanity's current rate of CO_2 production, Keith said, levels will rise back up to that point in only 100 years: 100,000 times faster.

"There is no controversy among anybody, even the skeptics, that the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere is going up - unless you pick ones that are just [8]**nutballs**." Keith said. "We know that without any doubt."

Reading Comprehension

1. Vocabulary work:

Words	What do you think it means?	Look them up
1. envision		
2. divisive		
3. measure		
4. skeptical		
5. hooked up		
6. akin		
7. overtly		
8. nutballs		

2. **Write a short, complete answer to each question, with reference to the text:**

a. What do scientists disagree on?

b. Why do scientists report different results on global warming?

c. Why are scientists alarmed and concerned?

d. What can climate change sceptics and scientists agree on?

e. Imagine you have to convince a skeptical friend that global warming is real. Write a list of key arguments that you could use.

Source: Philpot. B. (2018). English B for the IB Diploma. UK: Cambridge University Press.