This project may be completed over the summer to decrease students’ workload during the school year. If the project is not completed over the summer, students will be required to complete it during the 1st quarter (for fall semester students) or the 3rd quarter (for spring semester students).

Choose one of the following books. If you are unsure of which book would interest you, they can be easily researched at www.amazon.com. There are a limited number of books available from the APES room (316) and the school and public libraries also have several copies of these books. However, it may be necessary for you to purchase one.

The Product: Write a short paragraph (five to ten sentences) summarizing each chapter. Number each chapter clearly at the beginning of each paragraph. The entire report should be 2,000 words minimum regardless of the number of chapters (ie. books with more chapters should have smaller chapter summaries). This should be typed, since you will be submitting the paper to the plagiarism website, www.turnitin.com, on the due date. A culminating activity will also be completed in class.

Final thoughts: A few of these books bring up the topic of God or spirituality within the context of Environmental Science. Please understand that the purpose of this project is to raise your understanding of the issues involved in Environmental Science, not to dismiss or endorse any religious or theological views you may have. Some books may also contain minor instances of human sensuality or foul language. This is a college level class and the maturity to handle this is assumed.

APES BOOK REPORT OPTIONS


Choosing a book you will enjoy...


What Amazon says
Don't drink the water. Don't swim in it, fish in it, or even bathe in it. Rodney Barker's book, *And the Waters Turned to Blood* details the latest plague to visit our shores: Pfiesteria piscicida, the "cell from hell," an aquatic microorganism that causes sufferers to exhibit symptoms similar to Alzheimers or
multiple sclerosis. As it follows the fortunes of Dr. JoAnn Burkholder, one of the first scientists to recognize
the danger of Pfiesteria, Barker’s book reads like a cross between science fiction and conspiracy theory:
Dr. Burkholder discovers that excessive pollution in the rivers and coastal waters of the Southeastern
United States causes a deadly microorganism to breed like crazy; state and federal government attempts
to suppress the report. An investigative reporter by training, Mr. Barker writes *And the Waters Turned to
Blood* like a thriller, revealing pieces of the puzzle judiciously as he builds tension. Unlike in a literary
thriller, however, there is no tidy ending to this story. Readers will be left with the disturbing knowledge
that fish are still dying, fishermen are still getting sick, and the potential for disaster in this latest scourge
is still unmeasured.

**What Mr. Rush says**
The coolest thing about this book is that it is a true story that takes place in North Carolina. It can drag a
little in some places, but ultimately is an easy-to-read page-turner featuring actual researchers from NC
State. This has even been enjoyed by non-science people as a casual summer read.


**What Amazon says**
Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* is now 35 years old. Written over the years 1958 to 1962, it took a hard
look at the effects of insecticides and pesticides on songbird populations throughout the United States,
whose declining numbers yielded the silence to which her title attests. "What happens in nature is not
allowed to happen in the modern, chemical-drenched world," she writes, "where spraying destroys not
only the insects but also their principal enemy, the birds. When later there is a resurgence of the insect
population, as almost always happens, the birds are not there to keep their numbers in check." The
publication of her impeccably reported text helped change that trend by setting off a wave of
environmental legislation and galvanizing the nascent ecological movement. It is justly considered a
classic, and it is well worth rereading today.

**What Ms. Magee says**
This is often considered the most important environmental book of all time and a “must read” for
environmentalists. It can be dry and repetitive, but the things you learn from this book will help you
throughout the course. It is always a good book to refer back to when taking the AP Exam.


**What Amazon says**
In the deeply mysterious ocean, no this darkness, and shows how corner is more shadowy to us than the
unknown, uncharted realm of the shark. And as with all shadows, we’re afraid of what lurks in them. Juliet
Eilperin’s beautifully evocative *Demon Fish* lights up fearing sharks rather than understanding them has
cost us more than we know. (It’s cost the sharks even more: Though we’ve never been able to pinpoint
how many of them live in our planet’s waters, we do know that their populations are plunging, possibly
even into decimation territory, largely at our hands.) For my money the best, page-turning narratives are
immersive ones, and Eilperin excels at this. Readers will enjoy traveling with her as she ventures from
Indonesia to Japan to Africa to North America in dauntless pursuit of answers to questions that few writers
have asked: Why do we approach sharks with such runaway emotion? Why do we fear these fish
sometimes, and revere them others? What’s really going on with these animals, beneath the ocean’s
surface? And of course the big one: after surviving all five global mass extinctions, can sharks make it
through another decade of co-existing with us?

**What Mr. Rush says**
Who doesn’t like sharks? This is a great book about sharks around the world and the people who love
them and hate them.

**What Amazon says**
Francis was green before it was the popular thing to be. On January 17, 1971, he saw a half-million-gallon oil spill near the Golden Gate Bridge, and a year later, in an attempt to do something positive for the environment, he chose to start walking, forsaking motorized vehicles of any kind. He walked everywhere, and on his 27th birthday, feeling again that he was not doing enough for the world, he took a vow of silence. For the next 17 years, he spoke not a word. But his life didn't stop and he never sat still. Francis managed to walk across the United States and, while he did, he earned an undergraduate degree and a master's degree in science and environmental studies; finally, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he completed a PhD in land resources. He learned how to play the banjo, and the five-string Conqueror became his walking companion, people magnet, and calling card. He continued his pedestrian trek, took a job at the office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and eventually became UNEP's Goodwill Ambassador to the World's Grassroots Communities, and walked and sailed to the tip of South America. *Planetwalker* is an inspiring story that will make teens think and may help them to realize that global change is possible through individual action.

**What Ms. Magee says**
At its core, this book is an inspirational tale about a guy who accomplishes a whole lot while walking and mute. You need to be ready to read about a lot of walking and not talking!


**What Amazon says**
Five watershed events in the deep past decimated life on earth, hence the designation “Sixth Extinction” for today’s -human-propelled crisis. To lay the groundwork for understanding this massive die-off, Kolbert crisply tells the stories of such earlier losses as the American mastodon and the great auk and provides an orienting overview of evolutionary and ecological science. She then chronicles her adventures in the field with biologists, botanists, and geologists investigating the threats against amphibians, bats, coral, and rhinos. Intrepid and astute, Kolbert combines vivid, informed, and awestruck descriptions of natural wonders, from rain forests to the Great Barrier Reef, and wryly amusing tales about such dicey situations as nearly grabbing onto a tree branch harboring a fist-sized tarantula, swimming among poisonous jellyfish, and venturing into a bat cave; each dispatch is laced with running explanations of urgent scientific inquiries and disquieting findings. Rendered with rare, resolute, and resounding clarity, Kolbert’s compelling and enlightening report forthrightly addresses the most significant topic of our lives.

**What Ms. Magee says**
An engaging look at a series of case studies that show how biodiversity is being lost in what can be called the Sixth Extinction.


**What Amazon says**
Quinn won the Turner Tomorrow Award’s half-million-dollar first prize for this fascinating and odd book. The unnamed narrator is a disillusioned modern writer who answers a personal ad (“Teacher seeks pupil. . . . Apply in person.”) and thereby meets a wise, learned gorilla named Ishmael that can communicate
telepathically. The bulk of the book consists entirely of philosophical dialogues between gorilla and man, on the model of Plato's Republic. Through Ishmael, Quinn offers a wide-ranging if highly general examination of the history of our civilization, illuminating the assumptions and philosophies at the heart of many global problems. Despite some gross oversimplifications, Quinn's ideas are fairly convincing; it's hard not to agree that unrestrained population growth and an obsession with conquest and control of the environment are among the key issues of our times. Quinn also traces these problems back to the agricultural revolution and offers a provocative rereading of the biblical stories of Genesis. Though hardly any plot to speak of lies behind this long dialogue, Quinn's smooth style and his intriguing proposals should hold the attention of readers interested in the daunting dilemmas that beset our planet.

**What Mr. Rush says**
It's about a gorilla who telepathically teaches a guy about global issues of consumption. Most people either love or hate his book, based on whether they can get past the idea of a telepathic gorilla.

---


**What Amazon says**
Because of the scientific terminology and the interlinked data amassed bit by bit, this is not an easy read for narrator or lay listener. But it's a fascinating book, and Grupper handles it well. Grupper's careful narration brings to life Weisman's judicious organization, unambiguous grammatical structure and vivid descriptions of what would become of land, sea, fish, flora and fauna should humans disappear from the face of the earth. Weisman explains the earth's capacity for self-healing. Unchecked by human intervention, a city like New York would flood within days, its buildings and infrastructure would collapse, and soon the city would revert to its original ecosystem. But the message of the book is our legacy to the universe: Every bit of plastic manufactured over the last 80 years or so still remains somewhere in the environment. Weisman and Grupper convert abstract environmental concepts into concrete ideas. Broadly and meticulously researched, finely interwoven journalism and imaginative projection, the book is an utterly convincing call to action.

**What Ms. Magee says**
Amazing look at what would happen if humans simply disappeared. It includes descriptions of not only how nature takes over, but also how our infrastructure holds up (or doesn't).

---


**What Amazon says**
The eminent Harvard naturalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Edward Wilson marshals all the prodigious powers of his intellect and imagination in this impassioned call to ensure the future of life. Opening with an imagined conversation with Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond, he writes that he has come "to explain to you, and in reality to others and not least to myself, what has happened to the world we both have loved." Based on a love affair with the natural world that spans 70 years, Wilson combines lyrical descriptions with dire warnings and remarkable stories of flora and fauna on the edge of extinction with hard economics. How many species are we really losing? Is environmentalism truly contrary to economic development? And how can we save the planet?

**What Mr. Rush says**
E.O. Wilson is the most important ecologist alive today and this is one of his most influential books. He has a great way of making scientific concepts easy to understand in this discussion of the importance of biodiversity. This is another great book to be able to quote on the AP Exam.