

AP Environmental Science Book Report

1st/3rd Quarter Project (optional summer)

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

Bloomberg, Michael and Carl Pope. *Climate of Hope: How Cities, Businesses and Citizens Can Save the Planet*. 2017. ISBN#978-1250142078

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. 1962. ISBN#978-0618249060

Knecht, G. Bruce. *Hooked: Pirates, Poaching and the Perfect Fish*. 2006. ISBN#978-1594866944

Leakey, Richard and Roger Lewin. *The Sixth Extinction: Patterns of Life and the Future of Humankind*. 1996. ISBN#978-0385468091

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. 2007. ISBN#978-0143038580

Preston, Richard. *The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring*. 2007. ISBN#978-0812975598

Quinn, Daniel. *My Ishmael*. 1997. ISBN#978-0553379655

Wilson, Edward O. *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*. 2016. ISBN#978-1631490828

Choosing a book you will enjoy...

Bloomberg, Michael and Carl Pope. *Climate of Hope: How Cities, Businesses and Citizens Can Save the Planet*. 2017. ISBN#978-1250142078

What Amazon says

In *Climate of Hope*, Bloomberg and Pope offer an optimistic look at the challenge of climate change, the solutions they believe hold the greatest promise, and the practical steps that are necessary to achieve

them. Writing from their own experiences, and sharing their own stories from government, business, and advocacy, Bloomberg and Pope provide a road map for tackling the most complicated challenge the world has ever faced. Along the way, they turn the usual way of thinking about climate change on its head: from top down to bottom up, from partisan to pragmatic, from costs to benefits, from tomorrow to today, and from fear to hope.

What Mr. Rush says

Tired of climate change doom and gloom? Written by a former Republican mayor and a former Sierra Club Democrat, this book provides practical solutions to climate change that can begin to be implemented today.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. 1962. ISBN#978-0618249060

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.

Knecht, G. Bruce. *Hooked: Pirates, Poaching and the Perfect Fish*. 2006. ISBN#978-1594866944

What Amazon says

The Patagonian toothfish—which can live up to 50 years and grow to six feet long—is an ugly creature considered too bland for eating by most South Americans. Its high fat content, codlike texture and lack of a fishy taste convinced a Los Angeles fish merchant who found the toothfish in Chile in 1977 that, given an exotic new name, it would do quite well in America. By 1998, "Chilean sea bass" had become the hottest restaurant craze: "[e]veryone had to have it." Knecht (*The Proving Ground*) weaves a parallel plot, which takes place in the South Indian Ocean in 2003, where an Australian patrol boat is hunting down a pirate vessel for stealing toothfish. The chase takes them thousands of nautical miles away to dangerous Antarctic waters and involves South African mercenaries and a dramatic boarding in dangerous seas. Knecht's gripping book flips between the commercial history of the toothfish—just the latest of many culinary fads that end up threatening an ocean species—and the chase, which illuminates the practically lawless world of commercial fishing, where factory boats with vast dragnets can devastate a population in just a couple of years, a practice the author calls "the marine equivalent of strip mining."

What Mr. Rush says

As a Marine Biologist, this is my favorite on the list. The author bounces back-and-forth between a pirate chase and the perils of overfishing, with a focus on the obscure fish known as Chilean Seabass.

Leakey, Richard and Roger Lewin. *The Sixth Extinction: Patterns of Life and the Future of Humankind*. 1996. ISBN#978-0385468091

What Amazon says

Paleoanthropologist Leakey and coauthor Lewin examine biology's traditional viewpoints, which maintain a linear progression from simple to complex species development. In this scenario, survival of the fittest means success, and species extinction indicates failure. The authors also present the current trends in evolutionary science theory suggesting that the world is shaped by mass extinctions (natural catastrophes have caused five) instead of natural selection and that the shape and behavior of biological communities is driven by chaotic interaction rather than the simplistic balance-of-nature concept. Leakey and Lewin argue that *Homo sapiens* is the result of many chance events in evolution rather than the foreordained culmination of evolutionary excellence. Unfortunately, our self-awareness and mental capacity has given us the dubious capability of triggering a sixth extinction, destroying entire species through overhunting and habitat destruction. As the only sentient creature among animals, we have the duty to protect all of Earth's species. The authors present a powerful message based on years of observation and fieldwork.

What Mr. Rush says

This is a great book for explaining evolution, the major mass extinction events on Earth, and the ultimate effect these had on biodiversity. The argument is that humans are now causing the sixth major mass extinction.

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. 2007. ISBN#978-0143038580

What Amazon says

In *The Botany of Desire* (2001), about how people and plants coevolve, Michael Pollan teased greater issues from speciously small phenomena. *The Omnivore's Dilemma* exhibits this same gift; a Chicken McNugget, for example, illustrates our consumption of corn and, in turn, agribusiness's oil dependency. In a journey that takes us from an "organic" California chicken farm to Vermont, Pollan asks basic questions about the moral and ecological consequences of our food. Critics agree it's a wake-up call and, written in clear, informative prose, also entertaining. Most found Pollan's quest for his foraged meal the highlight, though the *Los Angeles Times* faulted Pollan's hypocritical method of "living off the land." Many also voiced a desire for a more concrete vision for the future. But if the book doesn't outline a diet plan, it's nonetheless a loud, convincing call for change.

What Ms. Magee says

Ever wonder where your food comes from? This book traces the surprising origin of your food from its source to the grocery store shelves. Warning: it can be life-changing in the way that you view and purchase your food!

Preston, Richard. *The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring*. 2007. ISBN#978-0812975598

What Amazon says

Richard Preston, whose previous nonfiction thrillers include *The Hot Zone* and *The Demon in the Freezer*, takes a botanical detour in *The Wild Trees*. Most critics praised this noteworthy, if somewhat less sensational, effort. Yet while some relished the offbeat characters, the action-packed sequences, and Preston's personal climbing experiences, others found fault with Preston's detailed descriptions of his

subjects' personal lives, his overdramatization of mundane stories for effect, and his self-important account of going "native".

What Ms. Magee says

Fast in many spots, a little slow in others, this book makes you want to go climb trees – really BIG trees! It's a great tale about regular people that are passionate about trees: playing in them and ultimately saving them.

Quinn, Daniel. *My Ishmael*. 1997. ISBN#978-0553379655

What Amazon says

Another irresistible rant from Quinn, a sequel to his Turner Tomorrow Fellowship winner, *Ishmael* (1992), concerning a great, telepathic ape who dispenses ecological wisdom about the possible doom of humankind. Once more, Quinn focuses on the Leavers and Takers, his terms for the two basic, warring kinds of human sensibility. The planet's original inhabitants, the Leavers, were nomadic people who did no harm to the earth. The Takers, who have generally overwhelmed them, began as aggressive farmers obsessed with growth, were the builders of cities and empires, and have now, in the late 20th century, largely run out of space to monopolize. Quinn's books have not featured many memorable characters, aside from *Ishmael*. This time out, though, he invents a lively figure, 12-year-old Julie Gerchak, who is tough and wise beyond her years, having had to deal with a self-destructive, alcoholic mother. Julie responds to *Ishmael*'s ad seeking a pupil with an earnest desire to save the world (a conceit carried over from the earlier novel). Once again, the gentle ape shares his wisdom in a series of questions and answers that resemble, in method, a blend of the Socratic dialogues and programmed learning.

What Mr. Rush says

This is a concurrent story to *Ishmael* (The first in the series, which is not needed to understand this book), and this one is about the telepathic gorilla teaching a 12-year-old girl. The environmental ideas are not as fleshed out in this one, but the story is a little better.

Wilson, Edward O. *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*. 2016. ISBN#978-1631490828

What Amazon says

Edward O. Wilson possesses a rare, almost unique, combination of immense scientific knowledge and deep humane intelligence. Looking around him at the beloved natural world he has done so much to understand and taking the measure of the massive damage to it caused by human stupidity and greed, he has every reason to succumb to despair. But *Half-Earth* is not a bitter jeremiad. It is a brave expression of hope, a visionary blueprint for saving the planet.

What Mr. Rush says

This book is about the importance of biodiversity on Earth and gives a grand plan to save the Earth's biodiversity from extinction. Written by one of the most important ecologists ever, this book hypothesizes that putting aside half the Earth's surface would save the vast majority of species.