

**Case Study Title:** Global Warming; A Hot Topic in the Political World

**Article Information:** Please provide the information requested below for the four to five USA TODAY articles (from the printed newspaper) you've selected which were published between July 1, 2006 and March 1, 2007, focusing on a news topics relating to the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Study Topic, *Gold, Gods, and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power*.

Article headline:	What's heating the Earth? Fossil fuels are to blame, world scientist conclude; Their finding: Higher temps will last for the rest of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century
Byline (reporter(s)' name(s):	Patrick O'Driscoll and Dan Vergano
USA TODAY publication date:	1/31/07
Section (News, Money, Sports or Life):	News
USA TODAY page number:	1A
Article headline:	Report says warming 'very likely' caused by people, will last centuries
Byline (reporter(s)' name(s):	Patrick O'Driscoll
USA TODAY publication date:	2/2/07
Section (News, Money, Sports or Life):	News
USA TODAY page number:	6A
Article headline:	Global warming issue gains 'traction' with new Congress; Senate environmental panel holds hearing on new priority today
Byline (reporter(s)' name(s):	Traci Watson
USA TODAY publication date:	1/30/07
Section (News, Money, Sports or Life):	News
USA TODAY page number:	6A
Article headline:	Political climate shifts as verdict on warming arrives
Byline (reporter(s)' name(s):	Marcy E. Mullins
USA TODAY publication date:	2/2/07
Section (News, Money, Sports or Life):	News
USA TODAY page number:	8A
Article headline:	Warming poses a fiscal threat; British report urges shift to 'low carbon' economy
Byline (reporter(s)' name(s):	Dan Vergano
USA TODAY publication date:	10/31/06
Section (News, Money, Sports or Life):	News
USA TODAY page number:	9D

**Summary Statement:** Your one-page case study summary statement should outline your topic, any issue or controversy about this topic and how the case study examines these issues.

Global warming has been a growing threat to the world for the past century and now we know more than ever about what causes it. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Control (IPCC) 2007 report states that they are now 90% sure that global warming is caused mainly by the burning of fossil fuels. They have sectioned these emitters of greenhouse gasses into three categories; large stationary units, such as power and industrial factories accounting for almost 60% of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> output, the transport sector, and the small residential sector. There are also other factors that contribute to the increase in temperature. The clearing of rainforests and the development of cities has made the earth unable to transform harmful CO<sub>2</sub> toxins back into a stable atmosphere. Aerosols and natural gasses are other factors as well.

Some of the short term effects of global warming are already being witnessed today whereas the long term effects may not be stopped for centuries. Extreme weather conditions are already being seen throughout the world. From the tsunami in Asia to Hurricane Katrina, tropical storms are more intense and devastating than ever. Global warming will cause deadly heat waves that will lead to longer more severe droughts, the depletion of freshwater supplies, forest fires, crop failure, and higher energy bills. The polar ice caps will melt and the sea levels will rise. With 50% of the American population on the coast even a small rise in the sea level could affect the US.

The US is taking global warming seriously, and is taking steps to reduce the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted into the atmosphere. President Bush mentioned global warming in the State of the Union address, and Congress' House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. has informed the nation that a special climate change committee is being formed and that four bills aimed at slowing emission of greenhouse gasses have been introduced. The day after Bush's State of the Union address the Conference of Mayors announced that global warming is number one on its top-10 list of priorities. Over 375 Mayors have signed pledges to reduce greenhouse gasses representing 55 million Americans in all 50 states. This pledge would reduce the transport sector by 10% by 2020. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a state level emission capping and trading program that more than 12 states are participating in including New York. Even companies like General Electric have joined environmental groups demanding federal legislation cutting the emissions of greenhouse gasses. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol was a mandatory reduction in greenhouse gasses. The US has not embraced the Kyoto Protocol, and states that it's "flawed" because China and India, two of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters are exempt from the restrictions.

Global warming is a serious world threat, and its effects are devastating. Extreme weather conditions are already showing up and scientists predict worse to come. Policies regarding the emissions of greenhouse gasses are sure to show up in countries all over the world.

**Discussion Questions:** Develop three to five thought-provoking discussion questions that use critical thinking skills to examine this topic from different perspectives.

1. Is the Kyoto Protocol not going far enough? By allowing developing countries, such as India and China, to ignore their greenhouse gas emission obligations, will we be able to lower the threat of global warming? Are the USA and Australia right in supporting, but not signing the Kyoto Protocol due to this fact?
2. What distinguishes a developing country from a developed country? When would the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decide that a developing country is now “developed?” Would that country have to then accept their greenhouse gas emission obligations, or could they opt to continue to ignore their greenhouse gas emission obligations as they were allowed to do in the past?
3. The transport sector is a large part of the carbon dioxide emissions, what as individuals can we do to drop the emissions from this sector? From the residential sector? Will individuals be able to make a difference in the threat of global warming?
4. What actions can be taken to adapt to the environmental threats of global warming? How can we help reduce the risks of devastating droughts and the depletion of fresh water supplies? How can we help third world counties prepare for the future effects of global warming?
5. The amount of greenhouse gasses that’s in the atmosphere today isn’t expected to deplete within this century, even if harmful emissions were stopped entirely. What implication does that have for the next century? Will our grandchildren’s grandchildren still be living with the greenhouse gasses produce in the industrial era? How different will the world be in 200 years?

**Future Implications:** Write an essay (up to 200 words) on how you predict this topic will influence society in the future and/or what result or outcome you anticipate.

The world will have to adapt and provide new solutions for global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Control (IPCC) has developed CO<sub>2</sub> capture and storage technology, which could help prevent harmful CO<sub>2</sub> gases from entering the atmosphere. The large industrial sector and residential sectors are the most amenable for this type of capture and storage, but with the industrial sector making up over half of the world’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we could drastically cut back on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that is put into the atmosphere.

There are many counties that are trying to come up with a reasonable means of enforcing a cap-and-trade system. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change developed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 that would cut back on the world’s output of CO<sub>2</sub>. The Kyoto Protocol separates countries in two major ways: developed countries, which have accepted greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations and must submit an annual inventory; and developing countries, that have no greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations, but may participate in the Clean Development Mechanism. With plans for the future and a means of adaptation we can cope with global warming, as long as every county is willing to do their part.

Sponsored by USA TODAY and Phi Theta Kappa.

For questions or additional information e-mail [tria.cohen@ptk.org](mailto:tria.cohen@ptk.org) or call 601-984-3515.

**Additional Resources:** Suggest up to six additional resources related to this topic. Resources can include books, videos, Web sites (please include URL), and/or articles.

**Books-**

Victor, David G. The Collapse of the Kyoto Protocol and the Struggle to Slow Global Warming. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Houghton, John T. Global Warming the Complete Briefing. Third ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

**Journal Article-**

The Kyoto Protocol, market power, and enforcement. Alan de Brauw.  
*Applied Economics* 38.18 (Oct 10, 2006): p2169(10). (6528 words)

**Book Review-**

Mahlman, Jerry D. “Global Warming: Misuse of Data and Ignorance of Science.” Rev. of The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World, ‘Global Warming’ chapter, by Bjørn Lomborg. Union of Concerned Scientists 6 Dec. 2001: 1-8.  
<<http://www.ucsusa.org/ssi/resources/the-skeptical-environmentalist.html>>

**Web Cite-**

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2 March 2007. Unite Nations Environment Program. 9 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.ipcc.ch/index.html>>

**Movie-**

An Inconvenient Truth. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. Narr. Al Gore. Paramount Classics and Participant Productions, 2006.