**The Fear Surrounding Climate Change**

From natural disasters to extreme weather Climate change is a relevant topic that is constantly being addressed by scientists and many concerned individuals. Despite all the concerned individuals and the demand for action, how warranted is the concern for climate change? While many feel scared there are others that feel as if climate change isn’t a relevant issue today.

Climate change is a relevant topic that is constantly being addressed by scientists and many concerned individuals. Throughout time, the earth has experienced many different phases in terms of weather. These phases can be caused through natural forces from the sun or volcanic eruptions. Climate is the weather patterns of an area measured over years. Climate change refers to the change of these weather patterns, whether these conditions change in temperature or humidity.

Another important aspect to consider in understanding climate change is that climate change is a long-term trend. Scientists are constantly analyzing these current climate conditions through satellites, ocean buoys and other advanced technologies. The scientists compare this data to past climate records that have been acquired through analyzing natural sources, such as tree rings, corals, and water sediments.

A topic that is closely associated with climate change is global warming. While many would assume they discuss the same topic, global warming is one small aspect of climate change. NASA scientists claim that global warming is focused on the average global surface. Global warming is referencing only surface temperature, while climate change focuses on not only global warming but all other effects Earth is facing. There are other effects of climate change that can be as severe as global warming. Rising sea levels, polluted air extreme weather are all effects the earth faces from climate change. These changes in the climate can lead to environments changing, leading animals to adapt and change their habitats.

As scientists are studying these changes, climate change continues to be a polarizing topic. Some people feel as if climate change shouldn’t be treated as a threat to society. They believe that climate scientists can make a difference, trusting that their research will impact the way we view climate change. However, others believe that climate change is an extreme threat to our environment and we should face the issues with the utmost urgency. They feel a great level of threat from climate change, compared to individuals who see little to no threat. An article from Pew Research Center believes that these different mindsets can lead to bias, with credibility being tied into political views and personal agendas. Despite these different views, climate change remains to be a relevant topic in the public eye.

**Facing the Facts**

As the discussion of climate change continues to gain popularity, many individuals fear the threats of climate change and feel a strong call to action. These strong feelings towards a diverse topic can lead to questions of credibility and create potential bias. Despite these problems, the author can engage the audience to look deeper into the diverse world of climate change, developing strong feelings towards one side of the argument.

In an environmental article titled “Get scared: World’s Scientists Say Disastrous Climate Change is Here” from Zack Colman and Karl Mathiesen, the duo elaborates on how climate change has already caused natural disasters and will continue to lead to more. The authors continue to address climate change with the utmost urgency, using specific natural disasters as examples of humans interference with the natural ecosystem. They believe that the climate crisis is an upcoming threat with disastrous consequences, despite the widespread dismissal from politicians. The authors start the article with utmost urgency, stating that “the planet’s top scientists” have linked humans gas emissions to disastrous events. The article wastes no time to address their idea of relevant issues, while not providing a credible source for the first claim. Through using an urgent tone and nouns with negative connotations, such as disaster, it invites the audience to fear the future of climate change.

The article also pushes the idea of fear not only through written elements but visual as well. Throughout the article there are multiple photos of wildfires, glaciers melting, natural disasters in third world countries, and even a video calling out to politicians. The photos are large high-resolution images taking up a large amount of screen space. By implanting these large grim images throughout the article, the authors can pick the visual elements the reader will refer to, instead of visualizing their own. In this case, the images can be seen as distressing to some, creating an uncomfortable mood in the article. And with a title “Get Scared” the authors clearly want the readers to associate climate change with disastrous events and deadly consequences of human intervention. By enforcing the claims with strong visual elements, credibility becomes lost and bias sneaks in as the authors try to create fear within the audience.

Without using strong visual elements, the article “Are We Really Running Out of Time to Stop Climate Change?”, written by Rafi Letzter acknowledges climate change head on by discussing the consequences humans are currently facing. The author firmly believes that climate change is already taking hold, with many of its effects becoming irreversible as time goes on. The problems from climate change are not apocalyptic but can increasingly become harder to maintain. Letzter goes on to address how migrating and adaptation can be essential ways humans can combat the war on global climate change. By approaching climate change through a blunt claim, it allows readers to question their thoughts on the aspect of stopping climate change. Letzter continues to address climate change in a lighter tone but still emphasizes the importance of making a difference. The author creates this importance by showing the readers certain effects of climate change such as food production and diseases. These topics can create a sense of fear within the reader, due to the consequences of those effects.

In contrast to these call-to-action articles, Michael Shellenberger, a writer for Forbes, addresses the stress and fear many people face when discussing climate change in the article “Why Apocalyptic Claims About Climate Change Are Wrong”. Shellenberger believes that climate change should not be addressed with apocalyptic lingo, as they are unwarranted claims lacking credible sources. Shellenberger provides examples of apocalyptic claims made from relevant figures today. By using relevant figures, the audience can form a connection with these topics through previous knowledge. He continues to tell the audience that these claims are not credible and have no solid proof that climate change could lead to an “extinction of the human species”. By doing so the article can approach a lighter tone, compared to the fearful mood conveyed in “Get Scared”, easing the reader to approach climate change in a different aspect. The author also finds other ways to ease the tension of worrisome apocalyptic claims, and the fear of future natural disasters. Shellenberger addresses how economic development has lowered the death toll from natural disasters. Providing a credible source, this allows the readers to approach natural disasters in a more manageable mindset.

**Unnecessary Fear**

Through analyzing the evidence and approaching the different claims, we can approach the question again. How concerned should we be about climate change? Should we fear climate change as far as describing the apocalypse, or should we approach the topic in a far lighter manner? Despite these diverse views, I find that climate change shouldn’t be feared or ignored. Instead of spending time spreading fear of climate change effects, the media should be educating the public in acknowledging what climate change is.

By acknowledging climate change without all the fear and negative consequences, more people can discuss climate change and form their own understanding. Through describing climate change with an apocalyptic tone and using words with negative connotations, articles spend more time creating this fear than elaborating on the problem of climate change. Shellenberger addresses this sense of fear by stating “no credible scientific body has ever said climate change threatens the collapse of civilization much less the extinction of the human species.” Without a credible source of evidence, these claims fall flat. While these claims serve a purpose to develop fear, people should base an understanding on credible sources that are backed by scientific evidence.

These apocalyptic claims aim to create a call for action within the reader through fear. The problem with pursuing the reader with fear is that you create the same sense of fear towards acknowledging the problem. Instead of engaging the public to understand the topic of climate change, these articles and media outlets use threats of the future to push their ideas. In the article “Get Scared” the authors discuss the future of natural disasters due to the increasing threat of global warming. While the article brings several ideas that involve important aspects of climate change, such as increasing technological advances and significant political movements, they become lost as the authors use apocalyptic themes to capture the reader's attention. The importance of making a difference is motivated through fear, instead of focusing on actually making a difference.

By ignoring these claims that lack the necessary evidence, we can approach the concern for climate change in a different manner. There should be a concern for climate change, but this concern should not be based on fear for the future. Through this we can focus primarily on the problem of climate change. When we start to focus primarily on the problem and acknowledge its consequences, we can prepare and develop solutions that will make a difference. Letzter addresses climate change less aggressively in his article but still maintains a strong support for combating climate change. Instead of mostly writing about the worrisome state many think our climate is in, Letzter spends time explaining how we can deal with the current problems or climate faces. The author understands that climate change won’t end the world but sitting by and watching won’t help either. There needs to be a call to action and a drive to fix things, without making false claims of the next doomsday.

Climate change should be seen as an important problem with negative consequences. Less time should be spent on worrying the public and making biased claims that lack the necessary evidence. More time should be spent on education and allowing the public to understand why scientists are concerned. The concern is not based on the end of the world and other apocalyptic claims, rather than accepting the problem and understanding the less we do now the more we will have to do later down the road. People should be spreading awareness, not spreading fear to motivate the public in taking a stand.



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| **Project Portion** | **Ideal Criteria** | **Overall Feedback** |
| Introduction | * Engaging * Shows importance of question * Indicates major parts and content |  |
| Background | * Uses credible, neutral sources * Effectively and sufficiently explains essential information * Written objectively in own words * Well organized and focused paragraphs with transitions * Minimal error |  |
| Analysis | * Smooth transition from background * Summarizes accurately and in own words two opposing answers and one objective answer to the question * Recognizes bias * Reasonable observations about how all sources make their arguments impactful * Well-organized and focused paragraphs with transitions * Minimal error |  |
| Response | * Smooth transition from analysis * Incorporates strong points from sources * Draws a reasonable and well-supported conclusion, answering the question * Provides satisfying conclusion to the project * Good transitions between focused paragraphs * Minimal error |  |