

EXAMPLE LONG INFORMATIVE THEME

Prompt: Write a Long Informative Theme about the negative effects of climate change. Include at least three sections in your essay on a minimum of six double-spaced pages. Include at least two subtopics in each section. Use the MLA style, and include in-text citations and a reference list.

TITLE OF PAPER: “Warning: The Changing Climate could be Hazardous to the Health and Welfare of All!”

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“Warning: The Changing Climate could be Hazardous
to the Health and Welfare of All!”

A warning such as this one should be posted everywhere for everyone to see because climate change is a reality (Rayfield 1). It has been defined as a “significant and lasting change in weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years” (Wikipedia 1). Within the last few years, the major climate change that is occurring is an increase in temperatures throughout the world. Scientists have pinpointed the cause of this rise in temperatures to be the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Because this temperature increase, on the surface, seems to be small (only two to three degrees) (Thompson 1), people have not paid much attention to it, and some people have argued that it is not important. Nevertheless, the change in temperature is causing serious changes on the planet and increased numbers of natural disasters. Super storms, tornados, earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, floods, wildfires, and other disasters are occurring more frequently than in the past. All of these changes in weather patterns and climate are affecting the lives of humans, animals, and plants in a negative way.

Effects on Humans

Most importantly, humans have a lot to lose related to climate change. Something that they can lose relates to the current “choice locations” on the planet where humans choose to live.

Indeed, people may need to relocate their homes to be comfortable. Because the increased temperatures are melting the ice caps at the poles, the level of the oceans is expected to rise, and some coastal areas are expected to be exposed to severe coastal erosion and may be permanently flooded. Cities and towns that are currently located on the coasts may not be able to exist. Second, also because of increased temperatures, people may want to migrate to cooler areas, especially in the summers. They might even want to move permanently to cooler spots. Third, because a “dust bowl” effect is being created in the Midwestern states that have drought-like conditions, people might wish to move to states where there is more rainfall.

Something else that humans might lose related to climate change is their health. Because of the extra heat conditions, for example, humans are contracting heat-related illnesses more often. Such heat-related illnesses as heat stroke and dehydration are resulting in more deaths. The extra heat is also resulting in the increased spread of certain diseases that once stayed in certain southern locations. For example, Lyme disease and ehrlichiosis (spread by ticks) and the West Nile Virus (spread by mosquitos) are now common in states where they were rarely seen because ticks and mosquitos have moved northward. The incidence of malaria, another disease spread by mosquitos, is also on the rise worldwide. One more health consequence of the extra heat is more respiratory disease in humans. Smoke from wildfires and dust from dust storms that result from drought are causing people to have difficulty breathing and increasing their asthma symptoms. All of these health issues are compounded by mental health problems that occur when people have to face extreme heat conditions and disasters. Depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety disorders can definitely result from problems associated with losing one’s home and livelihood after a disaster.

A final area of potential loss for humans related to climate change is the loss of enjoyable activities. Because of the extreme heat, humans are choosing to stay indoors more. That way, they can feel comfortable in air-conditioned environments. If they stay indoors, they are less likely to enjoy outdoor activities and less likely to engage in sports or outdoor exercise. They are less likely to go to the beach or the lake for recreational activities. They are less likely to sunbathe and relax outdoors reading a book. The added degrees of temperature are also resulting in a change in people's clothing choices. They are choosing to wear summer clothes for additional months of the year since seasons like fall and spring are almost non-existent.

Effects on Animals

Also importantly, climate change is not only affecting humans in a negative way, it is also taking a toll on wildlife and livestock with regard to where they live, what they can eat, and whether they survive. Indeed, the locales where wild animals are located are changing drastically as a result of climate change. Because of the heat, animals are moving toward the poles and relocating in areas where the temperatures are cooler. Animals are also moving upwards in elevation. If they live in a valley, they are likely to move upward toward the mountaintops. In other words, they are abandoning their homes and becoming refugees in new lands. As a result, they are not used to the surroundings, the foods they can find to eat, and the predators they need to avoid there. More and more animals are getting bunched together in smaller and smaller areas. When that happens, animals become stressed and cannot survive.

Another characteristic of wild animals that is being affected by climate change relates to their migration. Because of the increased temperatures, animals and birds are often staying in one location instead of engaging in their annual migration. In some cases, they simply migrate a shorter distance than usual to a location where the temperature is comfortable. In other cases,

they simply move downward or upward in elevation to where the temperature is more comfortable. Such changes in migration habits may be problematic if the animals and birds cannot find the right kinds of food and other needs for their survival. Changes in rainfall are also affecting migration patterns. Because humans are trying to save water sources, they are building dams without attending to the migration patterns of fish that travel upriver to spawn. New dams are blocking the migration and reproduction of fish.

Still another characteristic of wild animals that is being affected by climate change relates to their reproductive habits. Often, animals have a particular place that they go in order to mate and raise their young. For example, sea turtles go to particular beaches in order to lay their eggs . If the sea level rises even 50 centimeters, more than 30 percent of the Caribbean beaches used as nesting grounds by sea turtles will be covered with water (“Climate change – effects” 1). Monk seals also use beaches to raise their young. Dolphins and whales need the shallow gentle waters near such beaches to raise their offspring. These places will certainly be disrupted and may not exist if the sea levels rise as predicted. Moreover, the zooplankton population on which whales feed is being destroyed by the warmer seawater.

Finally, the changing climate is affecting the physical health and survival of animals in several negative ways. Because of the intense and lasting heat in some areas, animals are succumbing to heat-related diseases such as heat stroke. Since heat helps bacteria grow, infectious diseases are spreading among animals. For example, lobster shell disease has been linked to the increased temperature of seawater. Tick and mosquito-borne diseases are spreading among pets and wild animals like deer. Additionally, dangerous weather conditions are killing and injuring animals. For example, thousands of animals have been killed in recent floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes. Moreover, because of the drought conditions in states where

livestock are typically raised, many farmers are selling off their herds for meat because they cannot provide enough water or feed to the animals. This is reducing the number of livestock being raised and, in turn, the food supply to humans.

Effects on Plants

Of similar importance, not only have humans and animals been affected by climate change, but plants are also experiencing negative repercussions. On the one hand, individual wild plants and whole plant species are being lost as a result of climate change. Because of droughts, wild fires are occurring more and more often; they are engulfing millions of acres of land in flame each year. Wildfires are wiping out whole forests and prairies, which will take decades to repopulate. Also because of droughts, floods, and other disasters, wild plants are dying at tremendous rates. The diversity of plants is endangered because so many plants are dying or not adapting to the new surrounding climate. Only the strongest types of plants are likely to survive the changing climate, so there will be fewer types of plants that will remain.

Cultivated plants are also endangered because of the changing climate. Importantly, increased temperatures are creating drought-like conditions in many of the farming areas across the Midwest. If crops survive at all these days, they do not grow to their full height and do not reproduce. Also importantly, because of severe storms and flooding, crops get washed away. Sadly, if they remain standing, because they are weakened by drought conditions, plants are more likely to get infected by a disease or attacked by insects.

On the other hand, because of climate change, some plants are spreading out of control in a variety of ways, but they are not wanted plants. One type of unwanted plant includes those plants that cause allergic symptoms. Ragweed is one plant that is spreading because of the warm temperatures, and it continues to bloom longer than it did in the past. That means that humans

are having more allergic symptoms, like hay fever and asthma, for longer periods than they did in the past. Another type of unwanted plant is algae. This plant grows in lakes and other bodies of water; various varieties of it have grown out of control in some lakes so much so that recreational activities can no longer take place. In other instances because of drought conditions, unwanted plants, like weeds, are growing so well that they are crowding out desired plants. Landscaped properties are becoming more and more difficult to maintain. In other words, because of climate change, the growth of some plants is out of control and affecting human lives and the lives of desirable plants.

Some Suggestions

To conclude, climate change is negatively affecting the lives and welfare of humans, animals, and plants. Moreover, all of the consequences of climate change are interacting to create harm for all. For example, the loss of crops, cattle, and other protein sources like lobsters and fish is affecting the amount of food available for humans. Clearly, people need to take control of climate change as soon as possible. Most importantly, they need to reduce drastically carbon dioxide emissions from smokestacks and vehicles across the globe. Relatedly, they need to recycle and reuse products as much as possible rather than demanding new products to be manufactured and causing more carbon dioxide to be released into the atmosphere. Also importantly, they need to conserve water in as many ways as possible. To save animals and plants, they need to rebuild the forests that have been lost. They need to create animal reserves where animals who are in danger of extinction can be safe. They need to build safe-nature corridors for animals to travel through as they migrate. They need to help animals adjust to lost lands and nesting grounds. They need to do research that will help them understand how to save

animals and themselves. All in all, they need to find ways to work together throughout the world because climate change is a global problem which will affect all life on the Earth.

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