

Text A: Film Review**Gore's Mission: Planet Earth**

A film review of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*

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Former vice president of the United States, Al Gore, is on a **mission**. His **destination**? No, it is no longer the highest **political office** in the United States it seems. He will leave that mission to other **noble-minded** men (or women). Mr Gore has **set his sights** on **loftier goals**. The aim of his mission now is Planet Earth.

In 2007, Al Gore shared the Nobel Peace Prize with the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a result of the **tireless** work he has done to educate people all over the world about the dangers of global warming. The problem was **poignantly portrayed** in his Oscar-winning documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

What exactly does *An Inconvenient Truth* tell us about global warming? What is causing our planet to get hotter? How do we know? What are the **consequences**? Is there anything that we can do to help? These are some of the questions that Al Gore takes on in the film.

In *An Inconvenient Truth*, the concept of **global warming** is explained, first in scientific terms, and then in a format that even young children can appreciate: a *Simpsons*-like animation film about the unsuspecting "Mr Sunbeam" who meets a menacing gang of **greenhouse gases**.

This cartoon is meant to illustrate **the greenhouse effect**. Like the green-tinted glass of a greenhouse that provides a warm environment for plants, greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, such as **carbon dioxide**, trap the sun's heat, which has a warming effect on the Earth. In itself, this is a good thing. Without greenhouse gases, the Earth would freeze.

However, human activities are **tilting the balance**. We are burning **fossil fuels** such as coal, oil and petrol, and this is **releasing** vast amounts of carbon dioxide and other harmful gases into the **atmosphere**. At the same time, we are **clearing forests** for wood and for creating more farmland. Plants and trees **absorb** carbon dioxide, but when we cut them down, the problem of global warming gets worse. As the amount of carbon dioxide increases, the atmosphere absorbs more heat and the Earth continues to get warmer.

The evidence that Mr Gore presents in his film is overwhelming and very convincing. The vast majority of scientists agree, claims Mr Gore, that global warming is not natural; rather, it is caused by human activities.

What are some of the devastating effects of global warming? According to the film, **mountain glaciers** are melting very quickly. What's worse is that polar **ice caps**, as well as **shelf ice** in **Greenland** and **Antarctica**, are also melting at an unprecedented rate. This will ultimately result in **rising sea levels** which will **submerge** low-lying **coastal areas** around the world.

Weather patterns have also become more **unpredictable**. For instance, the number of **hurricanes**, or typhoons, has nearly doubled over the last thirty years. At around the same time *An Inconvenient Truth* was being filmed, **Hurricane Katrina** struck the city of **New Orleans**, causing extensive damage from **flooding**. In many other parts of the world, **heat waves**, **droughts** and **wildfires** are also on the increase.

If global warming continues, we can expect the consequences to get even worse, not only for humans but for many other creatures on Earth. **Climate change** and **coastal flooding** and will result in a massive **refugee crisis** for humans and the **extinction** of many species of animals.

Mr Gore claims that “we already know everything we need to know to effectively **address this problem.**” But what can we do?

If a greater number of humans were able to **use more efficient electrical appliances, drive smaller cars that get higher mileage, take mass transit more frequently, and invest in renewable sources of energy** like **solar** and **wind power** for our energy needs, we could drastically **reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere**, thus **reducing global warming** and **slowing down its effects**. “The solutions are in our hands,” says Mr Gore. “What we need is **determination.**”

The final message of the film is that the every individual must **play a part for the sake of future generations.** If we all make small changes to our daily routines today, this can add up to big differences in stopping global warming. We can **choose the way we live**, and our choices can **make a difference** – one way or the other.

If you have not seen *An Inconvenient Truth*, you can begin by **watching this film.** Check out the **website** www.climatecrisis.net for more ideas on saving the planet.