

Answer Key

Identifying the Definition of a Social Issue

Read the following excerpt from the film review and complete a definition in English for “global warming” based on the information provided. Then define some of the key concepts. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

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 just gets worse. As the amount of carbon dioxide increases, the atmosphere absorbs more heat and the Earth continues to get warmer.

Excerpt from “Gore’s mission: Planet Earth”

1. Defining the issue:

According to the passage, *global warming* occurs because greenhouse gases in the Earth’s atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, trap the sun’s heat. / the amount of carbon dioxide increases and the atmosphere absorbs more heat.

2. Defining the key concepts:

a) A *greenhouse* is a house made of green-tinted glass that provides a warm environment for plants.

b) *Greenhouse gases* are gases in the Earth’s atmosphere such as carbon dioxide

c) *The greenhouse effect* occurs because greenhouse gases in the atmosphere trap the sun’s heat causing the Earth to get warmer.

d) *The atmosphere* is the air that surrounds the Earth.

e) *Fossil fuels* are fuels such as coal and oil that are formed in the Earth from plant and animal remains.