

AL GORE • AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AL GORE

Albert Arnold “Al” Gore, Jr. was the forty-fifth Vice President of the United States, serving from 1993 to 2001 under President Bill Clinton. Gore also served in the U. S. House of Representatives (1977–85) and the U. S. Senate (1985–93), representing Tennessee. Gore was the Democratic nominee for president in the 2000 election, ultimately losing to the Republican candidate George W. Bush in spite of winning the popular vote. A prominent environmental activist, Gore was awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for the “efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.” He also starred in the Academy Award–winning documentary on the topic of global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*. In 2007, Gore helped to organise the July 7 benefit concert for global warming, Live Earth. Gore is currently chairman of the Emmy Award–winning American television channel Current TV, chairman of Generation Investment Management, a director on the board of Apple Inc., and an unofficial advisor to Google’s senior management, chairman of the Alliance for Climate Protection. Al Gore has continued to be a prophetic voice in this decade of escalating climate and this time of the Trump administration’s rejection of climate change. *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* is a 2017 documentary film, directed by Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk, which addresses the progress made to tackle the problem and Gore’s global efforts to persuade governmental leaders to invest in renewable energy, culminating in the landmark signing of 2016’s Paris Agreement.



ABOUT HIS WORK

An Inconvenient Truth - The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It

It is a book by Al Gore released in 2006 in conjunction with the film *An Inconvenient Truth*. Based on Gore’s lecture tour on the topic of global warming, this book elaborates upon points offered in the film. The publisher of the text states that the book “brings together leading-

edge research from top scientists around the world; photographs, charts, and other illustrations. There are also personal anecdotes and observations to document the fast pace and wide scope of global warming.” The book mainly focuses on global warming. The book starts with the writer’s personal involvement in environmental issues. It then explains why greenhouse gases are one of the major



factors causing global warming. The book also includes considerations about the writer's professor who studied the reasons behind the increment of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the effects of global warming, like the melting of glaciers, heat-waves, drought, rise of sea levels, including also the writer's own real-life experience of the effects of global warming. The book, in its analysis of the interrelation between humans and the environment, ends up by suggesting a solution to readers. In a section called "The Politicization of Global Warming", Al Gore states, "As for why so many people still resist what the facts clearly show, I think, in part, the reason is that the truth about the climate crisis is an inconvenient one that means we are going to have to change the way we live our lives." In 2009, the audiobook version won the Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album.

THE TEXT

Fastest Temperature Increase Occurs at the Arctic

I went up to the North Pole. I went under that ice cap in a nuclear submarine that surfaced through the ice. It had been **patrolling** since 1957. They have gone under the ice and measured with their radar looking upward to measure how thick it is because they can only **surface** where the **thickness** of the ice is 3 and half feet thick or less. So they have kept a meticulous record which they wouldn't **release** because it was national security. I went up there in order to persuade them to release it, and they did. And here's what that record showed.

Since 1970 there has been a precipitous **drop off** in the amount and extent and thickness of the arctic ice cap. It has diminished by 40% in 40 years. There are two studies showing that in the next 50 or 70 years in summertime it will be completely gone. Now you might say, "Why is that a problem? How could the arctic ice cap actually melt so quickly?" When the sun's rays hit the ice, more than 90% of them bounce off right back into space like a mirror. But when it hits the open ocean, more than 90% is absorbed. As the surrounding water gets warmer, it speeds up the melting of the ice. Right now, the arctic ice cap acts like a giant mirror. All the sun's rays bounce off, more than 90%, to keep the earth cooler. But as it melts and the open ocean receives that sun's energy, instead, more than 90% is absorbed. So there is a faster build-up of heat here at the North Pole in the Arctic Ocean and the Arctic generally, than anywhere else on the planet. That's not good for creatures like polar bears that depend on the ice. A new scientific study shows that for the first time they're finding polar bears that have actually drowned, swimming long distances up to 60 miles to find the ice. They did not find that before. What does it mean to us to look at a vast expanse of open water at the top of our world that used to be covered by ice? We ought to care a lot because it has planetary effects.

to surface: *salire in superficie*
to patrol: *perlustrare*
thickness: *spessore*
to release: *rilasciare*
drop off: *calo*



COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions.

1. Why has the submarine been patrolling the area of the North Pole for such a long time?
2. What kind of device do they generally use?
3. When can they come up from under the ice? Why?
4. Why did Al Gore have problems in getting the record data?
5. By how much has the thickness of ice been reduced?
6. What will happen in 50 years' time if this trend continues?
7. What happens when solar rays hit the ice?
8. What happens when they hit water in the ocean?
9. What are the consequences of this phenomenon?
10. Why are polar bears at risk of extinction?

ANALYSIS

2 Read the text again and if necessary, search the Internet to answer the questions.

1. Underline the words in the text that refer to Al Gore's personal experience.
2. How do polar bears live on the ice? What do they need to live?
3. In your opinion, why does Al Gore use direct speech?
4. Why does he introduce questions in the text?
5. What is the function of the last sentence? What modal verb could he have used instead of "ought to"?

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3 Complete the text with the missing words.

diseases • slavery • nation • civilization • chemicals • communism • generations • women • ozone • perspective • liberty • capable

Rising to the Occasion

Ultimately this question comes down to: Are we as Americans. (1) of doing great things even though they are difficult? Are we capable of rising above ourselves and above history? The record indicates that we do have that capacity. We formed a (2) We fought a revolution and brought something new to this Earth, a free nation guaranteeing individual (3) America made a moral decision that (4) was wrong and that we could not be half free and half slave. We, as Americans, decided that of course (5) should have the right vote. We defeated totalitarianism and won a war in the Pacific and the Atlantic simultaneously. We desegregated our schools and cured some (6) like polio. We landed on the moon, the very example of what's possible when we are at our best. We worked together in a completely bipartisan way to bring down (7) We have even solved a global environmental crisis before, the hole in the stratospheric (8) layer. This was said to be an impossible problem to solve because it's a global environmental challenge requiring cooperation from every nation in the world. But we took it on, and the United States took the lead in phasing out the (9) that caused that problem. So now we have to use our political processes in our democracy and then decide to act together to solve those problems. But we have to have a different (10) on this one. It is different from any problem we

have faced before, and that is what is at stake: our ability to live on planet Earth, to have a future as a (11) I believe this is a moral issue. It is our time to see this issue. It is our time to rise again to procure our future. This is the future in which we are going to live our life. Future (12) may well have occasion to ask themselves. "What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had a chance?" We have to hear that question from them, NOW.

Adapted from: *An Inconvenient Truth*

4 Read this short presentation and then discuss in pairs or groups.

The text you have read is an example of non-fictional writing. Works of non-fiction differ from works of fiction in several ways:

- The people, events, places, and ideas presented in nonfiction are real, not invented.
- Non-fiction is narrated by an author who is a real person.
- It presents facts, describes true-life experiences, or discusses ideas.
- Non-fiction is written for a specific audience, or group of readers. In addition, it addresses a clear purpose, or reason for writing.

1. What is the meaning of non-fiction?
2. Why is non-fiction true?
3. Could you give some examples of non-fiction books?
4. What are some original non-fiction writing ideas?
5. What are the different types of non-fiction?
6. How significant is the audience in non-fiction writing?