

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Environmental Articles

Everyone needs to be aware of what is happening in the environment. We are surrounded by articles about the latest environmental disaster, the newest problem just found, etc. The problem we have is in knowing what describes the truth of the issue, or comes closest to reality. One thing we can do is to know the validity of the source. How reliably has this source reported issues in the past? What do other sources say? How old is this article? Have more recent findings changed this view?

This is particularly important since a lot of what we know about environmental issues is from articles written as an issue becomes public. Articles are written from specific points of view: political, radical environmentalists, moderate environmentalists, not-in-my-backyard groups, scientists, etc.

You and a partner will look at a chart that was used to report the danger of radiation on the west coast of the United States. The danger was potentially caused from a disaster that happened in March 2011. This was reported about 3 ½ years after a tsunami destroyed a Japanese nuclear power plant called Fukushima. You will answer some questions. Then I will read you from an article written at this same time. It reported the current scientific findings. When I am done, you will answer a few more questions.

1. What is the source of the information you are using?
2. Specifically where (in the world) is the information in the chart located? How do you know?
3. Does your chart have a way to understand the distance or radiation levels? Explain.
4. Where is the problem the greatest? Be specific. How do you know?
5. Where is the problem the greatest in the United States? Be specific. How do you know?

Critically Considering Science 'News'

6. What seems to be the intent of your chart? What point of view is it presenting?

STOP AND WAIT until we can discuss both charts and I can read you from a scientific article published at this time.

8. Did your article distort or support the real science? Give specific illustrations of either distortion or support.

9. How can you know if what you are reading reflects what is really happening?