In this assignment you are to write either a 5-6 page or a 10-12 page typed, double-spaced paper. If you do the 10-page paper you will get writing credit for the class. The intended audience for the paper is a general interest reader like yourself. Your paper should have a beginning point and end point and advance a thesis along the way. You need to choose one of the sources below and let Robb know which one on or before Friday November 5, 1999. The paper is due on the 24th of November, the Wednesday before the Thanksgiving weekend. This will be marked up by us and returned to you for revision. The paper in final form is due at the last class, Wednesday, December 8, 1999. The papers will be based on books. The books come in two forms: fiction/adventure and science nonfiction. You will get more credit if you take on one of the science references; the science will get you 110% of the points as for fiction/adventure for the same quality of paper. Of course, you may find it easier to write about fiction and adventure than science. Ideally, the book you choose should be one that you have not read before, but this is not a firm requirement. Remember you will need a thesis for your paper, so don’t pick something with which you can’t find a problem or controversy or point of view. If you want help and advice, consult your professor.

The possible sources:

**Fiction/Adventure/Nature Books: 100% credit**


Nansen, F., 1999: *Farthest North*. Modern-Library, 608. (Nonfiction story of attempt to take a wooden boat to the north pole and the incredible journey home.)


**Science Non-Fiction Books: 110% credit**


Basic-Books, March 1999, 300. (How weather and climate shaped history. Easy read for non-scientists, but good, if rambling, content. Very new, only seems to be available in hardback for $25. 30% off at Amazon.)

Gelbspan, R., 1997: *The Heat Is On: The Climate Crisis, the Cover-Up and the Prescription.*
Perseus-Books, 1997, 288. (It’s a conspiracy! Global warming!)

N-A-L/Dutton, Jan. 1993, 432. (Hey, I’m not endorsing the guy, but you might want to read his book.)

Lion Publishing, Oxford, 192. (Just the facts on global warming, please.)

Enslow Publishers, Short Hills, NJ, 224 pp. (the story of the discovery of ice ages and the orbital parameter theory for glaciations. Good read.)

Oxford University Press,, Oxford ; New York : 157 p. :. (Hey, Earth is our mother, and she can take care of herself.)


Schneider, S.-H., 1996: *Laboratory Earth: The Planetary Gamble We Can’t Afford to Lose.*
New York : Basic-Books, Dec. 1996, 192. (This is an authoritative, readable, and succinct account of the global warming problem, including science, economics and politics. I really should have required you to read this. Highly recommended. ~$10)

W-H-Freeman-and-Company, April 1998, 248. (More environmental determinism for anthropologists. This time the theory that the ice ages were critical in shaping modern humans.)


**Structure:**

Your paper should take the form of a summary of some aspect of your book that has some relevance to the subject of this course, which is Earth System Science/Climate/Human Society/Nature. Your paper should have a thesis (i.e. point) which you get across using logical or emotional argument. Be convincing. Write about something you feel strongly about, or at least are interested enough in to argue energetically. There is no set format, but make sure your ideas follow logically and in a reasonable sequence so an ignorant person could understand and be entertained.

Grading will be based on all of the following:
1) Organization of your thoughts
2) Accuracy and choice of your information/ideas. You don’t have room to cover everything, so get the most important idea(s) across clearly.
3) Writing style. We want a pleasant, clear presentation. Your professor has difficulty concentrating, so keep it interesting and make your points in simple everyday terms.
4) Grammar. Write in complete sentences. Use correct spelling and punctuation.

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**Schedule for completion of the writing assignment.**
Friday November 5. Let Robb know in writing what book you have chosen.
Wednesday November 24, Submit your paper for pre-evaluation. Make it good.
Wednesday December 8, Submit final version of paper. Make it perfect.