

“Analyzing the Impacts of Climate Change on Cape Cod”

Objective: You will be able to...

- 1) Evaluate the central ideas in an article from *The Boston Globe* on the impacts of climate change on the land, animals, and people of Cape Cod
- 2) Create written and visual summaries of the article for your community.

Warm-up:

- 1) Reflect on a place that is special to you. It could be a place you go with family, with friends, or on your own. Perhaps it is a place you visit in the summer! Use the following questions to guide your reflection:

<i>a. What does this place look like? Sound like? Smell like? Feel like? Describe this place to someone who may never see it.</i>	
<i>b. What do you like to do in this place? Describe a favorite memory you have of the place.</i>	
<i>c. Who else lives and works in this place?</i>	

- 2) Today, you will explore a place in the U.S. that has become special to more than five million visitors every summer: Cape Cod. Cape Cod is a **peninsula** on the eastern coast of Massachusetts. That means it is a long, thin strip of land almost entirely surrounded by water, but connected to a larger landmass. As you explore the images below of Cape Cod, consider the following questions:
 - a) What do you see? How do you imagine that this place would sound, smell, and feel?
 - b) What do you think people do for fun in this place? Why might it be special to people?
 - c) Who might live and work in Cape Cod? What kind of jobs might people have there?
 - d) How does this place compare to your favorite place? If you have already been to this place, what are your favorite things about it?



Images from John Tlumacki. United States, 2019.

Read and Analyze:

The news article “At the Edge of a Warming World” from *The Boston Globe* examines how the land, animals, and communities in Cape Cod are being affected by climate change. “To the millions of us who visit Cape Cod once or twice a summer, the effects of climate change can seem subtle, if we see them at all,” *Globe* journalists write in an introduction to the story on the *Globe’s* website. “But once you know how to see what is shifting, changing and washing away, it is impossible to ignore.”

Journalists from the *The Boston Globe* divided the article into five sections that each examine a different way in which climate change is affecting Cape Cod. Before reading the article, make predictions about how rising temperatures in Cape Cod could be affecting each of the following. **Note your predictions on a separate sheet of paper.**

- Part I: [Erosion](#) of the sand and [cliffs](#) on beaches
- Part II: Coastal [ecosystems](#) and [migration](#) of birds
- Part III. Fishing and access to food for fish
- Part VI: Roads, buildings and other [infrastructure](#)
- Part V: Storms and Flooding

In most sections, the article also examines how the lives of people who own homes and businesses in the Cape are being affected by these changes to the environment.

1. As you read each part of the story, use the comprehension questions from the downloadable PDFs to analyze key details and check your predictions.
2. After reading each part, use your responses to the comprehension questions to write a 2–3 sentence summary that captures the main idea of the section.

Written Reflection 1: Analyzing the Content

Analyze the details from the article by writing your answers to the following:

Question	Write your response here
1) What details most stuck out to you from the reporting?	
2) According to each part of the article, how is climate change affecting land, wildlife and communities in Cape Cod?	
3) How are these changes to the environment in Cape Cod affecting the lives of people and wildlife, and how might they further impact people and wildlife in the future?	
4) What solutions are scientists and other community members in Cape Cod trying right now to combat these changes, and why?	
5) What other long-term solutions does the article propose, and why? According to the article, why are some community members reluctant to implement these solutions?	
6) How might the effects of climate change on Cape Cod impact other parts of the world?	

Written Reflection 2: Analyzing the Structure

Analyze the structure of the article by writing your answers to the following:

Question	Write your response here
1) Which facts and descriptions from the article most stuck out to you?	
2) Which interview from the article most stuck out to you?	
3) Why do you think journalists included a mix of scientific information, personal stories from Cape Cod residents, and descriptions of the Cape’s landscapes in the article? How do they work together to communicate the impact of climate change on Cape Cod?	
4) Why do you think the article was divided into five sections? How were the sections alike and different?	
5) What strategies did the authors of the article use to engage readers who might not know much about Cape Cod?	

Extension Activities:

Use details from the article, and your own reflections, to complete the activities below **on a separate sheet of paper.**

1) Expository Writing: Bringing Attention To Solutions

Write a letter to a member of your local or state government that uses details from the article to highlight a challenge communities in Cape Cod are facing as a result of climate change. In your letter, propose an idea for combatting that challenge. Use the following questions to structure your letter:

- a. What is a challenge communities in Cape Cod are facing as a result of rising temperatures?
- b. Who is being affected by this challenge, and how?
- c. Why does this issue matter to you and your community? How does it connect to issues you are seeing where you live?
- d. What action would you like your local or state government official to take to combat this issue?

2) Creative Writing: Giving Voice to the Wildlife of Cape Cod

In parts II and III of the article, the journalists highlight the ways that rising temperatures in Cape Cod are affecting plants and animals. What might those plants and animals say if they had the opportunity to share their perspectives on the changing climate of the Cape?

Using details from the article, write a short [monologue](#) from the perspective of a plant or animal described in the piece. The monologue should describe how the life of that plant or animal has been impacted by climate change. Consider the following as you write your monologue:

- a. How might the plant or animal you chose speak? Short sentences? Long sentences? What kind of words might this plant or animal use?
- b. What specific examples can your character use to describe how their life has been impacted by climate change?

3) Visual Art: Design graphics that inform and encourage action

- a. Design a map or chart that visualizes how climate change is affecting Cape Cod’s wildlife in one of the following ways:
 - i. Erosion of the coastline (see section I)
 - ii. Health of salt marshes on the coast of Cape Cod (see section II)
 - iii. Migration of whimbrel birds (see section II)
 - iv. Access to food for cod (see section III)
- b. Design two visuals that combine images with quotes to communicate information from the article to members of your community.
 - i. Identify one quote from the article that highlights a way that Cape Cod has been impacted by climate change. Use additional details from the article to help you identify an image that you could pair with your chosen quote to communicate what you learned from the article. *Think: What image would better help a reader understand the quote I have chosen?*
 - ii. Identify one quote from the article that highlights a way that communities in Cape Cod can combat the impacts of climate change. Use additional details from the article to help you identify an image that you could pair with your chosen quote to communicate what you learned from the article.

- a. Identify the platform you will use to share your images and quotes with your community, and create visual designs for each quote/image pair that illustrates what your visual would look like on that platform. Would your community best learn from an Instagram post? A GIF? A billboard? A postcard? Create a design that would reach the largest audience in your community.
- b. BONUS CHALLENGE: Create two visuals for each of the five parts of the article, “At the Edge of a Warming World.” For each part, create one visual that highlights a challenge and one visual that highlights a solution.

4) Interview and present: Profiles of Business Owners in Your Community

The article highlights the stories of several business owners from Cape Cod, and how climate change has affected their business. For example, part I of the article introduces readers to John and Liam Ohman, whose restaurant closed after it was nearly destroyed by a March 2018 storm.

How might the challenges facing business owners in Cape Cod compare to challenges facing business owners in your community? Find out by writing a profile that communicates the story of a business owner in your community. Try to choose a business that was started in your community, and has been around for at least 10 years.

Your final profile can be presented orally or in writing. Consider the following as you prepare your profile:

- a. How can you use words to describe the business and why that business is important to people in your community?
- b. What questions will you need to ask the business owner to learn more about the following...?
 - i. How and why did this person open the business in your community?
 - ii. What are some of the challenges that this business has faced? What is causing those challenges?

5) Research and Act: Design a Campaign to Combat the Impacts of Climate Change in your Community

The article identifies and describes five ways that rising temperatures are affecting Cape Cod. Where do you see evidence of how climate change is impacting your community?

1. Conduct a research project about one way that rising temperatures are affecting the people, land and/or wildlife in your community.
2. Compile visuals, interviews and data that help explain the issue you chose.
3. Then, use your research to identify 1-3 ways that your community can combat this issue.

4. Finally, create a resource or event that communicates your research. Your resource and/or event should use details from your research to communicate the issue you chose AND the solution you identified. Would your community be most engaged by a pamphlet? A resource fair? A concert? Plan a resource/event that would best engage the people in your life!

Note on selecting a topic: The team from *The Boston Globe* spoke with scientists, business owners and other community members to research the article, “At the Edge of a Warming World.” As you begin researching the impacts of climate change on your community, consider talking to the scientists, business owners, educators, doctors, family members and friends from your life. These community members might be able to help you identify a topic and the next steps for your research.