

SHOULD WE CLASSIFY HUMAN HISTORY AS THE “ANTHROPOCENE AGE?”

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA FOR HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the [Thinkalong module](#). Students can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

100,000,000 YEARS FROM NOW

It's Okay to Be Smart | February 8, 2016 | Video

6:26 minutes

A PBS Learning Media video from *It's Okay to Be Smart*, exploring what it would mean to label the current epoch “Anthropocene”

- Humans have made so many significant changes to the Earth that future geologists would classify the era in which we live now as the “Anthropocene” epoch.
- The video asks when the classification would begin and what future scientists would find in the rocks as evidence of human existence.
- Humans have only existed for about 200,000 years, a relatively short period of time in relation to other life on Earth.
- While future scientists may not uncover relics of civilizations, but would find evidence of our ecological footprint.
- The video suggests that our biggest impact would be materials we have created - like plastics, bricks, concrete, and glass.
- Fossils of animals would reflect domestication and invasive species.
- The clearest mark, however, would be the detonation of the first atomic bomb, which would leave a unique chemical signature.

WHEN DID HUMANS START SHAPING EARTH'S FATE? AN EPOCH DEBATE

NPR | April 6, 2015 | Audio

3:54 minutes

A radio story regarding debate within the scientific community over whether to label the current time as the Anthropocene age.

- A debate has started over whether or not to formally establish a geologic time scale to describe humans' time on Earth.
- Some scientists want to offer a different name that distinguishes the impact humans have had in the current Holocene epoch. The “Anthropocene” definition was coined about 15 years ago and has informally caught on with scientists since then.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

- It is hard to determine when this new epoch would start, with some scientists favoring the Industrial Revolution, others the mid-20th century during the Atomic era, and others advocating that human-led change to the Earth started thousands of years ago with the development of agriculture.
- Geologists use the geologic time periods to piece together Earth's unknown history by studying rocks and fossils to gain a better understanding of the Earth in previous times. Some argue that labels, especially for a time where we have written and recorded information about what happened to the Earth, doesn't necessarily help scientists define a specific geologic occurrence.

EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE IN THE AGE OF MAN: SCIENTISTS CATALOG MORE HUMAN-MADE MINERALS

PRI | May 21, 2017 | Audio

6:52 minutes

A radio story that discusses how human-made minerals show the impact that mankind has had on the Earth.

- Dr. Robert Hazen and his team recently discovered 200 new chemical compounds around the world that didn't (and couldn't) exist before the age of man.
- When humans change the environment, through actions like mining, industrial processes, waste, it helps to rearrange atoms to create new minerals.
- Hazen says a future geologist would recognize that the new minerals are evidence of human impact on the Earth.

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your classroom and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Anthropocene
- Epoch
- Geology
- Mineral
- Element
- Homo Sapiens

CONTEMPLATE

Students will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.



A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help students answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Students will engage their peers in an evidence-based debate using the media they just analyzed. Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form an evidence-based response to the debate question.

In addition to rich in-class discussions, teachers can also connect with other classrooms through the Thinkalong website. [Sign up here](#) to be connected.

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LET'S INVESTIGATE

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Use this worksheet to help you investigate the media sources in the Thinkalong module.



SUMMARIZE THE TOPIC

KEY VOCABULARY

MEDIA RESOURCE 1

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

MEDIA RESOURCE 2

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

MEDIA RESOURCE 3

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

CONTEMPLATE YOUR SOURCES

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

After watching the media in the module, answer the questions below.

1. AUTHORSHIP: Who created this message?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

2. FORMAT: What creative techniques are being used to grab my attention?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

3. AUDIENCE: How might different people understand this message differently than me?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

4. CONTENT: What values and points of view are represented? What's left out of this message?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3

5. PURPOSE: Why is this message being sent?

MEDIA 1

MEDIA 2

MEDIA 3



CREATE YOUR ARGUMENT

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Create strong arguments for both sides from the resources in the Thinkalong module.



DEBATE QUESTION	
PRO ARGUMENT	CON ARGUMENT
REASONING	REASONING
EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE