

Obama Wants Tough New Anti-Pollution Law

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By Joyce Grant

Coal plants in the United States will have to cut their production of carbon dioxide (known as “carbon emissions”) by 30 per cent by the year 2030.

Coal is used to create electricity. However, when coal is burned, it gives off *carbon dioxide*, a gas which is the biggest man-made contributor to global warming or “climate change.” Global warming is bad for the planet.

U.S. president Barack Obama wants to make coal plants be more environmentally friendly.

So he told them they will have to pollute less.

The coal industry is upset by Obama’s new rule. They say it will cause nearly a quarter of a million people in the U.S. to lose their jobs, and that many coal factories will have to close.

Obama’s government says the changes will save thousands of lives because Earth’s air will be cleaner. Obama called carbon dioxide emissions a “national health crisis.”

In a speech, Obama said that “as a president and as a parent, I refuse to condemn our children to a planet that’s beyond fixing.”

He pointed out that there are rules that limit companies creating toxic chemicals like mercury, sulfur and arsenic but until now there haven’t been strict rules about carbon pollution.

Some people say that with the new rules, electricity will become more expensive for people to buy. The United States uses coal to create 40 per cent of its electricity.

Barack Obama can legally only be president until 2016. (American presidents are only allowed to be president for eight years.) In 2016 he will have to leave office. Often when leaders step down, they make laws that may be unpopular with people but are about issues they believe strongly in.

In other words, Barack Obama won’t have to worry about getting re-elected so in his final years as president he is freer to make laws that he feels are important, such as this law about carbon emissions.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

By Jonathan Tilly

Writing/Discussion Prompt

Barack Obama has explained why he felt it was important to drastically reduce carbon emissions. What environmental issue is most important to you? What do you do in your life to help solve this problem? Share your answers with your class and inspire each other to make little changes that could make a big difference.

Reading Prompt: Making Inferences / Interpreting Texts



Today's article explains that Barack Obama may have his bold new rules to lower carbon pollution because he is in the final years of his presidency. Does this information make his new rules less bold?

Primary

Make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence (OME, Reading: 1.5).

Junior

Use stated and implied ideas in texts to make inferences and construct meaning (OME, Reading: 1.5).

Intermediate

Develop and explain interpretations of increasingly complex or difficult texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts to support their interpretations (OME, Reading: 1.5).

Language Feature: Parentheses and terminal punctuation

When a sentence ends with a parenthesis, do you know where to place the period, exclamation or question mark? The answer is, it depends. If the words inside the parentheses are a complete sentence, the final punctuation mark is placed inside the closing parenthesis. (For example, this sentence is complete and, therefore, the final punctuation goes inside the second parenthesis.) However, other sentences contain words inside parentheses that do not make a complete sentence and, in those cases, the final punctuation is placed outside the second parenthesis (like here).

Here are two examples from today's article:

Coal plants in the United States will have to cut their production of carbon dioxide (known as "carbon emissions") by 30 per cent by the year 2030.

(American presidents are only allowed to be president for eight years.)

Write two sentences that include parenthetical statements. Construct one sentence so its final punctuation is inside the second parenthesis. Make another that would have you place the final punctuation outside the second parenthesis.

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