

**iLab: Our Choice – Economics and Politics****Chapter Fifteen – The True Cost of Carbon****Chapter Sixteen – Political Obstacles**

iPad use: You are a brilliant student. You know how to do all sorts of crazy stuff on an iPad like change the wallpaper, check your twitter account and download Angry Birds. Please resist doing those things, because today we are doing a lab specifically with the app called “Our Choice.” When you get your iPad, please go directly to the app. Thank you for your cooperation.

When you open the app “Our Choice,” you will be greeted by Al Gore (who wrote the book this app is based on). If you are instead greeted by a spinning Earth, press the counter-clockwise arrow in the lower left corner. Touch anywhere on the screen (you can even poke Al in the eye!) and press “skip welcome.” This will take you to a tutorial which is very helpful. Upon completing the tutorial, touch the screen again to “skip titles”. This brings you to spinning Earth, where we will begin.

Advance to Chapter Fifteen – The True Cost of Carbon, and expand the first page to full screen. As you read the chapter, answer the following questions.

*Subheading: A Flawed System*

1. What is what economists call a “negative externality”?

*Subheading: The System of National Accounts*

2. What is missing from our determining of GDP?

*Graphic: GDP vs. GPI – Product vs. Progress*

3. Define GPI. What makes it different than GDP?

*Subheading: Blind to the Consequences*

*Subheading: Market Fundamentalism*

*Movie: Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness*

4. How does Bhutan’s growth differ from other countries?
5. Give two specific examples of how this philosophy has impacted the people of Bhutan.

*Photo: Clear-Cutting in the state of Washington. This is not photoshopped!*

*Subheading: Subprime Carbon Assets*

*Subheading: Short-Sightedness*

*Graphic: Average Holding Time of Stocks*

6. How has average holding time of stocks changed in the last 70 years? What does this indicate about the priorities of stockholders?

*Subheading: Looking at the Long-Term*

7. How would taking a long-term view of investments change investment strategy?

*Subheading: Paying for Pollution*

*Movie: Leveling Appalachia – The Legacy of Mountaintop Mining*

8. Analyze the quote by Chris Hamilton, of the WV Coal Association. He says “I suspect every mountain in our state is for sale if somebody wants to buy it and just preserve it.”
9. Describe the situation of Anita Miller.

*Graphic: The True Value of Our Ecosystem*

10. What is an “ecosystem service”?
11. Choose two ecosystem services and give a specific example of each.

*Subheading: The True Price of Oil*

*Graphic: A Brief History of the Price of Oil*

12. Compare the price of oil to U.S. consumption. Explain your comparison.

*Subheading: The Principal-Agent Problem*

13. What is the “principal-agent problem”?

*Subheading: Putting a Price on Carbon*

14. What are our three options according to the author?

*Subheading: More Regulation*

*Graphic: How Cap and Trade Works*

15. How does a cap and trade system work?

*Subheading: How Cap and Trade Helped Reduce Acid Rain*

16. By what percentages were acid rain concentrations in the Eastern U.S. decreased from 1990 to 2009?

*Subheading: An Economic Opportunity*

17. The author states “Sustainable development will be the primary driver of economic and industrial change over the next 25 years.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Advance to Chapter Sixteen – Political Obstacles, and expand the first page to full screen. As you read the chapter, answer the following questions.

*Subheading: An Ongoing Debate*

18. Why are the measures required to solve the climate crisis deemed “unpalatable”?

*Subheading: Politics & Money*

19. What contributes to the differences between Democrats and Republicans when it comes to the acceptance of human activities contributing to global warming?

20. How many climate issue lobbyists are there for each member of the House and Senate?

*Subheading: A Campaign of Deception*

21. Provide evidence that scientific evidence regarding climate change is being undermined.

*Subheading: Attacking the Truth*

*Subheading: More Empty Arguments*

*Movie: Media Promotion of Climate Skepticism*

22. What does it mean for a paper to be “peer-reviewed”?

23. How does scientific consensus (peer-reviewed scientific papers) differ from media reports?

*Subheading: Corporate Propaganda*

*Movie: Pro-Coal Propaganda Campaigns*

24. Analyze the quote “Carbon dioxide. They call it pollution. We call it life.”

*Subheading: Letting the People’s Voice Be Heard*

*Subheading: The Alliance for Climate Protection*

25. How are energy companies like ExxonMobil and nonprofit organizations like The Alliance for Climate Protection similar? How are they different?

26. The “Our Choice” app obviously has a focus on the issue of climate change. Give an example of another environmental issue that contends with the same political obstacles. Give an example of an environmental issue that has found political success.