

CHAPTER
9
SECTION 2**SKILLS WORKSHEET****Compare Viewpoints****3**

Read the statements below, which present the viewpoints of two different interest groups. Then answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

“For the past 200 years, the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, and deforestation have caused the concentrations of heat-trapping ‘greenhouse gases’ to increase significantly in our atmosphere. . . . Greenhouse gases are necessary to life as we know it, because they keep the planet’s surface warmer than it otherwise would be. But, as the concentrations of these gases continue to increase in the atmosphere, the Earth’s temperature is climbing. . . . Scientists are certain that human activities are changing the composition of the atmosphere, and that increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases will change the planet’s climate. . . . To implement its climate policy, the Federal government is using voluntary and incentive-based programs to reduce emissions and has established programs to promote climate technology and science.”

—from *Climate Change: Basic Information* on the United States Environmental Protection Agency Web site, accessed Nov. 13, 2008

“. . . [T]he number of climate change skeptics is growing rapidly. Because a funny thing is happening to global temperatures – they’re going down, not up. . . . Brazilian meteorologist Eugenio Hackbart explained that extreme cold or snowfall events in his country have always been tied to . . . El Ninos . . . [and] La Ninas. . . . [Since] August was the first month since 1913 in which no sunspot activity was recorded . . . and solar winds were at a 50-year low, [Hackbart] was not surprised that Brazilians were suffering . . . a brutal cold snap. ‘This is no coincidence,’ he said as he scoffed at the notion that manmade carbon emissions had more impact than the sun and oceans on global climate. . . . Professor [John] Christy has been in charge of NASA’s eight weather satellites that take more than 300,000 temperature readings daily around the globe. . . . [H]e concludes that while manmade emissions may be having a slight impact, ‘variations in global temperatures . . . cannot be attributed to carbon dioxide.’”

—Lorne Gunter, “Thirty Years of Warmer Temperatures Go Poof,”
National Post, Oct. 20, 2008

Apply the Skill

- 1. Identify the Sources** For each statement, identify the source, the intended audience, and the purpose.
- 2. Determine Each Group’s Frame of Reference** How might the experiences and data of the Environmental Protection Agency and scientists Hackbart and Christy affect their views on this issue?
- 3. Evaluate for Point of View and Bias** Identify the facts that are presented in the two statements. What instances of faulty logic or exaggerated claims can you find?
- 4. Compare and Contrast** Determine how the viewpoints are different. Do the “facts” given in the statements contradict each other in any way?