



*Marked by towering glaciers and vast expanses of tundra and open sea, the astonishing Arctic landscape exudes a feeling of immense power.*

*But the region's ecosystem is actually one of the most fragile, and it is facing quick deterioration from man-made intrusions such as mining, oil drilling, and pollution - as well as global warming. Journey with explore to meet the region's people and find out how these issues are affecting their time-honored way of life.*

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## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grades 6 - 12

Geography, World History, Civics

### **Geography - Standard 18. Understand global development and environmental issues**

- Understand the possible impact that present conditions and patterns of consumption, production and population growth might have on the future spatial organization of Earth
- Understand how the interaction between physical and human systems affects current conditions on Earth
- Understand the concept of sustainable development and its effects in a variety of situations
- Understand why policies should be designed to guide the use and management of Earth's resources and to reflect multiple points of view

### **World History - Standard 44. Understand the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world**

- Understand efforts to improve political and social conditions around the world
- Understand the causes and effects of population growth and urbanization
- Understand the importance or meaning of the natural environment for societies around the world
- Understand rates of economic development and the emergence of different economic systems around the globe
- Understand how specific countries have implemented social and cultural changes

### **Civics - Standard 17. Understand issues concerning the relationship between state and local governments and the national government and issues pertaining to representation at all three levels of government**

- Understand how he/she can contact his/her representatives and why it is important to do so, and knows which level of government he/she should contact to express his/her opinions or to get help on a specific problem

**Resource - [McREL Content Knowledge – Standards & Benchmarks](#)**

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 🗨️ *What is meant by the film's title, "Change at the Top of the World"?*
- 🗨️ *What is global warming? What are its causes?*
- 🗨️ *Why are the effects of global warming felt more in the Polar Regions?*
- 🗨️ *It is mentioned in the film that there are good and bad aspects of global warming for the people of the Arctic region. What are the good aspects? The bad aspects?*
- 🗨️ *What is the Northwest Passage? How has it changed over this century? Who benefits from the change?*
- 🗨️ *As the frozen land in the arctic thaws due to global warming, what kinds of natural resources are becoming available? Since much of the Arctic has not been claimed by any country how can countries claim ownership of the resources there? What are the laws?*
- 🗨️ *What is the difference between a glacier and an iceberg? What is meant by the quote, "tip of the iceberg"?*
- 🗨️ *Explain why the Arctic is melting so fast. How is it connected to pollution that is generated in larger industrialized countries?*
- 🗨️ *What is permafrost? Why does the thawing of permafrost cause potential hazards for the buildings of Iqaluit? How are the people dealing with this issue?*
- 🗨️ *Is global warming just a problem that people of the Arctic have to address? If not, who else needs to help? What can you do to help stop global warming?*

### ACTIVITY

#### Federal Legislation – Do my congress representatives represent my views?

Read through the [OpenCongress.org](https://www.opencongress.org) website to see what bills are before congress related to environmental issues. Look for the congress members from your state. Where do they stand on the issues? Do they reflect your opinions? Click on their **Official Website**. Draft a letter to them explaining your opinion.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Arctic is a cold, vast expanse of land, sea, and ice. Historically, it has been inhabited by relative few. The Inuit people have lived for centuries in a man vs. environment existence. They have learned to survive in the most extreme conditions, but now find that their world is facing an onslaught of change. Global warming will bring economic activity to the region. Ocean waters, frozen for hundreds of years, are becoming navigable. This will bring people, ships, mineral and oil exploration. This can mean economic prosperity to some in the area, but for others it means a complete change in the ways the Inuit have lived. As the temperatures rise, glaciers and frozen lands thaw. Cycles of growth are disrupted for the plants and animals of the region, and subsequently so are the traditions of hunting and fishing. While the people of this area adjust to the changes in their way of life, governments are in a land grab to lay claim to the untapped natural resources of the area. The film explores these changes with the citizens of Iqaluit, capital of the newly formed territory of Nunavut. Mayor Elisapee Sheutiapik guides the Explore team on a journey to this area that visits the past, present and hopes for the future.

## Excerpts from Official Website of [The City of Iqaluit](#)

### Welcome to the City of Iqaluit:

It's hard to imagine anywhere in Canada with greater prospects. The city's alive with the anything's -possible attitude of a young community. Bursting with new growth, exciting economic and social opportunities, this bustling Arctic capital is home to a diverse mix of people enjoying the leading edge of development and phenomenal potential. Young and old are working to create a future that will preserve the strengths of traditional culture, while embracing the surging changes of the 21st century.

Even though it's located on the remote Arctic tundra, Iqaluit aims to be every inch a capital city, with the amenities and quality of life to rival any in Canada. Iqaluit's economy -based mainly on a government that has expanded rapidly since the city became the capital of Nunavut in 1999- is growing by leaps and bounds. The city's infrastructure is developing at a steady clip, trying to catch up with population growth. As well as being Canada's newest and most northerly capital, Iqaluit is also Canada's fastest growing community.

### Mission Statement

Working together with our citizens, we will create a sustainable and environmentally responsible Arctic capital. By respecting our rich historical and cultural heritage, we will succeed in forging a community government that empowers our citizens to participate in positive community development.

We strive to ensure that the services we provide meet the needs and aspirations of young and old, Inuit and non-Inuit, long-time and new residents, business owners and employees. We welcome your comments and hope that you will participate fully in our community.



**Elisapee Sheutiapik,  
Mayor of Iqaluit**