CHAPTER VII: A DAY OF RECKONING

FOR DISCUSSION
What is the meaning of the word reckoning? How will humanity ultimately have to reckon with a world without oil? Discuss the following quote from business leader Fred Tennant: “In the U.S., we get fired up about doing something when oil prices are high, then when prices drop, we forget about it.” Do you agree? How is forgetting about high oil prices an easy way to keep people dependent on oil consumption? Do you agree with the modern doomsday scenario described in this chapter? How can humanity avoid such a disaster? Middle Eastern countries will still have 83 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves by the year 2020. How is this the “energy equivalent of nuclear weapons”?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
In this chapter, the author describes the process of deep-water drilling. Research the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, reviewing articles that caused the explosion that blew out the well, the economic and environmental effects of millions of gallons of oil in the gulf, and what BP has done in the aftermath to make amends. Students can also research government legislation or regulations that have been adopted since the BP disaster.

CHAPTER VIII: FOSSIL FUELS AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

FOR DISCUSSION
Discuss the issue of global warming and climate change, focusing on what scientists predict will be the effects of steadily rising temperatures. Discuss why the United States refused to participate in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Discuss China and India’s growing economies and the effects they will have on oil consumption, the burning of fossil fuels, and climate change. Why does “continued dependence on fossil fuels threatens our economic, political, and physical well-being?”

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Give the class time to research one environmental and/or human consequence of climate change, such as changing rainfall patterns, increasing severe weather, spreading of tropical disease, and melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers. Give students the option of doing a written or visually based report to share their findings.

CHAPTER IX: TOWARD A NEW ENERGY ORDER

FOR DISCUSSION
What is meant by energy independence? Where should the United States be focusing its efforts in order to end its dependence on foreign oil? Some people feel that the United States needs to drill more on its own land and in its waters to capture the oil that still exists in this country. Debate the issue of drilling in currently protected areas, such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. (For viewpoints from both sides of the debate, visit ArcticCircle.acom. edu/ANWR/underdebateindex.html). Reread the section “Oil Shale and Oil Sands”, and discuss/debate the positive outcomes of this process versus the negative consequences.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
To begin the following project, display this passage from the text: “The triple threat of peak oil, high prices, and global warming has forced people to think about meeting their energy needs with renewables such instead of fossil fuels.” Place students in small groups and assign each a renewable source of energy to research, including experimental technologies, such as wave energy (OceanEnergyCouncil.com/index.php/Wave-Energy/Wave-Energy.html). Research and present findings to class.

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Extreme Oil
BH.com/series/extremeoil/history

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
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CHAPTER IV: AUTOMOBILE AGE

FOR DISCUSSION
Read and discuss the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Challenge students to debate the statement. Discuss current conflicts in the Middle East, each conflict’s connection to oil, and how “western blood” is being shed as a result. How was Henry Ford’s assembly line method of producing automobiles directly related to the increase in oil demand and consumption? Talk about the statements from posters the British put up throughout Baghdad referring to the British army as “liberators.” How are western armies viewed in the Middle East today? Discuss the author’s point, “For, in reality, mandates gave legal cover to foreign domination.” How is oil “the blood of victory”?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Have students do research to compare the urban experience before and after the emergence of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation in the United States. Discuss how the politics and economics of oil production affect social upheaval in the Middle East. Have students research the effects of the oil embargo of 1973 on the United States, and how the politics and economics of its production affect countries outside of the region.

CHAPTER V: HOPELESS MONSTERS

FOR DISCUSSION
Lead a discussion on how “black gold helped cause the World War II, then governed its course and decided its outcome.” What was the German Blitzkrieg, and how did it depend on oil? Review and discuss the events of Pearl Harbor. How could the outcome of the war have been different if the Japanese bombers had not dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor’s tank farms?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Research the history of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Petroleum Administration for War (PAW). Discuss what would happen to the U.S. economy if the oil supply was cut off. Challenge students to create a “Plastics Day in the Life” list. Instruct students to note all of the objects that they use daily that are dependent on oil to run, and have them imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

CHAPTER VI: RICHEST PRIZE, GREATEST PROBLEM

FOR DISCUSSION
Display the two quotes that begin this chapter. Lead students in a debate on the two differing perspectives: oil as “one of greatest material prizes in world history” versus “the greatest problem of all time.” Discuss how oil fuels our lifestyles and the implications this has on our environment. Discuss how if the oil supply ceased, what essential machines would stop working? Discuss how the oil depends on oil to run, and have them imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Work with the school art teacher to make leaf impressions or a mural of the flora and fauna from the carboniferous period. Challenge students to create a “Plastics Day in the Life” list. Instruct students to note all of the objects that they use daily that are dependent on oil to run, and have them imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY
The quote by John D. Rockefeller that leads chapter two reads, “What a blessing the oil has been to mankind.” Start a discussion with the class about the pros and cons of oil in our world. Present students with the following scenario: In exactly one year’s time, the last of the world’s oil reserves will be spent. Direct students to write a one-page essay, poem, or story imagining how their lives would be if this scenario were to come true. Give students an opportunity to share their writing aloud.

ABOUT THE BOOK
The history of oil is as dark and impure as the crude itself. From the Stone Age, when hunters used asphalt to “glue” hand-worked stone points to the shafts of their spears and arrows, to our contemporary society that literally runs on oil, Black Gold: The Story of Oil in Our Lives takes readers on a comprehensive, fascinating, and sometimes frightening odyssey of the rapidly diminishing natural resource that has shaped the modern world. Oil touches nearly every aspect of life as it is lived today: the paved roads on which we drive, the plastic water bottle from which we drink, the fertilizers that help grow our food, and of course, the gasoline that fills our cars, all use oil. So valuable is black gold to our very way of life that wars have been waged for it, and to this day, governments are vying for control of this dwindling “freak of geology.” This book is an excellent resource for any teachers and students interested in learning about how this natural resource continues to influence every aspect of society, and ultimately how human beings will be forced to develop alternative sources of energy when the oil eventually dries up.

CHAPTER I: A FREAK OF GEOLOGY

FOR DISCUSSION
The author claims that “[oil] helps shape the history, society, politics, and economy of every nation in earth.” Discuss this statement and challenge students to offer concrete examples of oil’s power to shape world events. The author concludes this chapter with the statement, “For, without oil and natural gas, our lives would be very different and very poor.” Challenge students to describe how their lives would be if oil ran out. Ask students to think of countries in the world that do not have a ready supply of oil, and how the people of those countries are poor as a result. After students complete reading this chapter, have them explain why oil is a major source of the world’s energy is a “freak of geology.”

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
This chapter has a variety of science connections, such as geology, fossils and fossil fuels, and sedimentation. Work with the school art teacher to paint a field trip to a rock quarry or other natural area to see examples of sedimentation. Work with the school art teacher to make leaf impressions or a mural of the flora and fauna from the carboniferous period.

CHAPTER II: BLACK GOLD

FOR DISCUSSION
What qualities did the men described in this chapter have that led them to their discoveries and fortunes in the oil business? John D. Rockefeller believed that “everything good that came to him was a gift from God,” and based on this belief he bestowed millions of dollars to charity. What is the negative side of this belief? Why did people eventually come to “see Rockefeller as two people—one with an angel’s halo, the other with devil’s horns”?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Discuss the historical connections of Rockefellers to help students understand how oil business began. Work with the school art teacher to make leaf impressions or a mural of the flora and fauna from the carboniferous period. Visit a local oil well to see how oil is produced. Have students carefully follow the news for stories that help explain the price fluctuations.

CHAPTER III: THE DESTINY OF NATIONS

FOR DISCUSSION
In this chapter, it becomes clear that oil will become a key issue in modern warfare. Discuss why those countries that control oil are at a greater advantage than those that lack the resource. Discuss how the following statement by Walter Long is relevant in the war that are being fought today: “You may have men, munitions, and money, but if you do not have oil...all your other advantages would be of little value.” Discuss the meaning of the statement, “The Allied cause had floated to victory upon a wave of oil.”

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
After reading this chapter, build a history of oil time line covering the period 1900 through 1918. Students can expand the time line after reading each chapter.
CHAPTER IV: AUTOMOBILE AGE

FOR DISCUSSION
Read and discuss the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Challenge students to debate the statement. Discuss current conflicts in the Middle East, each conflict’s connection to oil, and how “western blood” is being shed as a result. How was Henry Ford’s assembly line method of producing automobiles directly related to the increase in oil demand and consumption? Talk about the statements from posters the British put up throughout Baghdad referring to the British army as “ Libertarians.” How are western armies viewed in the Middle East today? Discuss the author’s point, “For, in reality, mandates gave legal cover to foreign domination.” How is oil “the blood of victory”?

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Lead a discussion on how “black gold helped cause the World War II, then governed its course and decided its outcome.” What was the German Blitzkrieg, and how did it depend on oil? Review and discuss the events of Pearl Harbor. How could the outcome of the war have been different if the Japanese bombers had not dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor’s tank farms?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Research the history of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Petroleum Administration for War (PAW). Discuss what would happen to U.S. energy consumption if the oil economy was completely replaced by nuclear power. Give students time to research more examples of how oil has been used throughout history. Give students time to research more examples of oil’s role from antiquity through the start of the Industrial Revolution. Take students to the library or media center and direct them to search newspaper archives from the early 1880s, when John D. Rockefeller controlled 90 percent of the oil refined in the United States. Ask students to note how Rockefeller was depicted in the news, via articles, editorials, and political cartoons. Give students time to share their findings with the class. Have them research contemporary oil leaders and oil news to create political cartoons. In math class, follow and graph the daily price per barrel over a two week period. During this time, have students carefully follow the news for stories that help explain the price fluctuations.

CHAPTER VI: RICHEST PRIZE, GREATEST PROBLEM

FOR DISCUSSION
Display the two quotes that begin this chapter. Lead students in a debate on the two differing perspectives: oil as “one of greatest material prizes in world history” versus “the greatest problem of all time.” Discuss the “great need” of oil and its historical uses. Discuss how oil has affected the military as they become dependent on oil to run, and have them imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Challenge students to create a “Plastics Day in the Life” list. Instruct students to note all of the objects that they use or interact with on a daily basis. Have them imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

The quote by John D. Rockefeller that leads chapter two reads, “What a blessing the oil has been to mankind.” Start a discussion with the class about the pros and cons of oil in our world. Present students with the following scenario: In exactly one year’s time, the last of the world’s oil reserves will be spent. Direct students to write a one-page essay, poem, or story expressing how their lives would be if this scenario were to come true. Give students an opportunity to share their writing aloud.
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What is the meaning of the word reckoning? How will humanity ultimately have to reckon with a world without oil? Discuss the following quote from business leader Fred Tennant: “In the U.S., we get fired up about doing something when oil prices are high, then when prices drop, we forget about it.” Do you agree? How is forgetting about high oil prices an easy way to keep people dependent on oil consumption? Do you agree with the modern doomsday scenario described in this chapter? How can humanity avoid such a disaster? Middle Eastern countries will still have 83 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves by the year 2020. How is this the “energy equivalent of nuclear weapons”?

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In this chapter, the author describes the process of deep-water drilling. Research the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, reviewing what caused the explosion that blew out the well, the economic and environmental effects of millions of gallons of oil in the gulf, and what BP has done in the aftermath to make amends. Students can also research government legislation or regulations that have been adopted since the BP disaster.

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FOR DISCUSSION
Discuss the issue of global warming and climate change, focusing on what scientists predict will be the effects of steadily rising temperatures. Discuss why the United States refused to participate in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Discuss China and India’s growing economies and the effects they will have on oil consumption, the burning of fossil fuels, and climate change. Why does “continued dependence on fossil fuels threatens our economic, political, and physical well-being”?

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PRNewswire.com/extremeoil/history

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
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CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Have students do research to compare the urban experience before and after the emergence of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. Compare the city infrastructure before and after the automobile. Investigate the political and economic changes in the Middle East. Discuss the effects that oil production had on the politics and economics of the producing countries. Ask students to research how the automobile affected the Middle East. Have students research the Middle East oil production and how the politics and economics of its production affect countries outside of the region.

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CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Research the history of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Petroleum Administration for War (PAW). Discuss what would happen to the United States if there was a shortage of oil. Instruct students to imagine what the United States would be like if it had no oil. Have students create a list of objects that were made possible with oil. Instruct students to imagine what their lives would be like without these necessities. Challenge students to offer examples how their own lives would be affected, and similarly how the U.S. economy would change.

CHAPTER VI: RICHEST PRIZE, GREATEST PROBLEM

FOR DISCUSSION
Display the two quotes that begin this chapter. Lead students in a debate on the two differing perspectives: oil as “one of the greatest material prizes in world history” versus “the greatest problem of all time.” How does oil contribute to the growing national debt? How does oil contribute to the growing unemployment? Have students imagine how their lives would differ without these machines. Can they think of anything that is dependent on oil to run, and have them imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION
Challenge students to create a “Plastics Day in the Life” list. Instruct students to note all of the objects that they use or interact with that are made of plastic. Challenge students to imagine and discuss how their lives would be different without these machines.

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