Climate Change in the American Mind

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The Five Key Ideas

1. Scientists agree…

2. It’s real.

3. It's us.

4. It's bad…

5. …but there’s hope!
Most Americans Think Global Warming Is Happening

Do you think global warming is happening?
April 2020
A Majority of Americans Think Global Warming Is Mostly Human-Caused

Assuming global warming is happening, do you think it is...

April 2020
Few Americans Understand the Scientific Consensus That Human-Caused Global Warming Is Happening

To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of climate scientists think that human-caused global warming is happening? Please click on the slider bar below to indicate your answer. You can slide the indicator to the position that best describes your opinion.

April 2020
Only 26% of Americans Are “Very Worried”
The Yale Climate Opinion Maps
In your opinion, how much priority should your state and local governments give to protecting each of the following from the effects of global warming over the next 10 years?
Global Warming’s “Six Americas”

- Alarmed: 31%
- Concerned: 26%
- Cautious: 16%
- Disengaged: 7%
- Doubtful: 10%
- Dismissive: 10%

November 2019
N = 1,303

Highest Belief in Global Warming
Most Concerned
Most Motivated

Lowest Belief in Global Warming
Least Concerned
Least Motivated
“If you could ask an expert on global warming one question, which question would you ask?”

What can the world (and I) do to reduce global warming?

What harm will it cause? Why should I care?

How do you know that global warming is happening or human-caused?

Leiserowitz et al., (2011)
Global Warming’s Six Americas
5 Year Change (2014-2019)

- **Dismissive**: ▼3 pts (10%)
- **Doubtful**: ▼3 pts (10%)
- **Disengaged**: ▼1 pt (7%)
- **Cautious**: ▼7 pts (16%)
- **Concerned**: ▼7 pts (26%)
- **Alarmed**: ▲21 pts (31%)
Recommendations

1. Break the spiral of silence – talk about it

2. Know your audience - tailor your communications

3. Global Warming’s Six Americas

4. Simple clear messages, repeated often, by a variety of trusted messengers

5. Scientists agree: it’s real, it’s us, it’s bad, but there’s hope!
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