Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (https://www.americangeosciences.org)

Because We Live on Earth

Not so long ago, we had the first view of our planet from space. We were startled to see how beautiful and how fragile our home appeared, “a pale blue dot” said Carl Sagan, very different from the other planets in our solar system. Our home—blue with water, white with clouds, green with life—is a planet unique in our solar system and probably rare in the universe.

Nearly everything we do each day is connected in some way to Earth: to its land, oceans, atmosphere, plants, and animals. The food we eat, the water we drink, our homes and offices, the clothes we wear, the energy we use, and the air we breathe are all grown in, taken from, surround, or move through the planet.

By 2025, eight billion people will live on Earth. If we are to continue extracting resources to maintain a high quality of life, then we, as individuals and citizens, need to know more about our planet— its processes, its resources, and its environment. And only through Earth science education can students understand and appreciate our complex planet. The future lies in the hands of students, parents, grandparents, teachers, school administrators, school board officials, and politicians at all levels of government. The future of Earth science literacy—indeed, the future itself—lies in your hands.