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Summertime, in the words of the familiar [song](#) [5], and the livin' is easy. It's not as easy for science teachers as you might think, though. Sure, with schools out of session, they're no longer spending their days in lecture and lab and their nights grading and in prep. But that doesn't mean that they're relaxing on the beach with a tall cool beverage of their choice—not that they wouldn't be entitled to do so! No, diligent science teachers are updating their curricula and lesson plans, participating in professional development, and catching up on the latest science. Unfortunately, the Heartland Institute is continuing

to inflict its climate change denial literature on science teachers across the country. (See [“Don’t Let Heartland Fool Teachers!”](#) [6] and [“A Perfect Storm of Silver Linings”](#) [7] for background.) Fortunately, the Heartland mailing continues to be greeted with skepticism and dismissed with scorn. Here’s a chronological summary of the highlights over the last month or so.

- Although it wasn’t intended as a response to the Heartland mailing, the Paleontological Research Institution’s *The Teacher-Friendly Guide to Climate Change*, published in April 2017, can serve as a good antidote. Written specifically for teachers, especially but not limited to high school earth science and environmental science teachers, the book includes “both the basics of climate change science *and* perspectives on teaching communities of learners across the polarized spectrum,” as the authors, Ingrid H. H. Zabel, Don Duggan-Haas, and Robert Ross, write in their preface. And it’s freely [available](#) [8] (PDF) on line!
- Curt Stager of Paul Smith’s College [contributed](#) [9] a fierce op-ed to *The New York Times* (April 27, 2017), describing the Heartland booklet as “unscientific propaganda from authors with connections to the disinformation-machinery of the Heartland Institute,” and adding, “Judging from the responses of educators I know who have received ‘Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming’ in recent weeks, most copies of it are likely to be ignored or discarded. But if only a small percentage of teachers use it as intended, they could still mislead tens of thousands of students with it year after year.”
- Writing at the Huffington Post (May 3, 2017), Pamela Worth of the Union of Concerned Scientists [focused](#) [10] on the debunking efforts of Brandie Freeman, a science teacher in Georgia who [dissected](#) [11] the Heartland booklet on her blog. “They used really well known refutable sources,” Freeman explained. “I saw red flag after red flag—it wasn’t even that convincing. They just did a terrible job.” But, she warned, “If a teacher already didn’t want to teach climate change or they already had their own bias, they could read into it and instead of seeing red flags, they could have confirmation.”
- PBS’s *Newshour* (May 10, 2017) [described](#) [12] a California teacher as approaching “the climate change materials he had received in his school mailbox in the same way he had taught his students to think like scientists—with an objective frame of mind.” And having done so, he concluded: “What they are proposing in this is just ludicrous.” NCSE’s Ann Reid was quoted as deploring Heartland’s effort to insinuate “politically motivated attack on science into the science classroom,” adding, “I don’t think anyone wants outside groups trying to influence what’s taught in their children’s science classroom.”
- Yale Climate Connections (May 30, 2017) [talked](#) [13] not only to teachers but also to students, like Kelsey Singer, a high school senior in Round Rock, Texas, who created her own [website](#) [14] to debunk the Heartland material. I appeared in the article, too: “He estimates that roughly three quarters of the teachers he’s seen engaging in social media or posting on science education listservs have said they simply dismissed the book.” But, I added, “The worry is that the people least likely to check [the claims of the Heartland material] are the most likely to be influenced by them.”
- In its May 30, 2017, e-newsletter, the National Science Teachers Association [extended](#) [15] a generous (and environmentally responsible!) offer: “send us the unsolicited propaganda from the Heartland Institute and we will recycle it (or just email us a photo when you recycle). In return, teachers will receive free access to our popular e-book, *Ocean’s Effect on Weather and Climate*.” The offer also [appears](#) [16] on the section of NSTA’s website containing climate science resources, which additionally features NSTA’s previous warning to teachers about the Heartland material and links to NCSE’s counter-Heartland flyers.
- Climate Feedback, a network of scientists who collectively assess the credibility of climate change

coverage, [published](#) [17] a detailed assessment of the Heartland material on May 31, 2017. Its summary: “So how accurate is this book meant to teach elements of the science of climate change to teachers? Climate Feedback asked scientists who actually work on these topics. Their conclusion: it could hardly score lower. Scientists found that almost all the claims that made it to the ‘Key Findings’ section are incorrect, misleading, based on flawed logic, or simply factually inaccurate.”

- BuzzFeed (June 7, 2017) [quoted](#) [18] Cheryl Manning, a Colorado teacher who serves as the president of the National Earth Science Teachers Association, as saying, “I’m appalled at the Heartland Institute’s gall to think we are dumb enough to buy into this.” BuzzFeed also reported that several U.S. senators, including Sheldon Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island), are concerned about the mailing, notifying science education organizations about Heartland’s campaign and seeking a response from the secretary of education, Betsy DeVos, as to whether the Department of Education or the White House was collaborating with Heartland.

And, of course, NCSE released three flyers addressing the Heartland mailing on April 27, 2017. [“Have You Received This? Then Read This”](#) [19] (PDF; one page) briefly explains why using the material in the classroom would be a mistake. [“Top 5 Reasons Why This Book Doesn’t Belong in Classroom”](#) [20] (PDF; four pages) amplifies, noting that the material gets the facts wrong; misrepresents the scientific consensus; slanders the gold standard of climate science review; contradicts state science standards, textbooks, and curricula; and uses sham citations and dishonest tactics. And [“Heartland’s Claims Against the 97% Climate Consensus”](#) [21] (PDF; six pages) debunks a central claim of the material—that there is not a robust scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change—and explains the significance of the scientific consensus. As always, NCSE is 100% behind teachers striving to present climate change honestly, accurately, and completely!

[Updated on June 7, 2017, by the addition of the last bulleted paragraph.]

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[5] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summertime_\(George_Gershwin_song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summertime_(George_Gershwin_song))

[6] <https://ncse.com/blog/2017/04/don-t-let-heartland-fool-teachers-0018504>

[7] <https://ncse.com/blog/2017/04/perfect-storm-silver-linings-0018511>

[8] <http://www.priweb.org/files/pubtext/TFG-ClimateChange-Complete.pdf>

[9] <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/27/opinion/sowing-climate-doubt-among-schoolteachers.html>

[10]

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/got-science-science-teachers-fight-back-against-climate_us_5909ff8ae4b084f59b49f9ebb

[11] <http://sustainableschoolteacher.blogspot.com/2017/04/an-open-letter-to-teachers.html>

[12] <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/anti-climate-change-booklets-landing-mailboxes-thousands-teachers/>

- [13] <https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2017/05/teachers-dubious-about-heartland-climate-mailing/>
- [14] <http://heartofheartland.weebly.com/>
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