

Who are these children and why are they wearing these funny hats?



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Background

Australians suffer the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Each year, around 1,200 Australians die from what is an almost totally preventable disease. Everyone can develop skin cancer; however, some people may be at higher risk than others, due to a range of factors.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels in Australia are higher than in Europe, even during summer. Being located close to the ozone hole over the Antarctic means much higher, more severe levels of UV radiation get through to ground level.

During summer, the earth's orbit brings Australia closer to the sun than Europe during its summer, resulting in an additional seven percent solar UV intensity. This, coupled with clearer atmospheric conditions, means Australians are exposed to up to 15 percent more UV than Europeans. <http://www.theozonhole.com/consequences.htm>

Scenario

You've just been accepted for a study abroad program in Australia, and you are excited to learn that you will be studying at the Fairfield University in Brisbane, Australia from January until March. You're also thrilled that you will be missing the Midwestern winter – you love to sunbathe, and can't wait to enjoy the sunny climate of the southern hemisphere. But when your packet of study abroad information arrives, you are surprised to discover that you are expected to bring lots of lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, as well as a large supply of SPF45 sunscreen. Do you pack as requested, or go for the tan?

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will learn about the ozone hole, what causes the ozone hole, and why the ozone hole fluctuates in size and location. Why are people in Australia and New Zealand at such high risk for skin cancer?
- 2) Students will investigate the relationship between politics and environmental policies, especially those of the United States. What is the Kyoto treaty and why has the United States refused to ratify it? What political and/or environmental consequences does this imply for the United States? Students will learn about individuals/groups that have influenced national environmental policy in the past.
- 3) Students will be able to define or describe a "global issue" – as opposed to a local or national issue. Do people really care about issues that don't affect them directly on a daily basis? What does it mean to be a 'citizen of the world?'

