

155 Shaw Drive
Fairburn, Georgia 30213
Phone | (470) 254-3900
Fax | (470) 254-3902



Mr. Kenneth Andrews, AP Coordinator
Dr. Prewitt, AP Environmental Science Teacher

APES Summer Assignment- An Analytical Study

Start Date: May 26, 2026

Submission Deadline for Weekly Assignments: August 3, 2026 (First Day of School)

Submission for Culminating Project: August 24, 2026

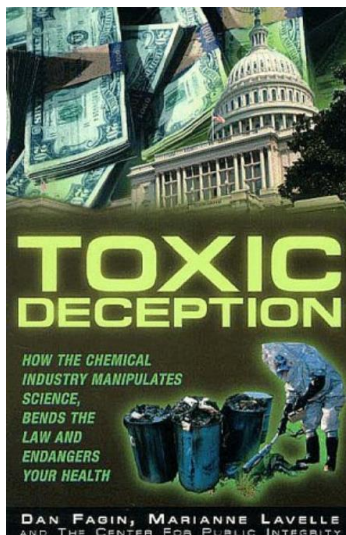
Grade Posting Date: August 28, 2026

Greetings AP Environmental Science students!

This summer you'll explore important environmental science topics we'll study more deeply in the fall. APES is a rich, interdisciplinary STEM course that blends chemistry, biology, math, history, and public policy. We'll examine environmental challenges — many caused by human activity — and learn how those events have shaped our world.

Through the summer assignments you'll step into the role of an environmental thinker, uncovering powerful stories and real-world problems that matter. There is reason for hope: by the end of this course you'll gain the knowledge and skills to inform others and help protect the planet for generations to come. Your journey starts now. Welcome to APES — an exciting, life-changing course that invites you to make a difference.

Please obtain a copy of Toxic Deception by Dan Fagin and Marianne Lavelle. I suggest buying a used paperback (Amazon often has affordable options). Order it soon so you can start reading by May 26, 2026. Full title: Toxic Deception: How the Chemical Industry Manipulates Science, Bends the Law, and Endangers Your Health (Paperback version).



ISBN-10: 1567511627

ISBN-13: 978-1567511628

“Where Education Meets Purpose”





Assignment Overview

Over the next six weeks, you will read the book *Toxic Deception*, and explore how the chemical industry influences science, regulation, and public health. You will complete weekly tasks to build your understanding, culminating in an Advocacy Project where you will propose a solution to a real-world chemical safety issue.

Due Dates:

Complete each assignment weekly on a weekly basis. See instructions below for each week below.

Final Project – Advocacy Project: Due August 28, 2026.

For all 6 weeks, follow the instructions below for saving assignments:

- 1) First, create an APES folder on your computer.
- 2) Inside your APES folder, create folders for each week. Name the folders accordingly (i.e., Week 1- The Science of Risk, Week 2 – Following the Money, etc.)
- 3) Use the following naming convention below for each task/assignment:

Week 1-Task title – last name First Initial of first name – date (M-DD-YY).

This allows you to keep track of assignments due each week. When school starts, you will upload each week into Canvas. **EX: Week 1- Dose-Response Reflection – PrewittA (5-29-26)**

Week 1: The Science of Risk

Focus: Understanding toxicology and how we measure safety.

Reading: Introduction & Chapters 1–2.

Task: Dose-Response Reflection - Write a 1-page reflection explaining the concept of dose-response. Why is it difficult to determine safe levels of chemicals? Discuss the difference between "hazard" and "risk."



Week 2: Following the Money

Focus: Industry funding and research bias.

Reading: Chapters 3–4.

Task: The Study Critique- Find a recent news article about a chemical or health product (e.g., a new sunscreen, a food additive).

Answer these questions:

- 1) Who funded the research mentioned in the article?
- 2) Does the article mention any conflicts of interest?
- 3) Based on this week's reading, what questions should you ask about this study's validity?

Deliverable: Refer to instructions

Week 3: Law, Loopholes, and Regulation

Focus: How laws protect (or fail to protect) the public.

Reading: Chapters 5–6.

Task: Regulatory Timeline - Create a visual timeline (digital or on paper) tracking the regulation of one chemical mentioned in the book (e.g., asbestos, lead, DDT). Mark at least 3 key events: Introduction, Evidence of Harm, and Regulatory Action (or lack thereof).

Deliverable: Refer to instructions. You will upload a photo or PDF of your timeline in Canvas when we return in the Fall.

Week 4: The Policy Brief – Addressing Toxic Persistence

Focus: To determine why hazardous chemicals remain in the market despite known risks and safer alternatives.

Reading: Chapters 7–8.

Task: The PR and Science Gap - Choose **one** of the Case Studies below. Read the two provided links. Write a 300-word analysis contrasting how these sources define "risk" versus "hazard."



Case A: PFAS ("Forever Chemicals")

Industry Stance: [American Chemistry Council \(ACC\) - Fluorotechnology & PFAS](#)

Independent Evidence: [Environmental Working Group \(EWG\) - What are PFAS Chemicals?](#)

Case B: Glyphosate (Roundup)

Industry Stance: [Bayer Global - The Glyphosate Guide](#)

Independent Evidence: [IARC Monographs Volume 112 - Summary of Evaluation](#) (This is a direct scientific summary of the classification; just scan the "Summary" section for the core conclusions.)

Case C: Phthalates (in plastics)

Industry Stance: [Plasticisers.org - FAQ \(Safety and Regulations\)](#)

Independent Evidence: [NIEHS/NIH - Phthalates and Their Impacts on Human Health](#)

Deliverable: Refer to instructions.

Week 5: Environmental Justice & Community Impact

Focus: Who is most affected by toxic chemicals?

Reading: Chapters 9–10.

Task: Local Connection Map

- 1) Research an environmental issue in your local community (use local news or EPA's EJScreen).
- 2) Propose one specific policy change or community-based action that could have prevented the issue you found or could mitigate it moving forward. Would stricter enforcement, better data transparency, or a 'precautionary principle' approach have changed the outcome for this community?"
- 3) Write a 300-word summary connecting the themes from the book (industry influence, regulatory gaps) to what is happening locally.

Deliverable: Refer to instructions.

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Week 6: Advocacy Project

Focus: Applying your knowledge to create change.

Reading: Review chapters/notes as needed.

Task: Advocacy Culminating Project

➤ Choose **ONE** of the following formats:

- 1) Policy Brief: A 3–5-page paper addressed to a local legislator proposing a specific policy change regarding a chemical.
- 2) Investigative Article: A 1,500-word news article written in the style of an investigative journalist exposing a chemical risk.
- 3) Awareness Campaign: A series of 3 social media posts (with graphics) and a 500-word strategy statement explaining how you would educate the public on this issue.

Deliverable: Refer to instructions.

Educationally Yours,
Dr. Prewitt
APES Teacher

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