

## Environmental Science AP 2019/2010

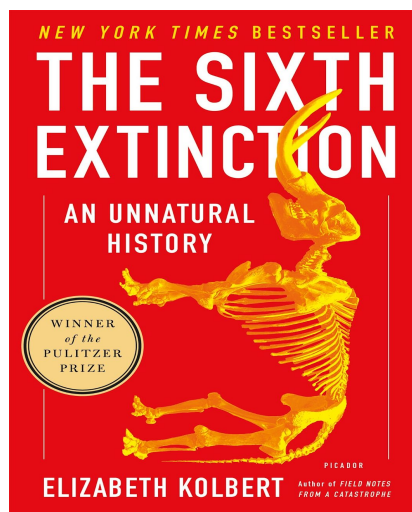
### Summer Reading Assignment

During the coming summer, you are asked to read *The Sixth Extinction*, a book by Elizabeth Kolbert. The premise of the book is that mankind - the species *Homo sapiens* - is responsible for changes to the Earth's ecosystems. These changes are resulting in the extinction of many species of animals, plants, and (I presume) fungi that have adapted to conditions around the world. Kolbert educates the reader on the current period of geological/biological time, referred to as the Anthropocene. This is a period dominated by man. She recounts the current thinking of paleontologists regarding previous mass extinctions that have occurred throughout the past hundreds of millions of years. You may be familiar with the mass extinction that is thought to be responsible for the disappearance of the dinosaurs some 65 million years ago. This event occurred at the end of the Cretaceous Period and is the fifth major extinction event chronicled by scientists in this field. Four others have been identified going back 439 million years.

Fully one third of the Environmental Science course deals with ecological matters. This book will introduce you to a wonderful array of species whose fate is used as a model or example for Ms. Kolbert to describe a destructive process or destructive impact caused by our species. You will learn how changes brought on by man are changing everything . . . AND the climate.

After reading the book, please address the following things. No one-word answers. Explain your answers.

1. Did you like the book or not?
2. Was there any optimism by the end of the book?
3. Is there a path forward that we should follow?
4. Is Ms. Kolbert a scientist?
5. Does she know what she is talking about?
6. Is her writing style good for you?
7. Would you like to read other things by Ms. Kolbert?
8. How was this book received by the reading public?



Mr. Marschall