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BHP Unit 10 Overview | OER Project

The rapid acceleration you learned about in Unit 9 produced a lot of changes. We can communicate instantaneously and travel around the world in hours. Some tourists are even heading to space! But all the fossil fuels that we burn to power our devices, produce our food, and travel are impacting our environment. Can we use the knowledge gained through collective learning to solve the climate crisis? This video is all about the future. Of course, we don't know what will happen hundreds, millions, or billions of years in the future, but we can use evidence to make some predictions.



0:12

Host writing on a notepad.

Time Travel Rachel appears.

“Welcome to Unit 10. What a fun ride it’s been. I’m sure you can endorse. This wonderful, wonderful...” Class? Learning product?

[Time Travel Rachel] Course! The rhyme is course.

[Present Rachel] Well if it isn’t me from the future.

[Time Travel Rachel] Do you know it takes you six years to come up with that rhyme?

[Present Rachel] Well, not anymore. Thanks for altering the space-time continuum.

[Time Travel Rachel] Move over, you promised I’d get to do this one.

Hello twenty-first century youth. I wore my retro outfit from the 2020’s so my futuristic clothing would not shock you. Hi, I’m time-traveler Rachel Hansen, and this is Unit 10: The Future.

1:05

I’ve leapt hundreds, thousands, and billions of years ahead. But according to the rules of time-travel I’m not allowed to tell you anything about the future that I’ve seen. But that doesn’t mean I can’t nudge you in a few interesting directions.

And after nine units of Big History, you certainly have the tools to prepare you for what lies ahead.

Course timeline graphic.

We’ve made it to the end of this course, but your work isn’t done. You have a lot of preparation to do for the future! We’ve covered so much history—13.8 billion years of it! Now, we travel into the future! So, go ahead add a few more billion years to the Big History timeline.

As you know from the early units, it’s really, really hard for humans to comprehend time at the scale of billions of years. Our entire species has only been around for less than 0.002 percent of time since the Big Bang.

2:06

Image of the universe.

And on top of the challenges of so much time, there’s also the vast, infinite expanse of space to grapple with.

Video clip of early human.

Our brains are capable of a lot of things, but envisioning a Universe of infinite space and time really strains the old neurons!

Now, in this last overview video, we’ll do what my old self had us do in each previous unit. We’ll review what we learned in Unit 9 and then get to the future.

Images and illustrations of the big questions.

As we venture into the distant and unknown time ahead of us, keep asking yourself the big questions:

What do you think humanity will accomplish in the future?

Will we ever find alien life forms on other planets?

Will we create artificial intelligence that ends up making humans into pets?

Will we solve the climate crisis and switch from burning fossil fuels to producing clean, zero-emission energy sources?

And those are just a few of the questions you’ll explore in this unit!

3:12

Images and a graph of new technologies and their pollution.

Video clips of a vacuum and soccer match.

Images of a protest and examples of collective learning.

In Unit 9, life moved pretty fast. Collective learning and the pace of innovation accelerated as the human population climbed. Fossil fuels powered new machines that allow us to travel across the world in hours and communicate with others around the globe in seconds. But using these fossil fuels also polluted our planet. Carbon dioxide levels continue to rise as does the temperature of our oceans and our sea levels.

So, while the Modern Revolution brought many positive effects, like antibiotics, robot vacuums, and epic fail soccer videos, it's also caused plenty of bad stuff.

But we can counteract many of these negative effects by changing the ways we use energy and innovating to find solutions. There are over 7 billion possible innovators on this planet. Combine all that brain power with all the knowledge we have from centuries of collective learning, and we can find these solutions.

4:18

Course threshold graphic.

Claim testers graphic.

Course threshold graphic

And that's part of what Unit 10 is all about—making evidence-based predictions and finding solutions for the future. But it's also about reviewing the 13.8 billion years of history that's behind us.

Armed with all this history, thinking skills, and information about how we know what we know, you are now ready to challenge the Big History narrative. I know; what? Look, we're not picking a fight, but you don't become a historian by just agreeing with what the last historian said. So test our claims!

For example, we built this whole course around eight thresholds of increasing complexity, but now you get to evaluate those thresholds and decide if you could do better than us! Are thresholds the best way to organize this course? Is this course missing any thresholds?

Remember in Unit 8? No threshold there, right? Do you think there's an argument to be made that we should add one?

5:17

Images and video clips of the issues facing Earth.

Well, that's one of your tasks in this unit: evaluate and challenge the narratives we've presented to you and offer new ways to do things better. That's yet another way you can contribute to collective learning.

Next, you'll investigate how the acceleration of the past 250 years has impacted the biosphere. You'll weigh the positive and negative effects of acceleration to decide what your vision of the future will be.

Of the many issues we face as a species living on Earth, what's the most important to you? Your job is to evaluate that issue and how it will affect the biosphere in 25 years and 100 years' time. You might remember doing this in the first unit of the course. This is a great time to see how your thinking has changed now that you have evidence to back up your claims.

6:07

Images of fortune tellers, course experts, and evidence.

Finally, you'll learn what the near future and distant future might hold for humanity, Earth, and the Universe. And no, you won't be using a crystal ball or tea leaves to make these predictions, you'll have to use the evidence you've learned from the authorities you've met along the way. And don't forget your own logic and intuition.

Good luck, my ancient ancestors. I must return to the future.

Video clips of the universe.

Wait, don't go yet! I still have a ton of questions about what's coming.

Will dark energy continue to accelerate the expansion of the Universe?

What does that mean for complexity—will the Universe just keep getting simpler as the space between galaxies grows?

What will happen to our Sun?

Will humans make the right decisions when it comes to energy use?

Image of a plant-based burger.

Will we all be eating plant-based burgers in the year 2050? What am I going to have for dinner?

7:04

Time Travel Rachel appears.

[Time Travel Rachel] Hey, this isn't about you, or me. It's about your students. Kids, in Unit 10, you'll try to answer all these questions and more...Except for the one about her dinner. I think we all know where that's going.

Time Travel Rachel and Present Rachel eat burgers.

[Present Rachel] Oh wow, is that a plant-based burger from the future?

[Time Travel Rachel] I somehow knew you wanted one.

[Present Rachel] Mmmm. The future tastes better than I thought it would...

[Time Travel Rachel] Yeah... That's the relish.



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