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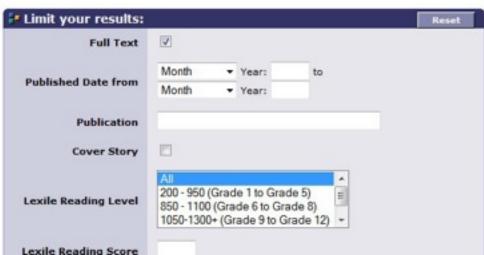
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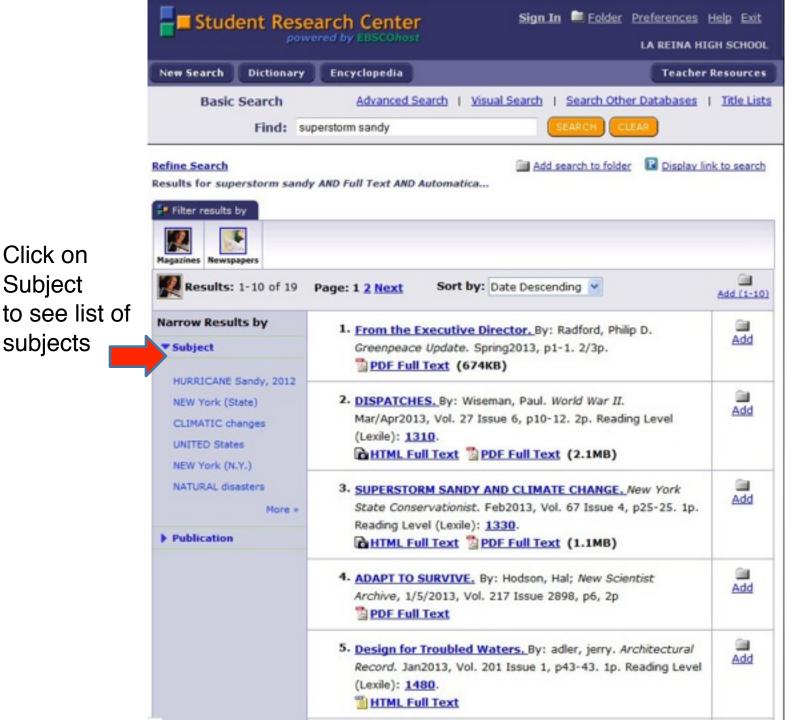


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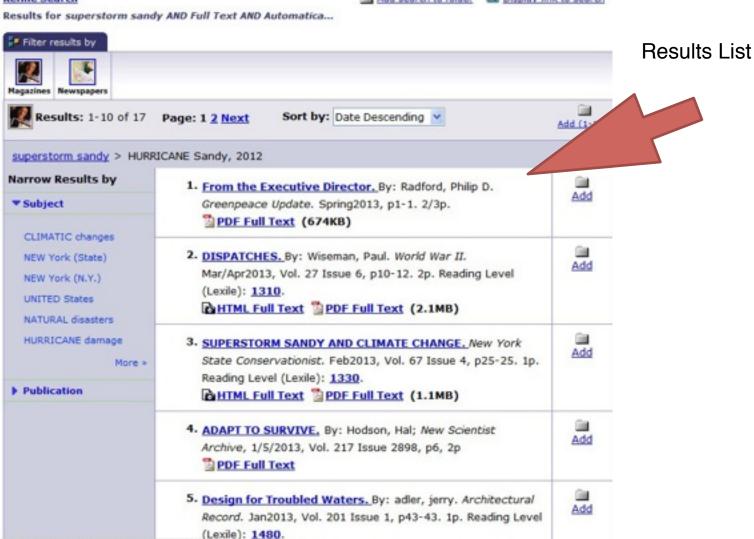


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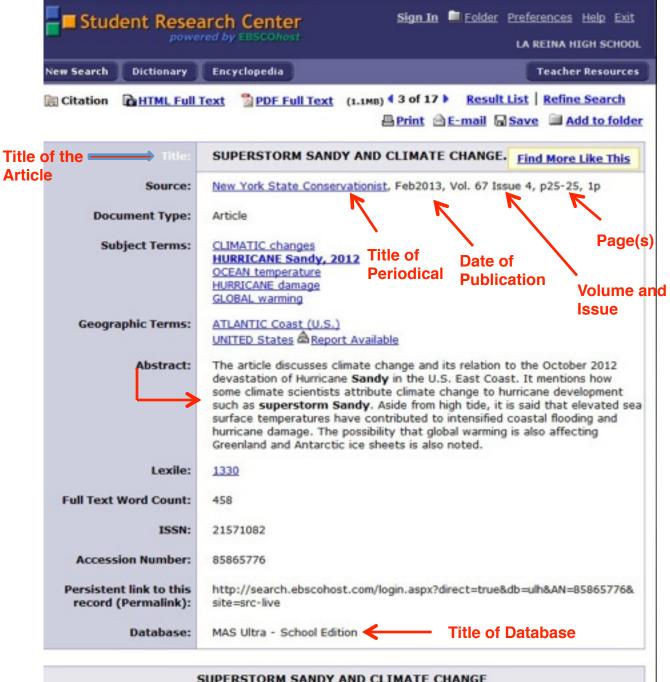
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## SUPERSTORM SANDY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In today's society, climate change is a hot-button issue. When Superstorm Sandy smashed into

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## SUPERSTORM SANDY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In today's society, climate change is a hot-button issue. When **Superstorm Sandy** smashed into the East Coast this past October, it had many back at the discussion table asking important questions, like: Was **Sandy's** destructive impact increased by climate change?

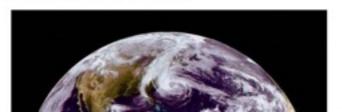
Scroll Down For Full-Text Of Article Hurricane development depends on many complex factors. Did climate change alter certain factors associated with **Sandy** (like sea surface temperatures, and the high pressure over Greenland that made the storm turn inland instead of out to sea), to cause it to become a "superstorm"? This sort of postulation is what climate scientists call "attribution"--how a specific weather event can be attributed to a particular cause in a global climate system that is very capable of producing extreme events from time to time on its own. It is one of the hardest things to do, and, in the case of **Sandy**, is a source of some debate. Many climate scientists view **Sandy's** origins as fairly typical; others think that things like the loss of arctic sea ice played an important role in the storm's development and path.

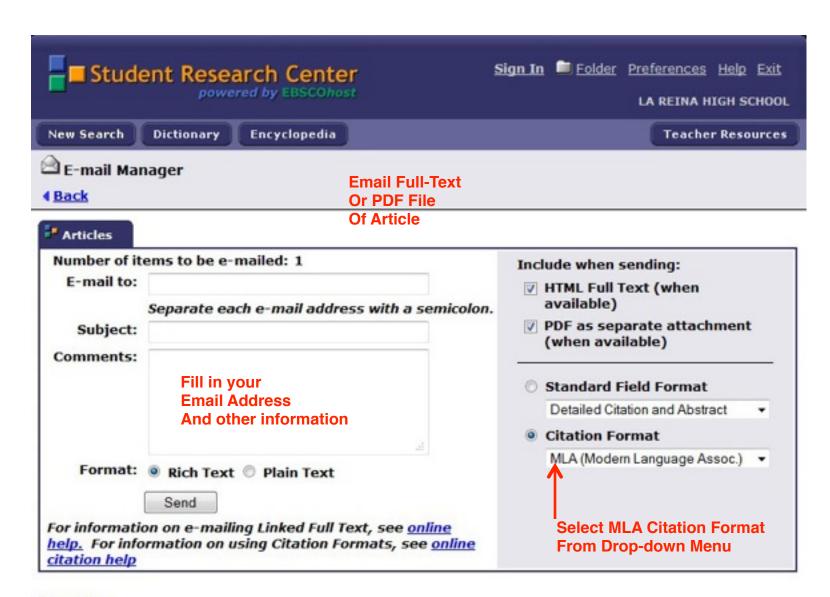
About 15% of the elevated sea surface temperatures feeding **Sandy** can be attributed to global warming as opposed to other regional patterns. There has also been nearly a foot of sea-level rise over the past century as the oceans have warmed. These factors, as well as others (like peak storm surge coinciding with high tide), increased **Sandy's** coastal flooding and damage.

We can predict that climate change will become more important throughout the coming century as major flooding events could become relatively commonplace. This would be due, in part, to steadily rising sea temperatures, ice melt and, in this context, to an accelerating rate of sea-level rise.

The ClimAID report discusses two different projections of sea-level rise. The more conservative estimate suggests an additional two feet in sea-level rise due to the warming ocean water expanding and melting of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. However, more attention is being given to the alternative idea that, even though total melting of these ice sheets will take centuries, they may melt more quickly than anticipated and could contribute to a sea-level rise of more than four feet this century.

Climate scientists continue to try to resolve the difference between these two projections. However, the rapid loss of arctic sea ice and current estimates of melt rates cause many to take higher rates more seriously. If the more dire predictors occur, and if carbon emissions continue on a high trajectory, coastal flooding events that now occur about once in a hundred years would happen as frequently as once in every 15 to 20 years.





Top of Page

