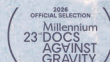


FROM THE OSCAR® & BAFTA NOMINATED DIRECTOR OF FIRE OF LOVE



"MAGNIFICENT"

GRADE A CRITIC'S PICK

-INDIEWIRE



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

DOCUMENTARY
FILMS

TIME AND WATER



HOW DO YOU SAY GOODBYE TO SOMETHING YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU COULD LOSE?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

TIME AND WATER

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RUN TIME

92:56

FACEBOOK: @Natgeodocs **INSTAGRAM:** @Natgeodocs **HASHTAG:** #Timeandwater

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

TIME AND WATER is a film about what we pass on to our loved ones: memories, knowledge, stories, landscapes – and our planet itself.

I make films exploring how humans connect with the natural world, often through allegory, metaphor, and myth. Central to my work is time – cultural rhythms, seasonal cycles, and geologic scales that show how human lives are intertwined with the living systems around us.

In **TIME AND WATER**, my team and I collaborated closely with writer Andri Snær Magnason to weave the stories of his grandparents, Árni and Hulda, Jón and Dísá, with that of Iceland’s glaciers. In doing so, we create a kind of cinematic time capsule of their memories and of Iceland’s cultural and environmental history. The intimate bond between Andri and his grandparents, especially Grandpa Árni, anchors the story: as Árni’s recollections fade, the glaciers around him are also receding, a parallel that underscores our fragility in the passage of time and the urgent reality of our climate emergency.

TIME AND WATER becomes both a reflection on loss and a call to action, showing how personal and planetary histories intersect and how our choices today ripple forward to shape the world our loved ones will inherit.

-Sara Dosa

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to ignite meaningful conversations around **TIME AND WATER**. Inside, you'll find discussion questions, background context, additional resources, and ideas for further engagement. We hope this guide helps deepen engagement and brings the stories, themes, and insights of **TIME AND WATER** vividly to life.



FILM OVERVIEW

TIME AND WATER is a powerful documentary that explores the intimate connection between humans and the natural world through the lenses of personal memories, archival footage, and the monumental movements of glaciers. Renowned Icelandic poet and sci-fi writer Andri Snær Magnason constructs a cinematic time capsule to preserve fleeting moments of life and memory alongside Iceland's changing landscapes, particularly as its glaciers recede due to climate change. Using his own archives, family photographs, and Icelandic myths, Andri embarks on a journey through time, grappling with the existential question of loss as Okjökull becomes the first glacier declared dead by the climate emergency. This layered storytelling not only highlights the fragile beauty of our world but also invites reflection on memory, generational ties, and our place within living systems. **TIME AND WATER** serves as a collage elegy that probes what it means to be alive amid profound epochal change, reminding us of the interconnectedness of human experiences and the planet's cycles.



GLACIERS



Glaciers are critical parts of our biosphere whose movements indicate the effects of climate change, illustrating the beauty, power and the fragility of our planet's ecosystems. **TIME AND WATER** highlights how these majestic ice formations are not just stunning natural wonders but also vital freshwater reservoirs that sustain communities and wildlife. As glaciers recede due to rising temperatures caused by burning fossil fuels, the urgent realities of climate change are revealed, prompting viewers to reflect on our interconnectedness with nature and the critical need for environmental stewardship.

WHAT ARE GLACIERS?

- A glacier is a massive accumulation of ice and snow that slowly flows over land under its own weight.
- They are found all over the world, from Tanzania to Argentina to Tibet, but are especially prevalent in polar regions and high mountain ranges with low summer temperatures. Glaciers and ice sheets currently cover about 10% of the Earth's land surface.
- A glacier is a smaller mass of ice that forms on land and slowly flows downhill, usually found in mountains or valleys. An ice sheet is enormous, covering entire land areas and spreading outward in all directions, like a continent buried under ice (found today in Antarctica and Greenland).

ROLE IN PLANET'S ECOLOGY AND WATER SYSTEMS

- **Freshwater Reservoirs:** Glaciers and ice sheets store approximately 69% of the world's fresh water, acting as a crucial resource for millions of people.
- **Ecosystem Balance:** They influence local ecosystems by providing essential water flow to rivers, lakes, and wetlands, supporting diverse plant and animal life.
- **Climate Regulation:** Glaciers reflect sunlight, helping to regulate the Earth's temperature. Their melting affects global climate and weather patterns.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Melting Glaciers:** Rising global temperatures are causing glaciers to melt at an unprecedented rate, leading to rising sea levels, reducing freshwater availability, and altering ocean and atmospheric conditions that shape global weather patterns. In turn, this is altering the chemical balance and contributing to a weakening of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), a major ocean current system that helps regulate climate by moving heat northward.

GLACIERS cont.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE cont.

- **Ecosystem Disruption:** As glaciers shrink, the ecosystems that depend on their meltwater face stress, threatening species and biodiversity. Changes in glacier runoff can also ripple through river systems, coastal zones, and ocean circulation, affecting habitats far beyond the ice itself.
- **Feedback Loop:** The loss of glaciers reduces the Earth's reflective power, leading to even more warming and accelerated melting. In parallel, added meltwater can strengthen ocean-surface freshening in the North Atlantic, which may further weaken AMOC and amplify regional climate shifts and extreme weather.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- How do glaciers impact your local water systems and ecology?
- What are the social and economic implications of glacier melt for communities worldwide?
- In what ways can we address the challenges posed by climate change affecting glaciers?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

UNDERSTANDING THE FILM

- 1 What are your biggest takeaways from **TIME AND WATER**? How would you describe this film to someone else?
- 2 What emotions did the film evoke in you? Were there moments that surprised or moved you?
- 3 What storytelling choices (such as archival footage, first-person narration, animation, folk music) stood out to you, and why?
- 4 How does **TIME AND WATER** differ from other stories you've seen about climate change?
- 5 How can sharing stories and memories shape how we deal with loss, and can they make what's gone feel present in a new way?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

SMALL STORIES, BIG INSIGHTS: CONNECTING PERSONAL NARRATIVES TO THE WORLD AROUND US

- 1 How do the intimate family stories in **TIME AND WATER** connect to universal themes, like intergenerational responsibility or environmental stewardship?
- 2 How does **TIME AND WATER** show the connection between human life and natural change, such as glacial shifts or environmental transformations?
- 3 Were there any small, intimate moments in the film that made you reflect differently on your own relationship with time, nature, or family?
- 4 In what ways can personal narratives inspire action or change in our communities or the environment?
- 5 In the film, a glacier is treated as something to mourn. What do you think about that?
- 6 How do you see places or natural environments holding memories the way people do?
- 7 What is something you care about and would want future generations to be able to experience?
- 8 How can mourning and processing grief transform feelings of loss and sadness?
- 9 The film uses references to Nordic mythology to shed light on large forces or events, such as Auðhumla, the frozen cow and Thor conquering the Midgard Serpent. Can you think of other examples of mythology, indigenous wisdom or other stories that could shed light on the current state of our planet?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

FROM FAMILY TO FUTURE: THE HANDSHAKE OF GENERATIONS

- 1 How does the film explore the bonds between generations? How do moments from Andri's family archives (like his grandmother's influence) shape the story?
- 2 What does the phrase "handshake of generations" mean to you in the context of this film? How does it connect past, present, and future actions?
- 3 How do family stories and memories help us understand larger environmental or societal issues?
- 4 In what ways does the film inspire audiences to consider how our choices today, especially collective ones, will affect future generations?
- 5 How do you feel about the future? What moments in the film change the way you perceive the future or your role in shaping it?
- 6 What is the role of imagination and storytelling in creating new possible futures for our planet and communities?
- 7 How can current generations take actions to make a positive impact on the climate and the future?
- 8 What is something, big or small, you would want to remember and protect for the future?
- 9 Try to do your own calculation. When do you become as old as the oldest person you know or have known? In what year will you turn 95?



ANDRI SNÆR MAGNASON

POET, AUTHOR AND CLIMATE ACTIVIST

Andri Snær Magnason is an Icelandic writer. He has written poetry, fiction, plays, nonfiction and science fiction. His book “On Time and Water” has been translated into more than 30 languages. Magnason has received international awards, such as the Philip K. Dick Honorary Mention for “LoveStar,” the Prima Tiziano Terzani in Italy for “On Time and Water,” and the Green Earth Book Award for his YA book “The Casket of Time.” “The Story of the Blue Planet” has been translated into more than 40 languages, and his play based on the story has been performed in 15 countries.



OKJÖKULL

“A Letter to The Future” By Andri Snær Magnason



On August 18, 2019, more than 100 people, including scientists, activists, journalists, and political leaders, hiked for two hours to the summit of Iceland’s Ok volcano to hold a funeral for Okjökull, the country’s first glacier lost to climate change, where a memorial plaque titled “A Letter to the Future,” written by Andri Snær Magnason, was installed.

The funeral for Okjökull was a ritual of mourning, blending scientific acknowledgment with cultural ceremony: participants gathered on the mountain for readings, poetry, speeches, and moments of silence. Andri wrote and presented this commemorative plaque where he acknowledged that Okjökull had lost its status as a glacier and warned that many more would follow unless we curb the social, economic and institutional forces driving the planet’s warming. This act of “ecological grief” generated widespread international media attention, with global coverage and striking images helping transform the event into a powerful symbol of the climate crisis. At the center of the ceremony, the memorial plaque “A Letter to the Future” was installed directly onto the exposed rock where the glacier once stood, and it remains there today as a permanent marker in the landscape, intended to endure long after the ice has disappeared.

Since its unveiling, versions of this plaque have appeared on several “dead” glaciers around the world, including a Spanish translation placed on a glacier in Mexico. These plaque additions underscore that glacier loss is not isolated, but a global and urgent reality.



ACTIVITY

BUILD A TIME CAPSULE

Think about what you would want to put in your own time capsule. What memories, experiences and stories of your family, community, and environment do you want to share with future generations?

ASK SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY OR COMMUNITY ABOUT THEIR OWN MEMORIES:

- What was the planet like when they were growing up, and how is it different now?
- Did they play outside? (There's nature in both cities and rural places.)
- Did they or anyone they know work outside? How did weather and seasonal changes impact their lives?

ASK YOURSELF:

- When you're outside, what do you enjoy about the natural world, and what are some experiences you have in it? How would you describe it to future generations?
- What things in the world around you do you imagine will be different in the future? How will that make people's lives different?
- What do you wonder might happen during your own lifetime that might shape the future?

Record your questions and responses — on a device or on paper — and create a special time capsule. It might be a box, or a file you send yourself on the computer, etc.



RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES TO EXTEND THE CONVERSATION

INTERVIEWS AND WRITINGS BY ANDRI SNÆR MAGNASON

- *On Time and Water* by Andri Snær Magnason – Read an excerpt from the book here: [“Handshake of Generations”](#)
- New York Times Op-Ed written by Andri Snaer Magnason – [“The Icelandic Landscape is Changing and It’s Changing Us”](#)
- [Emergence Magazine](#) | A Conversation with Andri Snaer Magnason
- [BBC Lights Out Podcast](#) | Interview with Andri Snaer Magnason
- [Time Sensitive Podcast](#) | Andri Snær Magnason on How Time and Water Explain the Climate Crisis
- [The Guardian](#) | Andri Snaer Magnason Op-Ed – The glaciers of Iceland seemed eternal. Now a country mourns their loss

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [The Smithsonian](#) | “Plaque Memorializes First Icelandic Glacier Lost to Climate Change”
- [OGGM-Edu](#) | Glacier modeling and interactive tools: Apps and visual tools to explore glaciological processes, glacier changes, and future scenarios.
- [International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation](#) | Includes the Ice School e-learning site for ages ~12-14, glacier change platforms, and stories about glacier loss globally.
- [Science Trek](#) | Curated list of glacier lesson plans, classroom activities, videos, and interactive tools from organizations like National Geographic, NASA, PBS, and USGS. Great for classroom, middle school, or high school lessons.
- [Glacial Detectives \(National Park Service\)](#) | A structured lesson plan for upper elementary students focused on glacier formation, movement, and land features using real photos and investigative activities.
- [USGS](#) | Evaluating Glacier and Landscape Change
- [Iceland Glaciological Society](#) | Glacier changes in Iceland
- [Nature Science Institute of Iceland](#) | Glaciers
- [Vatnajökull National Park](#) | Melting glaciers
- [UN](#) | What is Climate Change?
- [PBS](#) | Climate Literacy
- [Earth Island](#) | Remembrance in the Anthropocene
- [National Snow and Ice Data Center](#) | Why Glaciers Matter
- [Wrinkled Time](#) | The Persistence of Past Worlds on Earth
- [Why One Geologist Thinks We Should All Pay More Attention to Rocks](#)
- [As the Andes’ glaciers melt, our values can help: Voices from the land \(Colombia\)](#)
- [Listening, Response-Ability, and the Disappearance of Mexico’s Last Glacier](#)
- [Africa’s Tropical Glaciers Have Shrunk by 90 Percent, Research Shows](#)
- [Nature](#) | Himalayan glaciers present a climate paradox
- [‘On thin ice’: UN chief sounds alarm over rapid Himalayan glacier melt](#)