

# GLOBAL WARMING

Over the years we've watched as climate change has wrecked our planet and has greatly impacted the lives of every living creature. Yet despite the countless warnings we receive, we're still not doing enough to stop it. The question we should all be asking ourselves is, is our life style good for the environment and is there any hope for the future?

## What is climate change?

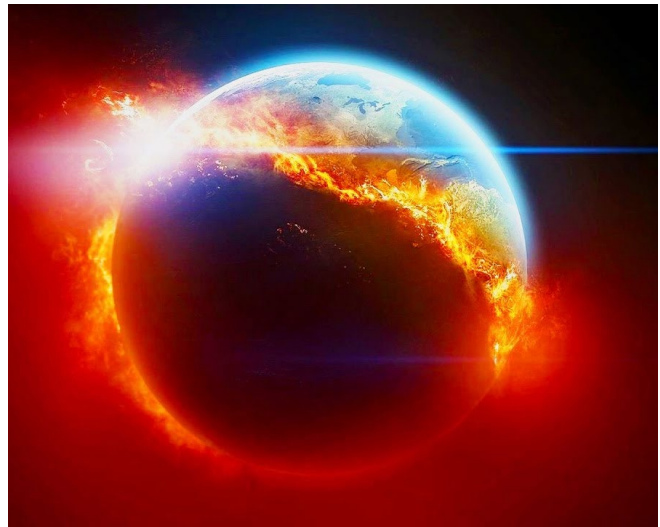
Climate change is something which has occurred over time due to humans and our way of living. The sun's rays pass through the atmosphere, which affects our climate. Some of these rays are reflected into space, which enables the Earth to cool down, however some rays are trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide. With the use of fossil fuels for things like transport and heating, these greenhouse gas emissions are building up, meaning more heat from the sun is being held in the Earth's atmosphere. This is causing the world to get warmer, which could lead to all kinds of problems later on.

## What are greenhouse gases and where do they come from?

Greenhouse gases are the cause for global warming, as they're a type of gas which absorbs infrared radiation. Examples of these gases include methane, water vapour, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide. These greenhouse gases have been produced due to human activity, including the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), which emit CO<sub>2</sub> when burnt.

Deforestation has also contributed to climate change, as trees take in carbon dioxide and output oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. With more trees being cut down, the more CO<sub>2</sub> there is in the atmosphere and the less oxygen there is being emitted.

Not only this, but farming also adds to greenhouse gas emissions, as animals are releasing methane



into the atmosphere. The more these gases build up, the more infrared radiation is absorbed, which is warming the Earth.

## World's top 12 emitters of CO<sub>2</sub> (megatons per year):

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) China: 11,256 | 7) Germany: 753       |
| 2) US: 5,275     | 8) Iran: 728          |
| 3) EU: 3,457     | 9) South Korea: 695   |
| 4) India: 2,622  | 10) Saudi Arabia: 625 |
| 5) Russia: 1,748 | 11) Canada: 594       |
| 6) Japan: 1,199  | 12) Indonesia: 558    |

## What are the impacts of global warming?

There are many situations which could occur and are currently happening due to climate change.

Because, the polar ice caps are melting, weather will

become very extreme and unpredictable, as the ice caps control our weather.

Also, with the ice caps melting, the sea level will rise with the added water, flooding many coastal areas in the future.



Droughts may also be a possibility, which could lead to more fires. An example of this would be the recent Australian bush fires, which got

seriously out of hand and destroyed lots of Australia's wildlife.

With the Earth's surface heating up many species could go extinct, such as the polar bear, as with the ice of the polar regions melting, their habitats are being destroyed, which could lead to them disappearing entirely. Climate change also threatens the human race in many ways which could lead to our own extinction.

Examples of this include water supplies running low with the increase in temperatures, as well as flooding introducing more water borne diseases to the population and causing them to spread.

Not only this, but crops could also be wiped out by floods or extreme heat and weather, which could lead to not enough food available for people, as well as economic impacts such as the price for food increasing.

With flooding and extreme changes in the weather people may also start migrating to other areas which aren't as badly impacted, causing overcrowding and forcing the economy down into poverty.

Tourism may also decrease for places like ski resorts, as with the snow melting from climate change, fewer people will visit as they'll be unable to ski with a lack of snow. This could be bad for areas which rely on tourism as a source of income.

### **What can we do about it?**

It's believed that we are unable to prevent climate change from occurring, as we've selfishly continued to carry on as we've done before. Because of this we can't reverse our actions and get rid of all the greenhouse gases lurking in our atmosphere. However, we will be able to slow it down by a significant amount if we act now.

We need to stop using fossil fuels and supporting these industries who are rich because they poison the planet. We need to find alternative fuel sources which are preferably renewable, such as solar power and wind power etc.

We need to stop dumping plastic into the oceans, which is killing marine life, either by finding a way to responsibly dispose of it, recycle it or (even better) to not use it at all unless absolutely necessary. Plastic production is adding to global warming. We should replace plastic with glass

instead, as it's a lot easier to recycle and will benefit the environment. Is plastic really that important to the extent that it's destroying the Earth and living creatures?

We also need to eat less meat, as mass farming of animals such as cows is contributing to a huge percentage of methane emissions. This doesn't mean we all need to go vegetarian, it just means we have to cut down the amount of meat we consume in our diet, so that could mean eating red meat, like beef, once a month and chicken once a week. Not only will eating less meat be healthier for the environment, it'll also be a lot healthier for us.

Saving water is also important, so that might be showering rather than having a bath, as well as turning the tap off when you're not using it.



Fast fashion is also contributing to climate change, with people constantly buying new clothes even when they don't necessarily need them. Growing cotton uses an awful lot of water, which could instead be used to grow crops or given to people in poverty who have no access to clean water. We should start purchasing fewer clothes, which are good quality, as well as long lasting and something you will wear frequently and not once then throw away. When we do purchase clothes, they should be responsibly manufactured and made from materials such as recycled fabrics and plastic, as well as plant materials such as **organic cotton** (this uses fewer chemicals and is much more eco-friendly than normal cotton) and bamboo. We should only every throw away clothes that no longer fit or are worn/damaged.



We should also focus on recycling and reusing things, such as giving away old clothes and toys to charity shops, as well as upcycling old furniture. Although many of us want to buy new clothing and household items, buying second hand isn't really that bad and there are lots of good quality things out there which may be better than some of the brand-new items you can buy in a shop.



Raising awareness is also crucial. Whether that's giving a presentation to a group of people or going to the extent of Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion and being more forceful in your approach. Understanding is vital to helping us fight back against global warming. We need to stop calculating how much time we have left and how much greenhouse gas is in our atmosphere and actually do something about it.

#### Statistics:

- Half the volume of sea ice has been lost since the late 70s.
- The average temperature of the world is 1.1°C higher than it was in 'pre-industrial' times.
- We could be heading for a temperature rise of 3°C+ by the end of the century.
- By 2050, greenhouse gas levels must be net 0.

#### Sources and images:

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