

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY



Here are some English words and phrases we use for talking about environmental issues such as climate change and global warming:

Atmosphere - The layer of air surrounding the earth that protects us from the sun's harmful rays.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) - a transparent gas that is either emitted or absorbed by all living things. Carbon Dioxide is a greenhouse gas which is naturally present in the earth's atmosphere.

Climate - typical weather conditions for a specific part of the world.

Climate Change - major, long term changes to global weather patterns. Climate change can occur naturally or it can be driven by human actions. Climate change can disrupt the balance of nature and threaten vulnerable species with extinction.

Ecosystems - natural habitats that support different kinds of animal and plant life, such as coral reefs.

Emissions - gases and other substances discharged into the air, such as plumes of smoke from coal-fired power stations or car exhaust fumes.

Extinction - when a plant or animal species dies out, it becomes extinct.

Fossil Fuels - sources of energy derived from the remains of living things that died a long time ago. Gas, coal, and oil are all fossil fuels.

Global Warming - a rise in the earth's temperature caused by an increase in greenhouse gases. If left unchecked, global warming leads to climate change which can be harmful for the environment.

The Greenhouse Effect - the effect that greenhouse gases have on the environment. Without the greenhouse effect, life on earth would cease to exist but human pollution intensifies it, and that can lead to problems.

Greenhouse Gases - gases that allow radiation from the sun to pass through the earth's atmosphere, and trap outgoing heat from the earth's surface. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane.

Solar Radiation - energy generated by the sun. Solar radiation is filtered by the atmosphere.

Weather - the atmospheric conditions which relate to a specific time and place.

Carbon footprint - the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organization, or community.

Ozone hole - a severe depletion of ozone in a region of the [ozone layer](#), particularly over Antarctica and over the Arctic.