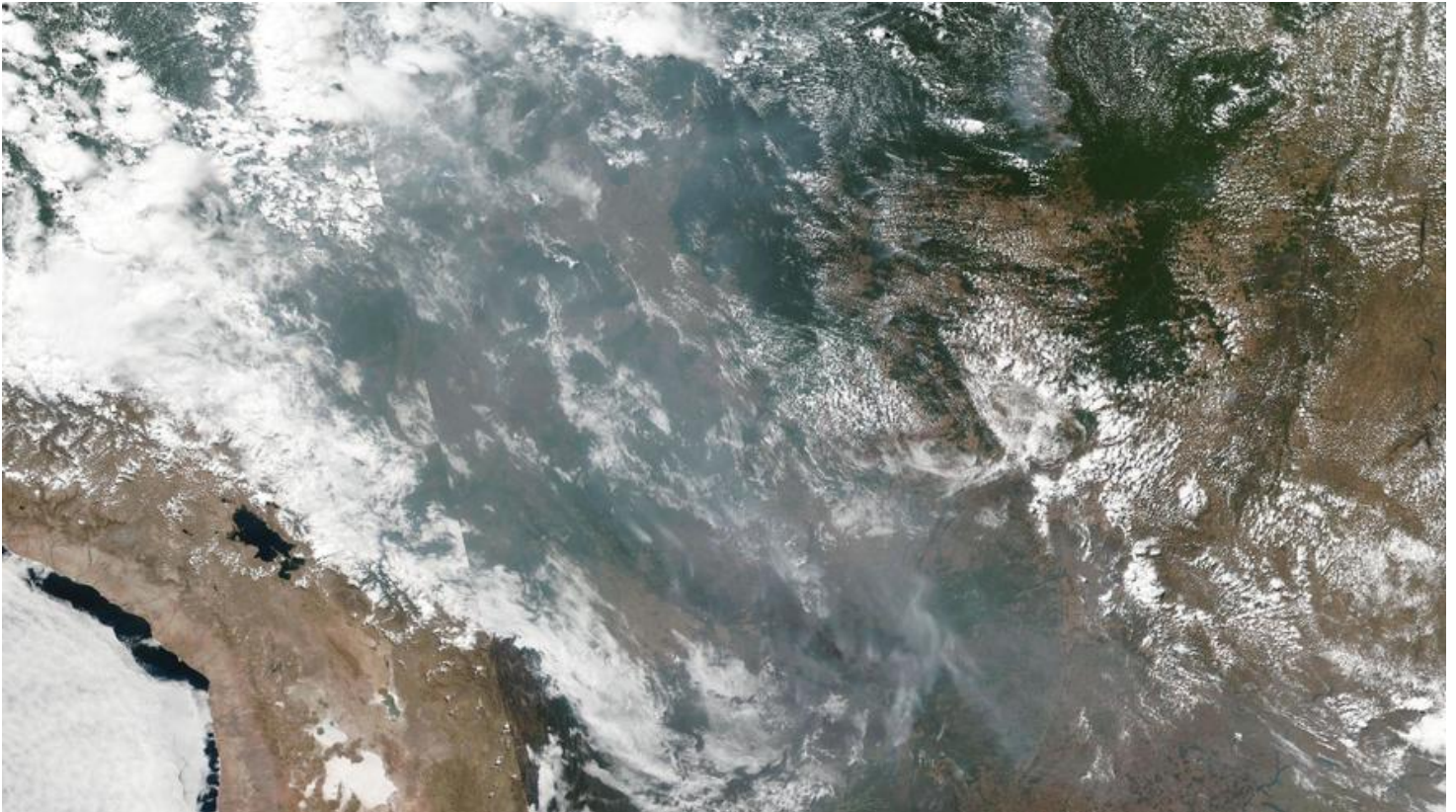


# Large areas of the Amazon rain forest in Brazil are on fire

By The Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 08.26.19

Word Count **408**

Level **600L**



A satellite view of smoke and fires in several states within Brazil including Amazonas, Mato Grosso and Rondônia on August 20, 2019.  
Photo by: NASA

Parts of the Amazon rain forest are burning. The Amazon is a very important ecosystem in our world. The fires have caused big debates. People don't agree on how the Brazilian government uses the land.

Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) studies science. It says the Brazilian Amazon has had 74,155 fires already this year. That's 85 percent more than last year.

Alberto Setzer works for INPE. He says that dry conditions make it easier for fires to spread. Still, humans are responsible for starting the fires. Sometimes they start the fires by accident. Other times, they start them on purpose.

INPE has seen much more deforestation in the Amazon this year. More trees are being cut down. There are fears that people are clearing the land. They want to use the rain forest for farming. The land is often cleared without permission.

INPE told the news media about what it was seeing in the rain forest. This angered Jair Bolsonaro. He is Brazil's president. Bolsonaro wants more agriculture and mining in the Amazon. He said INPE was lying about the situation in the Amazon.

### **Fires Are Making Global Warming Worse**

Fires and deforestation in the Amazon affect climate change. The Earth is getting warmer. This type of climate change is called global warming. People burn fossil fuels like gas and coal. It's what we use to heat our homes and power cars. Fossil fuels create greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide. Those gases trap heat in the air. This causes the climate to become warmer. Many countries want to stop global warming. The fires are making it very hard to do that.

The Amazon takes carbon dioxide out of the air. It helps produce the oxygen we breathe. However, it is becoming harder for the Amazon to do this. Deforestation and fires are part of the problem. Serious consequences could happen if the Amazon stops absorbing carbon dioxide. Global warming would happen faster. Many plants and animals would be lost.

Vitor Gomes studies the environment in Brazil. He says serious problems could happen if we don't limit deforestation. The rain forest could be very damaged by 2050. At some point, the forest won't get better.

Gomes added that half of the trees in the Amazon could be in danger soon. That is in the best possible situation. However, things don't look good. The patterns we see today suggest we could be past the worst possible situation.

## Quiz

- 1 Which sentence from the article states a MAIN idea of the entire article?
- (A) Parts of the Amazon rain forest are burning.
  - (B) They want to use the rain forest for farming.
  - (C) This type of climate change is called global warming.
  - (D) At some point, the forest will not get better.
- 2 A main idea of the article is that the Amazon is an important ecosystem.  
Which key detail from the article supports this MAIN idea?
- (A) Still, humans are responsible for starting the fires.
  - (B) INPE has seen much more deforestation in the Amazon this year.
  - (C) It helps to produce the oxygen we breathe.
  - (D) The rain forest could be very damaged by 2050.
- 3 According to the introduction [paragraphs 1-5], WHY was Jair Bolsonaro angry at INPE?
- (A) because INPE lied about mining and planting crops in the rain forest
  - (B) because INPE told the news about what was happening in the rain forest
  - (C) because INPE said there were more fires in the rain forest than there were
  - (D) because INPE cut down many trees in the rain forest
- 4 How do the fires in the Amazon affect the world?
- (A) If the Amazon is destroyed, people would run out of fossil fuels. They would not be able to have heat or use cars.
  - (B) If the Amazon keeps burning, it would take all of the carbon dioxide out of the air. It would be hard for people to breathe.
  - (C) If the Amazon burns down, farmers would have more space to farm. There would be more food for the world.
  - (D) If the Amazon is damaged, global warming would happen faster. Many plants and animals would be lost.

## Answer Key

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- (D) **If the Amazon is damaged, global warming would happen faster. Many plants and animals would be lost.**