

Water

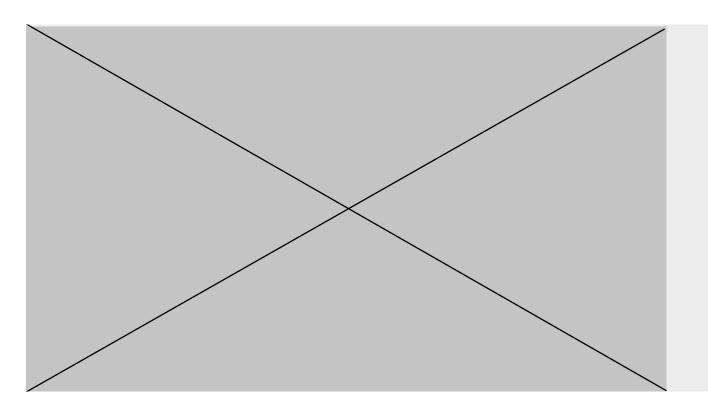
Record floods. Raging storms.

Deadly heat. Climate change
manifests itself in myriad ways, and
it's the ultimate equalizer: a
challenge faced by every living
being.

The term climate refers to the general weather conditions of a place over many years. In the United States, for example, Maine's climate is cold and snowy in winter while South Florida's is tropical year-round. Climate change is a significant variation of average weather conditions—say, conditions becoming warmer, wetter, or drier—over several decades or more. It's that longer-term trend that differentiates climate change from natural weather variability. And while "climate change" and "global warming" are often used interchangeably, global warming—the recent rise in the global average temperature near the earth's surface—is just one aspect of climate change.

Causes

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Effects

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