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**Mini-Assignment 2**

One graph that really stood out to me as interesting and important was the following:

A graph showing the temperature of the year

Description automatically generated

I have always been deeply passionate about climate change and environmental sustainability, so selecting this graph was a natural and meaningful choice. As someone who has followed the scientific and social conversations around climate change for years and has even taken undergraduate courses on the topic, I appreciate how powerful visual representations can be in communicating critical issues. This particular graph stands out because of its ability to evoke a strong emotional and intellectual response by showcasing the global temperature shifts over a prolonged period—spanning decades. The gradual changes over time, presented with the undulating waves and the thoughtful use of colour gradients, tell the story that the Earth’s temperature has steadily risen. This visual cue makes the data accessible, drawing attention to a pressing issue in an easy-to-understand and impactful way.

That said, I found one aspect of the graph less effective. The explanation regarding the ridges confused me, and I began to question my initial understanding of the graph. Before encountering that particular sentence, I felt confident in my interpretation that the graph represented the average (mean) temperature for each year from 1940 to 2020. However, after reading the explanation of the ridges, I was left uncertain about what the data actually represented. Perhaps there is more nuance in the design that I initially missed. While this lack of clarity is a shortcoming in the graph’s presentation, I still believe that, with the exception of that one detail, the graph does an excellent job of conveying the overall message. The visual story it tells is both straightforward and alarming.

What I appreciate most about this graph is how it effectively illustrates a complex global problem without the viewer needing to interpret small details or look for hidden trends. Unlike the 'hockey stick' graph, which can require a closer look to grasp fully, this graph lays out the stark reality of rising temperatures visually strikingly. It is a shame that it is not more widely recognized or utilized in climate change communication efforts. I believe that, with just a little more clarity on certain points, it could become a highly effective tool for educating the public on the severity of global warming. Its simplicity, combined with its visual impact, makes it a valuable resource for telling the story of climate change in a way that resonates with a broad audience.