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The Martian Climate: past and present

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Mars presents a complex case study of climate change given its history as a periodically warm and wet planet, with applications to astrobiology and understanding greenhouse feedback mechanisms on Earth. A one-dimensional energy balance model (EBM) is built using the finite difference method, based on a differential equation encompassing the effects of heat capacity, solar insolation, albedo, meridional heat diffusion, and outgoing radiation. Mean annual temperature values agree to a latitudinally averaged value of 1% to Earth climate fit from literature, and to within 3.2% when the same model is applied to Mars. Seasonal variations are clearly observed in the model and replicate more extreme variations expected on Mars, as well as the combined effects of obliquity and an eccentric orbit. Further work involving CO₂ cycle modelling is discussed to improve the Mars model given the importance of the annual pressure cycle.