

Is global warming real? assignment



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Scientists believe this is causing glaciers to melt, leading sea levels to rise. Wildlife is struggling to keep up with the rapid climate change and weather conditions are becoming more severe. This is why global warming is also referred to as 'climate change'. There is predicted to be less rainfall leading to water shortages and crop failures, certain species of animals and plants becoming extinct and the spread of disease due to insects migrating to warming countries to name just a few effects of global warming.

Greenhouse gases trap the sun's heat and light in Earth's atmosphere which raises the temperature on Earth, this is called 'the greenhouse effect'.

Greenhouse gases include Carbon Dioxide, water vapor, Nitrous Oxide and Methane which absorb and release thermal infrared radiation leading to the increase in Earth's temperatures. Greenhouse gases are needed to support life as we know it. Without these natural gases heat would escape into Space, they are what keep heat near Earth's surface. According to The National Geographic [online] 'This greenhouse effect is what keeps the Earth's climate livable.

Without it, the Earth's surface would be an average of about 60 degrees Fahrenheit cooler'. The principal cause of global warming is thought to be the burning of fossil fuels such as oil and coal which releases CO₂ into the atmosphere. Another major cause is thought to be deforestation. When deforestation takes place the carbon held by the trees and soil is released into the atmosphere adding to the greenhouse gases. Deforestation is described as the second leading contributor for carbon emissions globally (Climate Change: Our Priority).

Pollution occurs when vehicles burn fossil fuels such as petrol and diesel to produce their power, when burnt these fuels will also be released into the Earth's atmosphere. Scientists have reason to believe that heat waves are becoming more frequent, cold snaps are shorter, glaciers are melting, and climate changes could see animal and plant species becoming extinct. With less rainfall crops could fail. If sea levels keep rising land will be covered leading to whole populations needing to be moved to other land.

The NOAA produced a graph which shows the atmospheric samples contained in ice cores and more recent direct measurements that provides evidence that atmospheric CO₂ has increased since the Industrial Revolution in the 1800's. The EPIC have also detected decreases in snow and ice cover that are consistent with the warming of the atmosphere, they also state that using satellite data Arctic sea ice has minimized every decade since 1978. In 1997 the Kyoto Protocol emerged from the UN framework convention on climate change.

This agreement was the first legally binding framework on the environment. Its main purpose was for every country that had signed up to reduce their emissions of man-made greenhouse gases. These countries were given a limit of the amount of greenhouse gases they could produce. The question surrounding this agreement was will it work? Brown, (2005) said 'The fact is that, even if all the planned reductions are achieved, the amount that CO₂ emissions will be reduced will be tiny compared with that needed' According to the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency '... The United States and China- churned out more than enough extra greenhouse gas to erase all the reductions made by other countries during the Kyoto period. Worldwide,

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emissions soared by nearly 40% from 1990-2000. Due to the above opinions I am also of the view that this agreement does not work, more needs to be done to reach the levels of reduction apparently needed! Many people and researching scientists do not believe that the manmade gases are the cause of global warming, this has led to confusion, this and its predicted impacts on countries worldwide by the opposition have led global warming to be a very hot topic!

Some scientists feel we do not have enough long-term climate data and what we do have is not clear enough to come to any conclusions. Another argument according to The BBC is ' Since 1988- almost a decade-the record, as determined by observations from satellites and balloon radiophones, shows no warming'. The majority of long-term data comes from weather stations in urban areas, skeptics believe these stations see temperature rises due to the ' urban heat island effect'. The Earth has been warmer in past history and has always cooled again so skeptics ask why this can't be the case again?

Computer models that predict Earth's future are said to be unreliable. Evidence also shows the Northern Hemisphere is warming and the Southern Hemisphere has cooled down. Skeptics argue this is a hemispheric change and not a global one. A petition was signed by many scientists and members of the public to reject the Kyoto Protocol. Frederick Suite wrote a cover letter endorsing the petition signed by over 31,000 people, he wrote ' Research data on climate change do not show that human use of hydrocarbons is harmful.

TO the contrary, there is good evidence that increased atmospheric carbon dioxide is environmentally helpful'. We know that global warming occurs naturally and is very real however, the debate between scientists is if man-made emissions are the cause. From research I agree with the majority and feel that we are the cause and this is why the Kyoto Protocol was set up. The scientists that disagree have played a age part in damaging the actions countries were taking to reduce their greenhouse emissions.