



Climate Change

Climate is a pattern of weather that takes place over very long periods of time. The Earth has gone through several drastic changes in climate that we know of. For example, there have been recurring periods when the Earth's climate became so cold that most of the Earth was covered in ice. We refer to these periods as ice ages. Then the Earth warmed again and the ice melted.

Today, the term climate change is often used interchangeably with the term "global warming." Global warming describes a growing increase of carbon in the atmosphere, which has been contributing to the gradual rise of the overall temperature of the Earth. This extra carbon in the atmosphere is the result of humans burning fossil fuels, which releases carbon back into the atmosphere. Today, the amount of carbon in the atmosphere is greater than it has been in 420,000 years.

While a temperature increase of a few degrees may not seem like much, it is enough to cause some major environmental changes, such as glaciers melting, ocean levels rising, animals migrating, extreme weather, and changes in ecosystems.

1. What is an example of naturally occurring climate change?

2. What is an example of an naturally occurring climate change?