

Global Warming

By Patti Hutchison



¹ You know that the sun is the source of all energy on earth. But sometimes we get a double dose of that energy. Solar radiation reaches the earth. The earth soaks up some of it and reflects some back to the atmosphere. The reflected radiation is absorbed by the gases in the atmosphere. The gases act like the glass walls of a greenhouse. They trap the warm air in and reflect it back to earth again. Scientists call this the greenhouse effect.

² You may have heard that the greenhouse effect is a bad thing. But the truth is life could not exist on earth without it. Our planet would be cold. However, an increase in the greenhouse effect would make earth too hot. Many scientists think that this is happening now. There is an increase in carbon dioxide. This is causing an increase in the greenhouse effect. The earth is warming up.

³ Temperatures around the earth have steadily gone up over the past 200 years. The past twenty years have seen the biggest increase. If this continues, it could have a shocking effect on the earth. People's lives could be changed in a negative way.

⁴ Most scientists agree that global warming is happening. What they disagree on, though, is what is causing it. The greenhouse effect happens naturally. There is proof that the climate of the earth has warmed up and cooled down in the past. But data show that the population is growing. So is the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. Are people causing global warming? If so, what effects will this have on the earth?

⁵ Many scientists think that global warming is caused by human activities. Every time we drive a car, we put carbon dioxide in the air. We burn a lot of fossil fuels such as coal and oil. This gives off a lot of carbon dioxide. Cutting of the rainforests is also causing more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Plants take in carbon dioxide during photosynthesis. If there are fewer plants, this will not happen.

⁶ Climatic changes happen very slowly. It will take a long time to see the effects of global warming. There are two different theories. Some scientists think that the warming will cause the polar ice caps to melt. This will cause the oceans to rise. Coastal cities could be flooded. Other scientists have a different idea. If the air over Antarctica warms up, it can hold more moisture. This would mean more snow. The ice caps might get larger. We might even have another ice age.

⁷ There are other changes in our weather due to global warming. Sea level has risen

over four inches in the past 100 years. More water can be evaporated. This is causing more precipitation. There have been strong rain storms in parts of the U.S. This has caused massive mud slides and flooding. There has been an increase in violent storms such as tornadoes and hurricanes. They have caused a lot of injury and property damage.

° What can be done about global warming? Can one person make a difference? The answer is YES! If we conserve energy we will use less fossil fuel. Turn off appliances and lights when you're not using them. Wear a sweater instead of turning up the thermostat in the winter. Open the windows instead of using the air conditioner in the summer. Ride your bike instead of driving short distances. Always recycle everything you can. If we all work together to conserve, the earth will be a lot better off.

Copyright © 2013 edHelper

Name _____



Date _____

Global Warming

1. What is the source of all energy on earth? <input type="radio"/> A The greenhouse effect <input type="radio"/> B Fossil fuels <input type="radio"/> C The sun	2. Gases in the atmosphere act like: <input type="radio"/> A Walls of a greenhouse <input type="radio"/> B Violent storms <input type="radio"/> C Polar ice caps
3. The greenhouse effect is always bad for the earth. <input type="radio"/> A False <input type="radio"/> B True	4. Name two effects global warming is having on our weather. _____ _____
5. Name two activities that put more carbon dioxide in the air. _____ _____	6. What has happened to the level of the ocean over the past 100 years? <input type="radio"/> A It has decreased. <input type="radio"/> B It has increased. <input type="radio"/> C It has stayed the same.