

What is climate change?

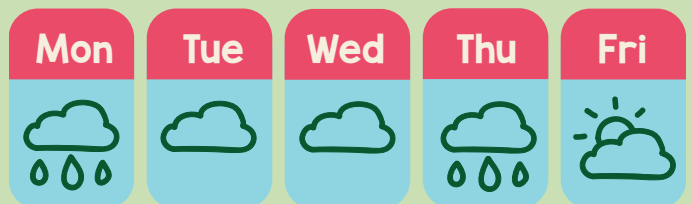
The easiest way to understand climate is by talking about weather. If you look out your window, you can see what the weather's like today. Sunny, cloudy or rainy, the weather can change by the hour. Over many years, we can see that there are patterns in the weather. Maybe it is usually hot, or there are frequent storms. We call these patterns the climate. The climate changes naturally, but humans are now changing it with drastic consequences.

Natural resources are materials which are found in the environment like plants, light, air, water and fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas). These resources are used by humans to power our homes, transport, feed and clothe us.

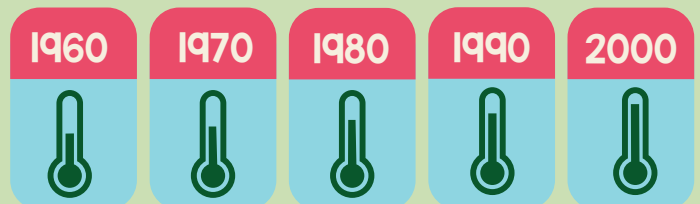
But many natural resources are overused. This is having drastic consequences everywhere. Greenpeace is working hard to make sure we act now to save our planet.

The climate is already changing because of us. But what exactly is the climate and why is it changing?

Weather = the day-to-day conditions of the atmosphere



Climate = a pattern of weather over 30+ years



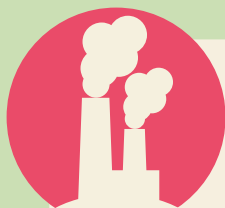
Why does it matter?

Climate change makes the weather more extreme. Storms are fiercer and heat waves are more regular. This leads to more frequent wildfires which turn magnificent forests to ash. Floods are happening more often too. We've seen these in Britain in Yorkshire, Somerset and Cumbria where homes and lives were wrecked by water.

In the Arctic and Antarctic, sea ice is melting and animals like polar bears are becoming homeless! Melting ice makes sea levels rise, so coastal cities are in danger of disappearing underwater. Not only that, but one-third of all animal and plant species are at risk of disappearing forever because rapid climate change is ruining their homes.



What's the problem?



Burning fossil fuels

The energy we use for electricity and transport mainly comes from fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. When burned, these fuels release greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. Because of this, the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere has rocketed. This gas traps heat from the sun and makes our planet warmer and it is now at levels not seen in millions of years – since before humans even existed!



Deforestation

Trees are important climate protectors because they store a huge amount of carbon dioxide. Think of them as boxes that store this dangerous gas. But when forests are cut down, this gas is released and it makes climate change even worse. Read the 'Protect Our Forests' introduction sheet for more information on this subject.



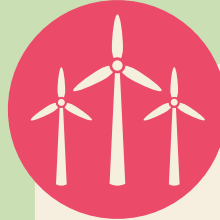
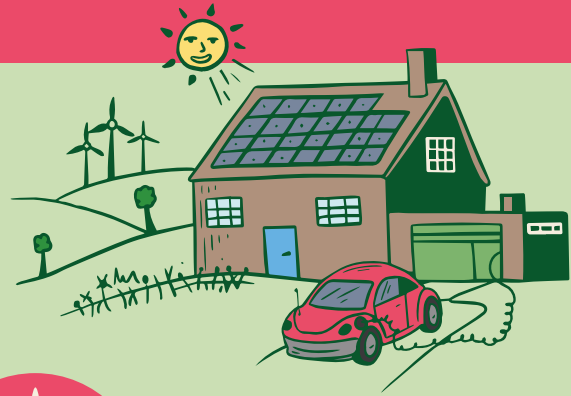
Ocean damage

Similarly to trees, oceans also store carbon. These are known as blue carbon reservoirs and they are huge. They are the largest area of stored carbon on the Earth. So when these important reservoirs are damaged by fishing or other destructive activities, not only are they no longer able to take in new carbon, but all the old stored-up carbon is released into the atmosphere. Read the 'Protect our Oceans' introduction sheet for more information on this subject.



What's the solution?

Greenpeace calls this a climate emergency because it's a problem we need to solve now. But don't worry, we already have the answers. It's about working together to make change happen.



Renewable energy

Renewable energy is made from natural resources too, like the wind and the sun, but it doesn't release carbon dioxide or change the climate. That's why Greenpeace is asking governments and companies like BP and Shell to switch to this energy source instead of using fossil fuels. We've even climbed oil rigs to stop oil drilling from happening because it's so bad for the planet.



Protect our forests and oceans

To stop climate change, we need to make sure forests and oceans are protected. That's why Greenpeace is asking companies and governments to stop destroying natural environments. To learn more, check out the 'Protect Our Forests' and 'Protect Our Oceans' introduction sheets.

By using different sources of energy and protecting our natural resources we can reduce many negative effects of climate change. But we need to act fast.



Work together

Millions of people around the world want to defend our climate. This includes the UK Student Climate Network, a group of young people who are striking from school on Fridays until climate action happens. By working together, we can demand a better future.

What can you do?



There are so many ways to help tackle climate change, from eating more veg to hopping on a bike. You can even get to know other children who are interested in stopping climate change by joining the UK Student Climate Network [here](#). Here are some more tips.



Transport

Walk or cycle to as many places as possible. Trains and buses are also good. They save a lot of carbon dioxide compared to cars and planes.

Invite a Greenpeace Speaker

Ask an adult to invite a Greenpeace Speaker to talk to your class or club. They'll tell you about the challenges our planet faces and what you can do to help. Find out more: www.act.gp/speakers



Food

Eat locally grown and seasonal fruit and vegetables. Transporting food across the world produces greenhouse gases. Check out what foods grow and when using [this](#) table.

Eating less meat protects the climate. If you want to know how, check out our 'Protect Our Forests' introduction sheet.

Share your knowledge

Tell your friends and families about the climate emergency and what they can do to help.



At home

Can you use less energy at home? Here are some tips on how:

- Switch off lights, computers, TVs and video games when you leave a room.
- Keep windows closed when the heating is on.
- Have short showers instead of baths.
- Recycle as much as you can.

Want to help your families too? Here are some tips:

- Ask your parents or carers to use energy saving light bulbs and switch to a renewable energy supplier.