



GCSE Eduqas

Climate change

Evidence has shown that Earth's temperature is rising due to an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This will continue to create a number of negative and positive effects.

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Positive and negative impacts of climate change

Impact on the world

The possible impacts of climate change will vary widely across the globe. People who live in the least developed countries will be the hardest hit.

Negative impacts could include:

- rising sea levels due to melting ice and thermal expansion (a billion people live in coastal areas)
- changing patterns of rainfall, causing desertification in some areas and increased flooding in others
- more frequent extreme weather events including heatwaves, droughts and heavy rainfall; tropical storms would also increase in strength and frequency
- extinction of certain species due to shifting temperature regimes
- spreading of diseases such as malaria (an additional 280 million people could be affected)
- changing patterns of agriculture and crop yields
- desertification or coastal flooding leading to human migration which could become a source of political and even military conflict
- ski resorts, in places such as the Alps, could close due to a lack of snow

Positive impacts of a warmer global climate could include:

- warmer temperatures and increased CO₂ levels, leading to more vigorous plant growth
- some animals and plants could benefit and flourish in a changing climate
- new shipping routes, such as the Northwest passage, would become available
- more resources, such as oil, becoming available in places such as Alaska and Siberia when the ice melts
- energy consumption decreasing due to a warmer climate
- longer growing season leading to a higher yields in current farming areas
- frozen regions, such as Canada and Siberia, could be able to grow crops
- new tourist destinations becoming available

Impact on the UK

Negative impacts of climate change in the UK include:

- rising sea levels flooding low-lying areas, particularly in southeast England - valuable farmland such as the Fens would be lost
- increased cost of building sea defences
- droughts and floods would become more likely as extreme weather increases
- increased demand for water in hotter summers putting pressure on water supplies
- changes in the pattern of demand for energy, increased use of air conditioning units in the summer and less demand for energy in the winter
- warmer temperatures might make it easier for diseases and pests to survive milder UK winters
- without irrigation, droughts could reduce the overall UK crop yield during some years
- houses in the future would need to cope with possible extreme summer heat, increased risk of damaging storms and the risk of flooding
- Scottish ski resorts could close due to lack of snow
- Arctic plant species in Scotland could become extinct

Positive impacts from a warmer **UK climate** include:

- higher year-round temperatures and longer growing seasons could mean that new crops such as oranges, grapes and peaches flourish in the UK
- higher yields of many outdoor crops such as cereals, potatoes and sugar beet due to a longer growing season and higher temperatures
- warmer temperatures would reduce winter heating costs
- accidents on the roads in winter could be less likely to occur
- warmer temperatures could lead to healthier outdoor lifestyles
- some plant and animal species would thrive and be able to grow and survive further north and at higher altitudes
- growth in the UK tourist industry, particularly seaside resorts, with warmer, drier summers



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