

Climate Change

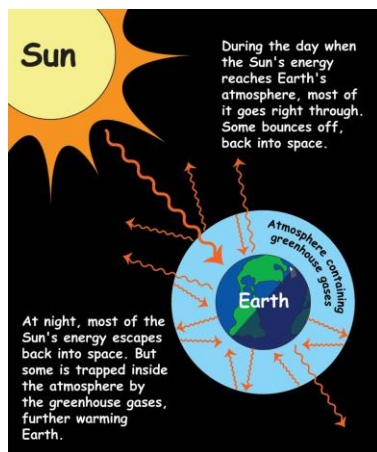
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A polar bear walks along a rocky shore, looking for food. The bear would usually be on the sea ice hunting for seals, pouncing when the seal comes up to breathe. But the ice has started to melt earlier and re-form later than it has in the past. Without the sea ice, the polar bear must scavenge for other, less nutritious food.



A polar bear in very poor condition photographed on Svalbard.
https://assets3.thrillist.com/v1/image/2275503/size/sk-2017_04_article_main_desktop.jpg

These changes in polar sea ice **are a result of** climate change. But **this** isn't just **affecting** polar bears—climate change **affects** everyone.



Weather changes day to day—sometimes it rains, other days it's hot. Climate is the pattern of the weather conditions over a long period of time for a large area. And climate can be affected by **Earth's atmosphere**.

Our Earth is surrounded by an atmosphere made up of gases. When sunlight enters our atmosphere, some of the sun's heat **is trapped by** the gas, and some **bounces back** out into space. By trapping that heat, our atmosphere keeps Earth warm enough to live on. Without **it**, our planet would be very cold, like Mars.

Many scientists agree that the Earth is now warming because of human activity. It is speeding up climate change. As mentioned above, sunlight enters the atmosphere, it passes the layer of greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases occur naturally, but humans also create them by burning fossil fuels.

Climate change affects more than temperature. Warmer water changes the patterns of ocean currents and they affect global weather patterns. Some places will receive more rainfall. This could **lead to** flooding. Other places will get **less**. This might mean **drought**. Tropical storms could be stronger, and a continuing rise in sea level **due to** melting polar ice might push people out of their homes.

(Adapted from <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/science/climate-change/>)