

Watching the Weather

Do you know what the weather will be tomorrow? A weather report can tell you. But what will the weather be like in ten years? Or 20 years? Or 100 years?

No one knows for sure. But some scientists say that our long-range weather outlook isn't good.

Those scientists say the summers will be hotter. They say that warmer, wetter winters are on the way. Severe droughts, floods, wildfires, and storms are also possible.

What's the cause of all those wacky weather changes? Experts say that humans are.

Warming the Globe

Some weather changes are due to global warming. Global warming happens when gases in the air trap the sun's energy. That energy heats Earth. Without the gases, the energy would escape into space.

Some global warming is good. Without it, Earth would be too cold to live on.

For years, though, humans have created lots of air pollution. The pollution traps more of the sun's heat. In turn, Earth has grown warmer, experts say. This could lead to bad weather.

Melting the Ice

There are some signs of global warming. One of the signs is happening in the coldest parts of the world.

Near the North and South poles, vast ice sheets are breaking up.

Earth's glaciers (GLAY-shers) are also melting. A glacier is a huge mass of ice that slowly moves. Experts say some glaciers may vanish by the year 2100.

A Rising Tide

As the ice melts, ocean levels rise. Experts say that levels have risen 4 to 10 inches in the past 100 years. Levels could rise 3 feet in the next 100 years!

High ocean levels might lead to floods along U.S. coasts. Some coastal areas might disappear under water.

That change might also bring more storms. Hurricanes are storms that create high wind and rainfall. They are strongest over water. Higher sea levels might lead to stronger hurricanes on U.S. shores.

Drying Out

In some areas, though, global warming might lead to drier weather. Dry weather often leads to droughts. A drought is a long period of very dry weather.

Droughts hit parts of the country this year. If experts are right, global warming could cause less rain to fall in the Midwest. This would be hard on plant life and people.

Droughts kill off crops. And dried-out plants and trees could lead to wildfires.

What's the Answer?

Scientists say that cutting down on air pollution will slow global warming. One way to lower air pollution is to drive less. Cars cause a lot of pollution. People also need to find cleaner ways to make electricity.

Experts aren't sure how global warming will change the weather. But they agree that something must be done to stop global warming. The life of future generations depends on it.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, what is one negative effect of droughts?

- A wildfires
- B storms
- C pollution
- D floods

2. In the passage, the author describes the problem of global warming. What solution does the author propose for this problem?

- A The author proposes melting the glaciers.
- B The author proposes cooling off the Earth.
- C The author proposes cutting back on air pollution.
- D The author proposes moving out of some coastal areas.

3. The passage suggests that

- A scientists can definitely know what the weather will be like in 10 years
- B people will drive their cars more in the future and cause more air pollution
- C there will be big problems in the future if global warming is not stopped
- D the droughts in the Midwest will not be difficult for people

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question: "Those scientists say the summers will be hotter. They say that warmer, wetter winters are on the way. Severe droughts, floods, wildfires, and storms are also possible. What's the cause of all those wacky weather changes?"

What does the word **wacky** mean?

- A hot
- B crazy
- C rainy
- D melting

5. What would be another good title for this passage?

- A Weather Problems in the Future
- B How to Predict the Weather
- C The Weather and You
- D Whether the Weather is Warm or Hot

6. How have humans caused the Earth’s weather changes, according to experts?

7. What signs of global warming might a person in the Midwest be most concerned about?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Many weather changes are happening _____ humans have caused global warming.

- A and
- B because
- C although
- D but

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Because of global warming, huge sheets of ice are breaking up near the North and South poles.

What? huge sheets of ice

(are doing) What? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: pollution (pol · lu · tion): making the earth, air, or water dirty.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **pollution**.

1. Smoking causes air pollution.
2. Many people want to solve the problem of pollution in water because drinking dirty water makes you sick.
3. Cars make a lot of pollution from the gas that they use for fuel.
4. The oil spill in the ocean caused a lot of pollution on the coast and harmed many sea animals.
5. The officials are trying to stop pollution of the soil because plants grown in polluted soil can be dangerous to eat.

10b. Which building causes more pollution?



11. If you drop a gum wrapper on the floor, is that pollution? Why or why not?
