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Global Climate Change QR Stations

**Directions:** **STEP 1** Scan the Reading QR code at your table. Read the information and answer the question for that station of your worksheet. When you have completed the question move on to the next station. Once you have ALL questions answered return to your starting point.

**STEP 2** – Reveal the correct answer answers to each question by scanning the Answer QR code for each question and repeating your rotation. If you answered the question incorrectly, you will explain your misconception in the space provided. If you answered the question correctly, you will answer the extension question given when you scan the answer QR code. Be sure to CIRCLE misconception or extension to show what you are writing about.

**Stations 1: Greenhouse Effect** How is the Earth like a greenhouse?

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**Station 2: Greenhouse Gases** Where do greenhouse gasses come from?

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**Station 3: Clouds and Temperature** Do clouds keep Earth cooler, or make Earth warmer?

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**Station 4: Causes of Climate Change** What is the main cause of climate change? Why?

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**Station 5: Effects of Climate Change** Why is a 1 degree temperature increase significant?

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**Station 6: The Ozone layer & Climate Change** Is the ozone hole causing climate change?

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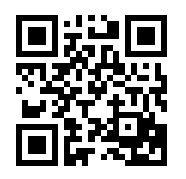
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**Station 7: Human Activity & Climate Change** How have humans contributed to climate change?

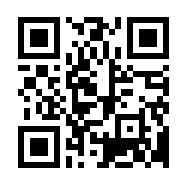
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Station 1 Answer



Station 2 Reading



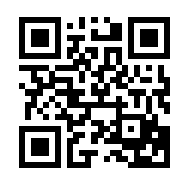
Station 2 Answer



Station 3 Reading



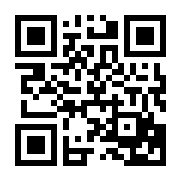
Station 3 Answer



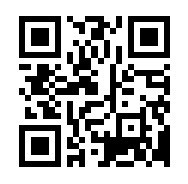
Station 4 Reading



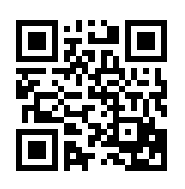
Station 4 Answer



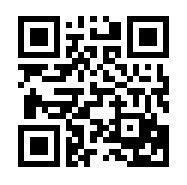
Station 5 Reading



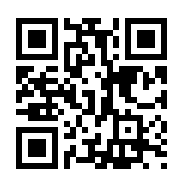
Station 5 Answer



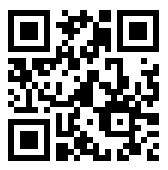
Station 6 Reading



Station 6 Answer



Station 7 Reading



Station 7 Answer



Station 1 Reading



Station 1 Reading How is the Earth like a greenhouse?

A greenhouse is a house made of glass. It has glass walls and a glass roof. People grow tomatoes and flowers and other plants in them. A greenhouse stays warm inside, even during winter. Sunlight shines in and warms the plants and air inside. But the heat is trapped by the glass and can't escape. So during the daylight hours, it gets warmer and warmer inside a greenhouse, and stays pretty warm at night too.

Earth's atmosphere does the same thing as the greenhouse. Gases in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide do what the roof of a greenhouse does. During the day, the Sun shines through the atmosphere. Earth's surface warms up in the sunlight. At night, Earth's surface cools, releasing the heat back into the air. But some of the heat is trapped by the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. That's what keeps our Earth a warm and cozy 59 degrees Fahrenheit, on average.

Station 1 Answer

Earth is like a greenhouse because its atmosphere traps some of the heat in to keep Earth’s surface at a comfortable temperature.

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

If human civilization had never developed on Earth, do you think there would be a greenhouse effect?

Station 2 Reading Where do greenhouse gasses come from?

<http://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/sources.html>

Station 2 Answer

Greenhouse gasses are naturally occurring, but we have a lot more of them in our atmosphere than we should. Most greenhouse gasses come from human activities, such as electricity production, transportation, industry, commercial and residential burning of fossil fuels, agriculture, and land use and forestry.

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

After reading about the sources of greenhouse gasses, what are some things that you and your family do regularly that produce greenhouse gasses?

Station 3 Reading Do clouds keep Earth cooler, or make Earth warmer?

Water in the atmosphere also acts as a greenhouse gas. The atmosphere contains a lot of water. This water can be in the form of a gas—water vapor—or in the form of a liquid—clouds. Clouds are water vapor that has cooled and condensed back into tiny droplets of liquid water.

Water in the clouds holds in some of the heat from Earth's surface. But the bright white tops of clouds also reflect some of the sunlight back to space. So with clouds, some energy from the Sun never even reaches Earth's surface.

As the ocean warms up, more water evaporates into the air. So does more water vapor then mean more warming? And does more warming mean more water vapor? And ‘round and ‘round we go?

How much the clouds affect the warming or cooling of Earth's surface is one of those tricky questions that several NASA missions are aiming to answer.

Station 3 Answer

Clouds help to do both, warming the Earth and cooling the Earth. They warm the Earth by holding in some heat from Earth’s surface, as water vapor is a greenhouse gas. They also cool the Earth by reflecting some sunlight back into space.

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

How might global climate change actually be producing more clouds?

Station 4 Reading What is the main cause of climate change? Why?

<http://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>

Station 4 Answer

The main cause of climate change is human expansion of the greenhouse effect. This happens because humans burn fossil fuels like coal and oil, which has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

How do you think global warming will affect the water cycle?

Station 5 Reading Why is a 1 degree temperature increase significant?

So, the Earth's average temperature has increased about 1 degree Fahrenheit during the 20th century. What's the big deal?

One degree may sound like a small amount, but it's an unusual event in our planet's recent history. Earth's climate record, preserved in tree rings, ice cores, and coral reefs, shows that the global average temperature is stable over long periods of time. Furthermore, small changes in temperature correspond to enormous changes in the environment.

For example, at the end of the last ice age, when the Northeast United States was covered by more than 3,000 feet of ice, average temperatures were only 5 to 9 degrees cooler than today.

<http://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>

Station 5 Answer

A one degree temperature increase is significant because Earth’s atmosphere has been stable for a very long time. Even a small temperature shift could mean big changes to the environment.

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

What do you think would happen if the average temperature around the world increased by one degree? How would your life be affected?

Station 6 Reading Is the ozone hole causing climate change?

The ozone hole is basically a man-made hole in the ozone layer above the South Pole during the Southern Hemisphere’s spring. The ozone layer, which lies high up in the atmosphere, shields us from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that come from the sun. Unfortunately we punched a hole in it, through the use of gases like chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in spray cans and refrigerants, which break down ozone molecules in the upper atmosphere.

While some of the sun’s UV rays slip through the hole, they account for less than one percent of the sun’s energy. So these UV rays cannot explain the global warming of the planet.

What scientists have uncovered recently, however, is that the ozone hole has been affecting climate in the Southern Hemisphere. That’s because ozone is also a powerful greenhouse gas, and destroying it has made the stratosphere (the second layer of the atmosphere going upwards) over the Southern Hemisphere colder. The colder stratosphere has resulted in faster winds near the pole, which somewhat surprisingly can have impacts all the way to the equator, affecting tropical circulation and rainfall at lower latitudes. The ozone hole is not causing global warming, but it is affecting atmospheric circulation.

Station 6 Answer

While some of the sun’s UV rays slip through the hole in the ozone, they account for less than one percent of the sun’s energy. So these UV rays cannot explain the global warming of the planet, but the hole in the ozone layer has been affecting the climate in the Southern Hemisphere.

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

If the hole in the ozone is not drastically affecting climate change, how else might it be affecting the planet?

Station 7 Reading How are humans contributing to climate change?

Most scientists believe that human activity is altering the composition of the atmosphere by increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs). Greenhouse gases occur naturally in the atmosphere and their presence results in what atmospheric scientists call the **greenhouse effect**. It is important to remember that the greenhouse effect is what keeps the earth warm enough to be habitable. The current concern is directed at an **enhanced** greenhouse effect, one that would put more heat-absorbing gases into the atmosphere and increasing global temperatures. The enhanced greenhouse effect has been linked to increased GHG emissions from human activities.

The recent attention given to the greenhouse effect and global warming is based on the recorded increases in concentrations of some of the greenhouse gases due to human activity. Of particular interest are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and ozone. With the exception of chlorofluorocarbons, all of these gases occur naturally and are also produced by human activity.

**Water vapor** is the most important GHG on the planet. Unlike most of the other atmospheric gases, water vapor is considered to be a 'variable' gas; that is, the percentage of water vapor in the atmosphere can vary greatly depending on the location and source of the air. For example, over the tropical oceans, water vapor may account for 4% of the total volume of gases, while over deserts or at high altitudes, it may be nearly absent. Water vapor absorbs heat readily. When discussing gobal warming, however, people often don't consider water vapor. Why not? The main reason is that human activity is not directly changing water vapor content. However, we do directly influence other GHGs. Although other GHGs are individually less important than water vapor, increasing their concentrations may affect global climate in significant and measurable ways.

**Carbon dioxide** () is considered the most important human-influenced GHG. Scientific measurements reveal an unmistakable global increase that is rapid and escalating. This increase arises primarily from the burning of fossil fuels (motorized vehicles, electric power plants, and homes heated with gas or oil) and the burning and clearing of forested land for agricultural purposes.

**Methane** () is largely a product of natural biologic processes, but its output can be accelerated by human activities.  is emitted from the decay of organic matter and from the digestive tracts of grazing animals (like cows). The additions from human activities include the expansion of agriculture, the increased number of livestock, the increased number of landfills, and leakage from natural gas pipelines.

**Chlorofluorocarbons** (CFCs) have no natural source; they are produced entirely by human activity. CFCs have historically been used widely as refrigerants in air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, and heat pumps. They are found in some foam plastics and used in some electronics manufacturing. Even though CFC production has been vastly reduced, these compounds remain in the atmosphere for a long time; we shall see their effects as GHGs for many years.

**Nitrous oxide** () is a naturally occurring GHG, which has increased significantly in recent years due to human activity.  is emitted from coal-burning power plants and can be released from the breakdown of chemical fertilizers in the soil.

**Ozone** () is also a greenhouse gas. It is important not to confuse the presence of the ozone in the stratosphere (a good thing) with the presence of ozone in the troposphere (a bad thing). In the troposphere, ozone can be a major component of urban smog damaging crops and aggravating respiratory problems as well as enhancing the greenhouse effect.

The concentrations of these GHG are increasing (although, thanks to recent global agreements, CFCs are being largely eliminated and their concentrations have begun to drop in the lower atmosphere). The emissions are not uniformly distributed globally. Most of the emissions come from the more developed countries, where power generation, power consumption, and living standards are highest.

Station 7 Answer

Humans are contributing to climate change by producing large amounts of greenhouse gasses, which are escaping into the atmosphere. Humans are producing these gasses in the following ways:

* Carbon Dioxide: burning of fossil fuels in motorized vehicles, electric power plants, heating homes with gas or oil, and the burning and clearing of forested land for agricultural purposes
* Methane: expansion of agriculture, increased number of livestock, increased number of landfills, and leakage from natural gas pipelines
* CFCs: used as refrigerants in air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, and heat pumps, found in some foam plastics, and used in some electronics manufacturing
* Nitrous Oxide: coal burning power plants, chemical breakdown of fertilizer
* Ozone: power generation and consumption

Did you get it wrong? Write about your misconception on your worksheet.

Did you get it right? Answer the following extension question on your worksheet.

What are 3 things that you can do to limit the amount of greenhouse gasses being produced?

Extension Questions

1. If human civilization had never developed on Earth, do you think there would be a greenhouse effect?
2. After reading about the sources of greenhouse gasses, what are some things that you and your family do regularly that produce greenhouse gasses?
3. How might global climate change actually be producing more clouds?
4. How do you think global warming will affect the water cycle?
5. What do you think would happen if the average temperature around the world increased by one degree? How would your life be affected?
6. If the hole in the ozone is not drastically affecting climate change, how else might it be affecting the planet?
7. What are 3 things that you can do to limit the amount of greenhouse gasses being produced?