

1 1.15 Complete the lecture with one word in each gap.

Climate change MYTHS AND FACTS



Scientists have been telling us for decades that the Earth's climate is changing. A recent report warned that temperatures are likely ¹ _____ rise by three degrees by the end of this century, which **is almost certain to** ² _____ catastrophic for the planet. Despite such clear statements, there is still a lot of misinformation out there. I'm ³ _____ to be talking about some common misunderstandings and what the facts of the matter are.

To begin with, I would say that **one of the key reasons** for confusion is that the media often feels that they need to deal ⁴ _____ the topic in a balanced way. Of course, this is generally a positive thing. However, in the case ⁵ _____ climate change, it means that when a news programme, say, has a scientist talking about how climate change is creating scorching temperatures or torrential rain, they often also invite an expert onto the programme ⁶ _____ denies that these freak weather conditions have anything to do with global heating. It looks and sounds to the viewer ⁷ _____ if about fifty percent of scientists are on each side, when, **in reality**, ninety-seven percent of scientists agree that climate change is happening. **In other words**, people are told, incorrectly, that scientific experts don't agree over climate change, when, ⁸ _____ fact, they almost universally do.

The second thing that people often tend to think whenever we happen to have sub-zero temperatures is that the earth isn't actually getting warmer. Anyone who believes this needs to look at the overall weather trends. **The fact is that** the last few years ⁹ _____ been some of the hottest since records began in the 1880s and the evidence suggests that it's going to continue to get hotter ¹⁰ _____ hotter. **Surprisingly**, we may also get more snowfall precisely because it's getting warmer. Because it's warmer, and ¹¹ _____ is less ice overall, there is actually more water in the atmosphere, which can then come down as heavy snow.

Then there are the people who accept that the climate is changing, but think that it's something that's happening naturally, rather ¹² _____ because of anything we humans are doing. **It is certainly true that** a variety of factors can affect the climate. For example, variations in temperature have happened ¹³ _____ a result of changes in the amount of energy from the sun reaching the earth and volcanic eruptions. But, please take note, these changes have happened very slowly over thousands or millions of years, whereas we've seen a huge and rapid increase in greenhouse gases ¹⁴ _____ as carbon dioxide since the Industrial Revolution, starting in the 1760s. These gases are widely known to trap heat and make the planet warmer. **It is clear that** industrialisation has caused this increase in greenhouse gases, especially when we note how much faster the greenhouse effect has ¹⁵ _____ happening since the 1950s.

Finally, some people accept the reality of climate change, and even that it is caused by human activity, but they maintain that carbon dioxide is actually a positive thing overall. Certainly, more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere does encourage plants to grow, and there is evidence that Earth has become greener as a result. However, as higher levels of carbon dioxide trapped in the atmosphere also cause heatwaves and freak storms, any benefit is lost as these will lead to crops being damaged or lost.

Similarly, people argue that higher temperatures mean fewer people will die of cold in the winter. This is probably true for people in northern Europe, but in other hotter places, such as Africa or South America, the number of people dying of heat will increase. So, **to sum up**, when talking about any benefits of climate change, we ¹⁶ _____ to ask ourselves: 'who benefits and for how long?'

2 Look at the expressions in bold in the lecture. In pairs, discuss how you say them in your language. Then write example sentences or mini-conversations with the expressions.