

UNIT 1: READING

CLIMATE CHANGE

These days most people believe that weather patterns around the world are changing. The world is getting hotter and storms, hurricanes, floods and droughts are starting to happen where they are not normally expected. This process is called *climate change*.

Causes of climate change

Climate change always happens, through a variety of causes such as the oceans of the world becoming larger or smaller, the movement of large areas of land around the planet, and changes in temperatures over long periods of time.

However, most recent discussion on climate change focuses on human activities which have an effect on the climate. This includes the burning of fossil fuels, such as petrol, which releases carbon dioxide into the air. Extra carbon dioxide causes an increase in the average temperature of the Earth's air and oceans. This very fast increase is called *global warming*.

Examples of climate change

Global warming is seen as a direct cause of many changes in weather patterns, such as the lack of rainfall in some countries, causing drought, and the increase in rainfall in other areas, causing floods. Also, rising temperatures in oceans and the air can cause changes in the way that winds move around the planet, leading to an increased number of severe storms, including hurricanes, in certain areas.

An increase in global temperatures also leads to ice melting at the North and South Poles, which then leads to rising sea levels. Other effects of changes in the climate include damage to land normally used for growing food, and some kinds of animals disappearing from the planet completely.

What can be done?

Most people agree that we have to change the way that we live, using fewer fossil fuels and doing much more to protect the natural environment.

1 Put the following events in the correct order.

- 1 Wind patterns around the world change.
- 2 Mankind burns fossil fuels such as petrol.
- 3 Storms and hurricanes occur.
- 4 The temperature of the air and the oceans increases.
- 5 Carbon dioxide is released into the air.

Correct order: 2, __, __, __, __

2 According to the text, is each of the following statements true or false?

1 Climate change is only a very recent process.	T / F
2 People think that global warming is caused by things we do.	T / F
3 Storms can be caused by an increase in global temperatures.	T / F
4 An increase in temperatures leads to an increase in polar ice.	T / F

3 Which is the best definition of the term 'climate change'?

- 1 The fact that general temperatures all around the world are rising.
- 2 The process in which weather patterns are changing around the world.
- 3 Storms, hurricanes, floods and droughts starting to happen around the world.

