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# How Global Warming Is Changing Our Planet

KS4 GEOGRAPHY

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

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## What Is Global Warming?

**Global warming** means Earth is getting hotter. Since the **1800s**, when factories and cars were invented, the planet's temperature has risen by about **1.1°C**. This might sound small, but even tiny temperature changes can cause huge problems.

The main reason is **greenhouse gases** like carbon dioxide. When we burn oil, coal, and gas for energy, we release these gases into the air. They act like a blanket around Earth, trapping heat from the sun and making our planet warmer.

Think of it like: Wrapping yourself in more and more blankets. At first one blanket feels nice and warm. But if you keep adding blankets, you get too hot and uncomfortable!

## Ice Is Melting

One of the biggest changes is that **glaciers and ice sheets** are melting. In places like the **Arctic** and **Antarctica**, huge amounts of ice are disappearing faster than ever before. This is happening because the air and oceans are warmer.

When ice melts, it turns into water. This water flows into the oceans and makes sea levels rise. Polar animals like **polar bears** and penguins are losing their homes because there's less ice to live on.

## Rising Seas and Extreme Weather

As oceans rise, coastal towns and cities face flooding. **Island nations** in the Pacific Ocean are at serious risk of disappearing underwater. Millions of people live near coasts and could lose their homes.

Global warming also makes **extreme weather** worse. We're seeing more powerful **hurricanes**, longer droughts, fiercer wildfires, and heavier floods. These disasters destroy homes, crops, and damage ecosystems where animals live.

Think of it like: A sick person's body temperature going too high with a fever. When you have a fever, everything in your body doesn't work properly.

## Changes to Nature

Plants and animals are struggling to adapt. Some species are moving to cooler places. Others are arriving in new areas where they don't belong. **Coral reefs** are dying because the ocean is too warm and acidic. This harms fish and other sea creatures that depend on them.

Seasons are shifting too. Springs arrive earlier, which confuses animals and plants that rely on seasonal timing to survive.

## What Can We Do?

The good news is we can slow global warming by using **renewable energy** like solar and wind power, rather than burning fossil fuels. We can also protect forests, which absorb carbon dioxide. Every action counts, from recycling to walking instead of driving.