

Global climate change

4.9.2.3 · Chemistry of the atmosphere · revision notes

How a rise in the Earth's average temperature leads to global climate change, and what the potential effects are. Expect 'describe four potential effects' questions and short discussions of the scale, risk and environmental implications of climate change.

Key facts

- Rise in average global temperature → global climate change
- More frequent and more severe storms
- Temperature and water stress for humans and wildlife
- Changes to the distribution of wildlife species
- Sea level rise → flooding and increased coastal erosion
- Changes in the amount, timing and distribution of rainfall
- Changes in the food-producing capacity of some regions

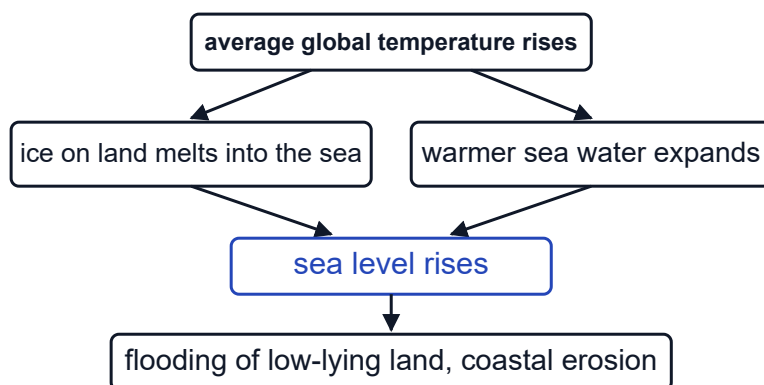
Notes

From warming to climate change

- An increase in the **average global temperature** is a major cause of **climate change**.
- Global warming is the rise in average temperature. Climate change is the wider change in weather patterns it causes, such as rainfall, storms and seasons.
- Climate change does not simply mean every place gets hotter: some places may get wetter weather, droughts or more storms.
- Many scientists think that extra greenhouse gases from human activities are causing the rise in temperature.

Potential effects (learn at least four)

- **Sea levels rise**, because ice on land melts into the sea and warmer sea water expands. This may cause **flooding** of low-lying land and more **coastal erosion**.



Explain each link in the chain to get every mark.

- **More frequent and more severe storms.**
- Changes in the **amount, timing and distribution of rainfall**: some areas may have droughts, others floods.
- **Temperature and water stress** for humans and wildlife, e.g. heatwaves and water shortages.
- Changes in the **food-producing capacity** of some regions: crops may fail in some areas but grow better in others.
- Changes to the **distribution of wildlife species**: some species move to new areas, and some may become extinct.

How to answer each type of question

Describe potential effects of global climate change

2 to 4 marks

Grade 5

1. Give as many DIFFERENT effects as there are marks.
2. Add a short consequence to each, e.g. 'causing flooding'.
3. Put each effect on a separate line so the examiner can count them.

Example. Describe **four** potential effects of global climate change.

Model answer. Any four from:

- sea levels rise, causing flooding / coastal erosion (1)
- more frequent or more severe storms (1)
- changes in the amount or pattern of rainfall, e.g. droughts in some areas (1)
- temperature and water stress for people and wildlife (1)
- some regions can produce less food (1)
- some species move to new areas or become extinct (1)

Don't lose marks

- ✗ Giving the same effect twice in different words (e.g. 'sea levels rise' and 'more floods from the sea') when the question asks for different effects.

- ✗ Writing 'it gets hotter' as an effect. That is the cause; give effects such as rising sea levels.
- ✗ Mentioning the ozone layer or skin cancer. These are not effects of global climate change.
- ✗ Being vague, e.g. 'bad weather' instead of 'more frequent and severe storms'.
- ✗ Saying every place will become hotter and drier. Some places may become wetter or stormier.

More tips

Memory tricks

- Six effects: 'Six Serious Risks Threaten Food and Wildlife': Sea level, Storms, Rainfall, Temperature and water stress, Food production, Wildlife distribution.
- Turn a one-word answer into a full mark by adding 'which causes...'.
e.g. 'Global warming is the temperature rise; climate change is what that rise does to weather patterns.'

Exam technique

- When asked for 'four effects', give four clearly different effects, one per line.
- 'Discuss' means give points about more than one aspect, e.g. how widespread, how likely and how serious an effect is.
- Use the specification's own words where you can: 'coastal erosion', 'distribution of wildlife species', 'food-producing capacity'.

What each grade needs

What you need to be able to do, from the first marks up to the top grade.

Grade 3

State a major cause of climate change

An increase in the average global temperature is a major cause of climate change.

Grade 4

Give potential effects of climate change

For example, rising sea levels, more frequent and severe storms, and changes in rainfall.

Grade 5

Describe four different potential effects

Give four clearly different effects, each with a short consequence, e.g. sea levels rise, causing flooding.

Free notes, worksheets, practice papers and mock exams at chhetriacademy.com. Written for this site; not taken from past papers.
Stuck? 1-to-1 tutoring with a free 30-minute trial lesson.