

## PRUEBA/PROVA: CLIMATE CHANGE

### EXAM and ANSWERS including SMART TIPS

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

In the past ten years, warmer-than-average temperatures have been recorded around the globe, and scientists warn that temperatures may soar by 1.8 to 4°C before the close of the century. Fluctuating temperatures are nothing new, of course: a thousand years ago, Britain was mild enough for Roman soldiers to plant vines, while in the medieval period the country experienced a mini ice-age! However, it is believed that this recent climate change has been caused by human activity, and especially by the emission of greenhouse gases.

The effects of this are being felt worldwide. In countries close to the equator, the hot weather is making deserts expand, and putting natural resources under tremendous pressure. In Spain, it is thought that nearly a third of the country may be lost to desert, and six percent of Spanish soil has already become dry and arid. In some of the world's poorest countries in Africa, desertification has cost lives and, with insufficient water, many more people may die as a result of drought and famine.

Climate change is affecting the coldest parts of the world, too, melting the ice in the Arctic and Antarctic. This is currently having a negative impact on local animal populations, such as polar bears, and it is not yet known what the wider repercussions might be. Alarming, some scientists have predicted that the additional ice water may cause the warmer currents or streams in the ocean to cool. Without the warmth provided by these currents, the median temperatures in northern Europe and America could drop by 5 to 10°C, which would make some areas unsuitable for crops and livestock and virtually uninhabitable. Paradoxically, it seems, global warming may actually be experienced as a big freeze in some parts of the world.

One thing is certain. If politicians do not act now, the earth will continue to heat up, possibly irreversibly. We must take better care of our planet – before the problem gets too hot to handle.

1. Read the text. Indicate whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE and write down which part of the text justifies your answer. [2 POINTS]

- a) Climate change is only a modern phenomenon, which has never occurred historically.  
*FALSE. 'Fluctuating temperatures are nothing new, of course ...' (paragraph 1)*

#### SMART TIP: giving evidence

Remember to support your answers with evidence. It might seem obvious that the sentence in question 1a is false, but you have to *prove* it is wrong. Quote the relevant information from the text, and check it again carefully afterwards. You will not get a full point if you only write 'false'.

- b) In Africa, people have already died as a consequence of the loss of fertile land.  
*TRUE. 'In some of the world's poorest countries in Africa, desertification has cost lives ...' (paragraph 2)*

**SMART TIP: checking the whole context**

Make sure that you always check the context before you decide whether a statement is true or false. Reading the text for the key word 'die' will lead you to find the sentence '... many more people may die ...' which talks about *future* probability. This might suggest that the statement 1b) is false. However, if you read the wider context, the sentence before this ('... desertification has cost lives') tells us that deaths *have already happened*. This means that the statement is true. Always read the whole text carefully before you give your final answer.

- c) The changing weather conditions at the Arctic are reducing the numbers of some animal species.

*TRUE. 'Climate change is ... melting the ice in the Arctic and Antarctic. This is currently having a negative impact on local animal populations, such as polar bears.'* (paragraph 3)

- d) If scientific predictions come true, fewer people will be able to live in parts of the USA in the future.

*TRUE. '... the median temperatures in northern Europe and America could drop by 5 to 10°C, which would make some areas ... virtually uninhabitable.'* (paragraph 3)

**2. Answer the following questions in your own words according to the text. [2 POINTS]**

- a) According to the text, how might a northern country such as the UK experience climate change differently from Spain?

*Suggested answer: The UK could experience freezing cold temperatures, whereas Spain will suffer from very hot weather.*

- b) Why must we take immediate political action?

*Suggested answer: We must take immediate political action on the issue of climate change, because if we leave it too late we might not be able to stop global warming.*

**SMART TIP: repeating information from the question**

When you answer a question using a full sentence, it is often helpful to begin your sentence using some of the words from the question (see above). This will help you to organize your ideas as well as demonstrate that you have understood the task.

**3. Find words or phrases in the text that correspond to the words and definitions given. [1,5 POINTS]**

- a) frequently changing (paragraph 1) *fluctuating*
- b) not enough (paragraph 2) *insufficient*
- c) indirect and usually bad results that happen some time after an action or event (paragraph 3) *repercussions*
- d) impossible to live in (paragraph 3) *uninhabitable*
- e) in a way that means something cannot be changed back to what it was before (paragraph 4) *irreversibly*

**4. Choose the correct option, a, b, c or d for each question and COPY the sentence onto your answer sheet. [1,5 POINTS]**

1. Climate change is a particular issue today because ...

- a) we are now emitting more greenhouse gases.
- b) temperatures have increased by 1.8–4°C in the past decade.
- c) *the planet is continuing to get hotter.*
- d) some countries are feeling the effects of it.

**SMART TIP: thinking about tenses**

Make sure you understand which tenses are being used in a statement before you decide whether it is correct. In question 1, option *a* is incorrect because it talks about a present state ('*are now emitting ...*'): the text does not give us a time reference for the emission of greenhouse gases. Option *b* is incorrect because it uses the present perfect : '*temperatures have increased*'. The text states that temperatures *will* increase by this amount in the future (not that they have already increased by this amount).

2. As a result of the hot weather, Spain ...

- a) *has had some land become dry and infertile.*
- b) is experiencing as much of a problem with desertification as Africa.
- c) has already lost almost a third of its soil to desert.
- d) has had temperatures decrease by 5 to 10°C.

3. The melted ice in the seas and oceans may cause ...

- a) most European countries to freeze.
- b) warm ocean currents to freeze over.
- c) *extremely cold temperatures in America.*
- d) desserts to expand in Africa.

**SMART TIP: reading carefully**

When you have to choose one of three options, make sure that you read all of the statements carefully. Some statements may be misleading: they *look* correct, but turn out to be incorrect. In question 3, options *a* and *b* both contain the key word *freeze*. This key word also appears in the text. However, both options are incorrect, because the information contained in both statements is not supported by evidence in the text.

**5. Write 120–150 words on the following topic. [3 POINTS]**

How do you think the world will change as a result of global warming?

**Suggested answer:**

*I believe that global warming will have a huge impact on our future lives.*

*The world will become hotter, and we will experience more extreme weather conditions, such as hurricanes and tsunamis. As a result of the changing climate, some animals and plants may lose their habitats and become extinct.*

*Natural resources will become very expensive, and there may not be enough food and water for everybody. Some people may die of disease, poverty or starvation.*

*Unless we do more to help the environment, I think that our lives will be very badly affected in the future.*

**SMART TIP: grammar and tenses**

Before you write, think carefully about the grammar and tenses you need to use in your composition. In this essay, you will need to use present tenses to give your opinion ('*I believe...*', '*I think...*'). You will also need to use future tenses, especially *will*, in order to make predictions about the future. Remember that you can add variety by using modal verbs of possibility to replace *will*, such as *may*, *might* and *could*.

Always read your composition after you have finished and check that your grammar, spelling, punctuation and word order are correct.