

## PRUEBA

### THE HOT ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Combating global warming is one of the most significant political challenges of our age. In the last decade, 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.

Climate change is nothing new, of course: in the past, the globe has experienced many fluctuations in temperature, some of which have been notably extreme. A thousand years ago, Britain was mild enough for Roman soldiers to plant vines and make wine. A few centuries later, Britain underwent what has been described as a 'mini ice age': seventeenth-century Londoners even used to go ice-skating on the River Thames! What is different about the recent climate change, however, is that this time it has been caused by human activity, and especially by the emission of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane.

So why should we be worried? In northern European countries, having warmer summers even seems quite appealing! However, nearer the equator, the hot weather is making deserts expand, and putting water resources under tremendous pressure. In Spain, it is thought that nearly a third of the country may become dry, arid land, and six per cent of Spain's soil has already been lost to desert. In some of Africa's poorest countries, the problem of desertification is turning to tragedy. With diminishing land for crops or animal grazing, and very low rainfall, the problems of drought, famine and disease are exacerbated. Climate change in Africa is already costing lives.

Climate change is affecting the coldest parts of the world, too, melting the ice in the Arctic and Antarctic. This is having a detrimental effect 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 average temperatures in northern Europe and America could drop by 5 to 10°C, which will 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 areas.

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

**1. Answer these questions about the text. Use your own words whenever possible. (2 points: 1 point each)**

1. How and why is the climate changing at the moment?
2. Why is the hot weather a problem in Africa?



**2. Read the following statements, decide whether they are true or false and justify your answer by quoting evidence from the text. (2 points: 0.5 points each)**

1. It is predicted that the planet will continue to heat up.
2. In the 1600s, Britain was even warmer than it is today.
3. People in the northern parts of the world are less anxious about climate change.
4. In Spain, nearly a third of the country has been lost to desert.

**3. Find in the text the words or groups of words which match these definitions: (1 point: 0.2 points each)**

- a. say that something bad might happen
- b. temperate, warm
- c. desirable, attractive
- d. changing into water
- e. fall, get lower

**4. Complete the text using the correct words from the box below. There are two words that you won't need. The words in gaps (c) and (h) will need a capital letter. (2 points: 0.25 points each)**

It (a) \_\_\_\_ taken politicians a long time to take (b) \_\_\_\_ issue of climate change seriously. (c) \_\_\_\_ first, temperatures rose (d) \_\_\_\_ gradually that the difference was barely noticeable. Many people thought that scientists (e) \_\_\_\_ have been exaggerating. Big businesses (f) \_\_\_\_ especially reluctant to listen, because they knew that reducing carbon emissions would (g) \_\_\_\_ expensive. (h) \_\_\_\_, it seems that now no one can afford to ignore this problem.

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**5. Write a composition of between 150–200 words on ONE of the following topics: (3 points)**

1. Write a letter to the Minister for the Environment. Express your concern about climate change, and suggest a few ideas about how the government could help the environment.
2. 'Climate change is the most serious issue facing the world today.' Do you agree?