

Climate Change Definitions

Climate: The average weather conditions in a particular location or region at a particular time of the year. Climate is usually measured over a period of 30 years or more.

Climate change: A significant change in the Earth's climate. The Earth is currently getting warmer because people are adding heat-trapping greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. The term "global warming" refers to warmer temperatures, while "climate change" refers to the broader set of changes that go along with warmer temperatures, including changes in weather patterns, the oceans, ice and snow, and ecosystems around the world.

Global warming: An increase in temperature near the surface of the Earth. Global warming has occurred in the distant past as the result of natural causes. However, the term is most often used to refer to recent and ongoing warming caused by people's activities. Global warming leads to a bigger set of changes referred to as global climate change.

Weather: The condition of the atmosphere at a particular place and time. Some familiar characteristics of the weather include wind, temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure, cloudiness, and precipitation. Weather can change from hour to hour, day to day, and season to season.