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What is Global Warming?

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Global warming is the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near-surface air and oceans since the mid-20th century and its projected continuation.

However, the phrase 'climate change' is becoming the preferred phrase instead of 'global warming' because it helps convey there are climate changes in addition to rising temperatures. The science of global warming is well understood. Certain gases, especially CO₂, absorb solar radiation that would otherwise be dissipated back into space. Like a down comforter on your winter bed, these gases then radiate heat back to the earth. The more of these gases in the atmosphere, the more energy radiated back to earth. The higher the percentage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the greater the amount of the sun's energy that is trapped on earth. While rising sea levels threaten our shorelines, increased storm surges and extreme wind events become matters of concern. Declining soil moisture will mean lost agricultural productivity and more frequent droughts, pests and forest fires.

FACT: The levels of CO₂ have risen from 280 parts per million in pre-industrial times to 382 ppm today.

FACT: The earth's surface temperature increased 1.33 ± 0.32 °F between 1905 and 2005.