The problem of climate change

A

The climate of the Earth is always changing. In the past it has altered as a result of natural causes. Nowadays, however, the term ‘climate change’ is generally used when referring to changes in our climate which have been identified since the early part of the twentieth century. The changes we’ve seen over recent years and those which are predicted to occur over the next 100 years are thought by many to be largely a result of human behavior rather than due to natural changes in the atmosphere. And this is what is so significant about current climactic trends; never before has man played such a significant role in determining long-term weather patterns – we are entering the unknown and there is no precedent for what might happen next.

B

The greenhouse effect is very important when we talk about climate change as it relates to the gases which keep the Earth warm. Although the greenhouse effect is a naturally occurring phenomenon, it is believed that the effect could be intensified by human activity and the emission of gases into the atmosphere. It is the extra greenhouse gases which humans have released which are thought to pose the strongest threat. Certain researchers, such as Dr Michael Crawley, argue: ‘even though this natural phenomenon does exist it is without a doubt human activity that has worsened its effect; this is evident when comparing data regarding the earth’s temperature in the last one hundred years with the one hundred years prior to that.’ Some scientists, however, dispute this as Dr Ray Ellis suggests: ‘human activity may be contributing a small amount to climate change but this increase in temperature is an unavoidable fact based on the research data we have compiled.

C

Scientists around the globe are looking at all the evidence surrounding climate change and using advanced technology have come up with predictions for our future environment and weather. The next stage of that work, which is just as important, is looking at the knock-on effects of potential changes. For example, are we likely to see an increase in precipitation and sea levels? Does this mean there will be an increase in flooding and what can we do to protect ourselves from that? How will our health be affected by climate change, how will agricultural practices change and how will wildlife cope? What will the effects on coral be? Professor Max Leonard has suggested, ‘while it may be controversial some would argue that climate change could bring with it positive effects as well as negative ones’.

D

There are many institutions around the world whose sole priority is to take action against these environmental problems. Green Peace is the organisation that is probably the most well-known. It is an international organisation that campaigns in favour of researching and promoting solutions to climate change, exposes the companies and governments that are blocking action, lobbies to change national and international policy, and bears witness to the impacts of unnecessary destruction and detrimental human activity.

E

The problem of climate change is without a doubt something that this generation and the generations to come need to deal with. Fortunately, the use of renewable energy is becoming increasingly popular, which means that less energy is consumed as renewable energy is generated from natural resources—such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, and geothermal heat—which can be naturally replenished. Another way to help the environment, in terms of climate change, is by travelling light. Walking or riding a bike instead of driving a car uses fewer fossil fuels which release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In addition, using products that are made from recycled paper, glass, metal and plastic reduces carbon emissions because they use less energy to manufacture than products made from completely new materials. Recycling paper also saves trees and lets them continue to limit climate change naturally as they remain in the forest, where they remove carbon from the atmosphere. Professor Mark Halton, who has completed various studies in this field, has stated: ‘with all this information and the possible action that we can take, it isn’t too late to save our planet from over-heating and the even worse side-effects of our own activity

Question 1–5

*Reading Passage has 5 paragraphs, **A–E**.*

*Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter **A–E** in the boxes below.*

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1..... A natural phenomenon that could also affect climate change.

2..... Steps we can take to help reverse the situation.

3..... An explanation of what climate change is.

4..... Organisations that want to help.

5..... Possible effects of climate change.

Question 6-9

*Look at the following people (Questions **6-9**) and the list of statements below.*

*Match each person with the correct statement, **A-F**.*

A. We have the ability to change the situation

B. Climate Change is Inevitable

C. Humans have made the situation much worse

D. Climate Change might not be all bad

E. Human activity and natural weather phenomena

F. While we may not be too late to save our planet, there are bound to be some extreme side-effects of past human activity one way or the other

6..... Professor Max Leonard

7..... Dr Michael Crawley

8..... Professor Mark Halton

9..... Dr Ray Ellis

Questions 10-13

*Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage? In spaces **10-13** below, write*

TRUE *if the statements agrees with the information*

FALSE *if the statements contradicts the information*

NOT GIVEN *if there is no information on this*

10..... Man is not entirely responsible for global warming.

11..... Scientists have come up with new evidence about the negative effects of carbon-free sources of energy such as nuclear power

12..... One of the purposes of Green Peace is to find out which companies and governments are doing things which don't help the actions of environmentalists.

13..... Most people aren't willing to start using renewable energy.

Solution:

1. B
2. E
3. A
4. D
5. C
6. D
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. TRUE
11. NOT GIVEN
12. TRUE
13. FALSE