

Too Much of a Good Thing

Characters: TV Reporter, Scientist, Researcher 1, Researcher 2, Researcher 3, Researcher 4, and Politician

TV Reporter: Good day! Several gases in the atmosphere contribute to global warming. The one you have probably heard the most about is carbon dioxide. What can you tell us about carbon dioxide?

Scientist: Carbon dioxide is a good heat-trapping gas- a greenhouse gas. A certain amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is natural.

TV Reporter: Where does carbon dioxide come from?

Researcher 1: In fact, we add some to the air every time we breathe out.

Researcher 2: We also add carbon dioxide to the air when we burn things, especially fossil fuels.

TV Reporter: What are fossil fuels?

Scientist: Fossil fuels are energy sources formed from the remains of plants and animals that lived millions of years ago. Researcher 3, what are some examples of fossil fuels?

Researcher 3: Coal, oil, and natural gas are all fossil fuels.

Researcher 4: The amount of fossil fuels being burned each year has been increasing worldwide.

All Researchers and audience: More carbon dioxide means more heat is trapped near the Earth's surface.

Politician: And guess what! Like two people walking hand in hand, as the amount of carbon dioxide in the air increased over time, so has Earth's average surface temperature.

Scientist: If we keep adding carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere at the current rate, Earth will probably warm at least another 1.4 to 5.8°C, or 2.5 to 10.4°F by the year 2100.

Politician: That's a huge change in a very short time.

TV Reporter: This was the latest information about global warming. We want to thank all of our experts for their participation. Stay cool and protect the globe.

Adapted from: Johnson, Rebecca L. Global Warming. Reading Expeditions Series. National Geographic School Publishing. September 2008.