

TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Climate describes the typical weather that a location experiences over long periods of time. Since no part of New Brunswick lies more than 200 km from the ocean, the province experiences a blend of continental and maritime climates. This is fairly consistent over many years, but over time, these weather conditions can change. When they do we call it climate change.

What is climate change? Climate change is a change in long-term average weather patterns. It is important to learn about climate change because it affects the environment as well as the people, plants and animals that depend on it.

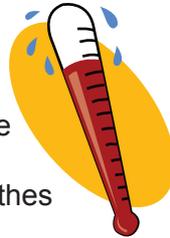
Climate change is a major concern today due in large part to the actions of people over the past 100 years. It may seem hard to believe that people can influence the Earth's climate but when we do things that send **greenhouse gases** into the air, we are making our planet warmer.



Some energy, like the energy your body needs, comes from the food you eat. But other energy, like the energy that is used to light and heat much of your school, comes from fossil fuels like coal and oil. Burning these fuels releases greenhouse gases.

We contribute to greenhouse gases whenever we use energy to do things such as:

- Turn on a light
- Drive a car
- Play a video game
- Heat or cool your home
- Take a hot shower
- Wash and dry your clothes



These activities are not wrong; we just have to learn to be smart about them. For example, turn off the TV when you are done or reduce the amount of time you spend in the shower. See *Be Energy Efficient* for more tips.

So, what's the big deal? Well, if temperatures continue to rise, the Earth will face many problems. As the climate changes, there may be changes in the natural environment that people depend on. Here in New Brunswick we can expect changes such as temperature and rain increases, more storms, rising water levels and more frequent flooding as well as the potential for low water levels and droughts.

But it's not too late! If we try, we can all do our part to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that we put into the environment.

Here are some ways you can help make a difference!

- Learn about the environment. To get started, ask a teacher for some suggestions. Then, choose a topic and create a project that you can present to your class so that they can learn too.
- If possible, save energy by taking the bus, riding a bike, walking or skateboarding to school.
- Start a recycling program at your school. See *Ready, Set, Recycle!*



- Invite guest speakers to your school from your local electricity company or other government agencies to encourage conservation.



- Start a "Lights Off" campaign.
- Take an annual climate change poll at your school. Ask students and staff how they get to school each day. Graph the results, showing the percentages of people who walk, bike, drive or take the bus.
- Help your family to look for produce that are in season and locally grown. The transportation of food over long distances releases large amounts of greenhouse gases each year.



These are just a few of the many things you can do to put less greenhouse gases in the air. Can you think of some other activities? Remember, every effort you make to reduce your impact on the environment counts!

Be part of the solution! Take action and make your commitment strong.

Definitions for **bolded** words can be found on the Keywords Index card.