[Explore Your Earth Home](http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/exploreyourearth/index.htm)

**Lesson 1: Climate Change**

**Goal:** Students will read about factors that can impact Earth’s climate and demonstrate understanding by answering reading comprehension questions.

**Time Required:** 45 minutes

**Materials Required:** [**Climate Change**](http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/exploreyourearth/pdfs/repro1.pdf)Student Reproducible 1 (PDF); pen or pencil; Internet access; Google Earth software

**Directions:**

1. **Prior to the start of class:** Download and install the Google Earth software onto your classroom computer. At the start of class: Open the Google Earth program by going to <http://earth.google.com/scholastic> to access the **Climate Change Google Earth page.** From this page you can view other Google Earth pages about environmental issues:
   * Deforestation
   * Ozone depletion
   * Pollution
   * Greenhouse gases
2. Briefly discuss the history of Earth Day with students:
   * In 1970, Senator Gaylord Nelson established April 22 as Earth Day in an effort to bring national attention to environmental issues. The day was an immediate success, and people all across the country began holding Earth Day events to clean up their local communities and inspire others to maintain a safe and clean environment.

Tell students that Earth Day events continue nationwide each April 22. These events highlight major environmental issues, such as climate change, an issue they will study today.

1. Distribute copies of **Climate Change** Student Reproducible 1 and read Part 1 aloud with students.
2. Have students gather around the computer. Tell them they can see some of the places where climate change has occurred or may occur in the future.   
   From the **Climate Change Google Earth page:**
   * Double click on Glacier National Park in the Places menu. Tell students that warming temperatures have caused the glaciers at Montana’s Glacier National Park to shrink to about one-third the size they were in 1850.
   * Double click on Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, in the Places menu. Tell students that scientists believe increased salt content due to rising sea levels have made Chesapeake Bay’s waters less sustainable for oysters.
   * Double click on Los Angeles, California, in the Places menu. Tell students that higher temperatures from climate make large cities such as Los Angeles more polluted.
   * Zoom out far enough to show the entire globe. Remind students that climate change is a global issue. We can all work together to reduce greenhouse gases and make a difference.
3. Allow time for students to complete Part 2 of **Climate Change** Student Reproducible 1.

**Wrap-up:** Lead a discussion on climate change and global warming. Allow students to express their ideas, concerns, and beliefs about the issue.

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