

Subject	Geography
Unit/Topic	GCSE - Changing Climate

Key Vocabulary	Definition
Glacial period	Historic cold periods associated with the build-up of snow and the growth of ice sheets and glaciers.
Inter-glacial period	Historic warm periods in-between glacial periods where conditions were much the same as they are today.
Quaternary period	The most recent geological period covering the last 2.6 million years, during which time there were several warm and cold periods.
Global warming	A recent trend with climate change involving a warming trend (0.85°C since 1880).
Milankovitch cycles	The effects of periodic changes in the movement of the earth on its climate over thousands of years. There are 3 Milankovitch cycles: precession, axial tilt, Eccentricity.
Eccentricity	A Milankovitch cycle which involves changes in the shape of the earth's orbit.
Precession (wobble)	A Milankovitch cycle which involves changes to the amount that the earth wobbles on its axis.
Axial tilt	A Milankovitch cycle which involves changes in how much the earth tilts on its axis.
Sunspot	A spot or dark patch that appears from time to time on the surface of the Sun and is associated with an outburst of energy from the sun.
Sunspot cycle	A period lasting 11 years during which sunspot activity increases from a minimum to an maximum and back to a minimum again.
Volcanic winter	A cooling trend caused by volcanic particles in the atmosphere blocking out the sun's radiation.
Greenhouse effect	Natural warming of the atmosphere as heat given off from the Earth is absorbed by liquids and gases, such as carbon dioxide.

Greenhouse gases	Natural gases in the earth's atmosphere which contribute to the greenhouse effect e.g. carbon dioxide and methane.
Enhanced greenhouse effect	The exaggerated warming of the atmosphere caused by the emission of gases from human activities, resulting in the natural greenhouse effect becoming more effective.
Emissions	When gases are released into the atmosphere.
Carbon footprint	The amount of carbon-containing greenhouse gases released into the environment by an activity, process, individual, or group, expressed usually as the equivalent in kilograms of carbon dioxide.

