



Investigating Our Changing World Climate

You're on a QUEST!

According to scientist Barry Rock, climate change is something that has been happening forever. Volcanoes, as well as other natural catastrophes and situations, have always been factors in the world's changing climate. However, as we learned from watching the video *QUEST Climate Change*, a major concern of Rock and other scientists is whether humans have become a major cause of climate change in recent times.

What are some actions that you can take to lower the impact of human activity on the atmosphere and the climate of our planet?

Step 1: What's the problem?

First, you will want to share and discuss what you've learned about climate change with family members. A few good Web sites that can help your family learn more about how our climate is changing as well as possible causes and effects are

<http://www.onesweetwhirled.org/ireland/learn.html>

A guide to understanding global warming:

<http://www.10percentchallenge.org/informationscience.php>

Information about the science of global warming and climate change.

<http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/effects>

How climate change may affect you and your community:

Step 2: What can you do about it?

Once you have gathered the facts, you'll want to think about possible solutions. What can we, as individuals and families who live in northern New England, do on our own that will make a difference?

Some examples include:

■ Cut back on home energy use and transportation activities.

There is a "residential calculator" that can help you and your family think about the ways in which you use energy. It also provides ideas about personal changes that your family can make to reduce the amount of carbon being released into the atmosphere due to energy use. To calculate your household's energy use and to learn what you can do to reduce it, visit:

<http://www.10percentchallenge.org/rezcalculator.php>.

■ Buy a "greener" vehicle.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Vehicle Guide gives information about air pollution emissions and the fuel economy performance of different vehicles. The guide uses these values to determine an environmental rating system for cars and trucks. You can compare these values to find the greenest vehicle that meets your family's needs at: www.epa.gov/autoemissions



INVESTIGATING OUR WORLD

■ Share your information!

Once you have investigated these resources at home and learned about what you can do to make a difference on an individual and family level, go back to school and see what your classmates have found. Global problems can seem so big sometimes that it almost feels as if one person can't make a difference. But, as you have learned, just by cutting 10% of your own carbon pollution, you can keep about 1060 kilograms of CO₂ out of the atmosphere this year!

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