

Global warming: Causes and effects

Earth's temperature has risen about 1 degree Fahrenheit in the last century. The past 50 years of warming has been

attributed to

human

activity.

Burning fuels such as coal, natural gas and oil produces greenhouse gases in excessive amounts.

Greenhouse gases are emissions that rise into the atmosphere and trap the sun's energy, keeping heat from escaping.

The United States was responsible for 20 percent of the global greenhouse gases emitted in 1997.

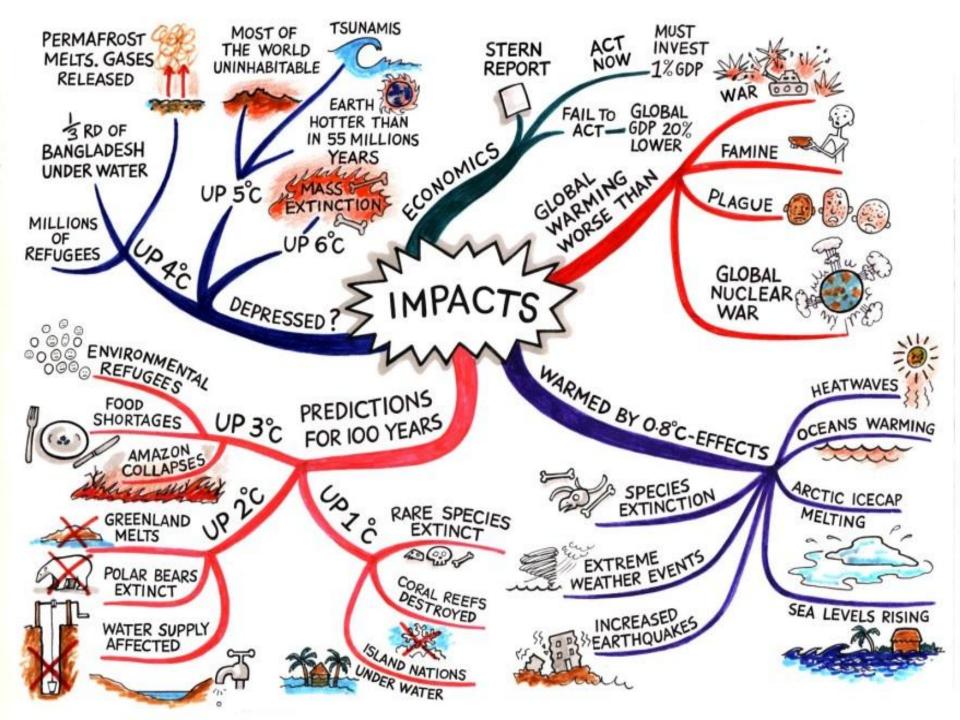
During the past 100 years global sea levels have risen 4 to 8 inches.

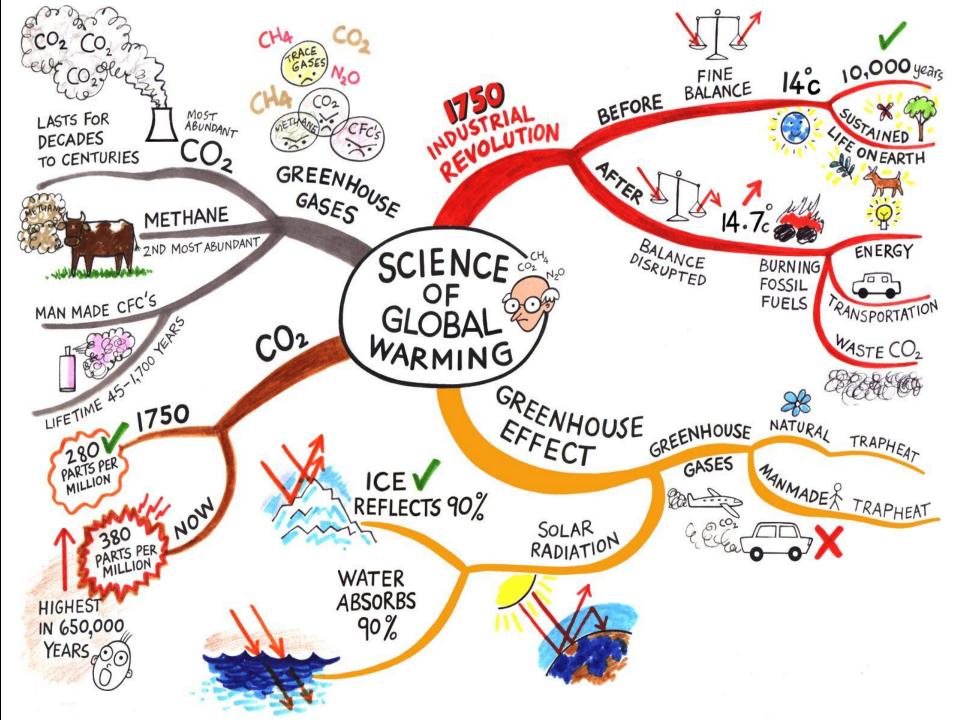
Most of the world's emissions are attributed to the United States' large-scale use of fuels in vehicles and factories.

Some predictions for local changes include increasingly hot summers and intense thunderstorms.



Damaging storms, droughts and related weather phenomena cause an increase in economic and health problems. Warmer weather provides breeding grounds for insects such as malaria-carrying mosquitoes.







1. Solar radiation passes through the clear atmosphere 3. Some solar radiation is reflected by the Earth and atmosphere

2. Most radiation is absorbed by the Earth's surface and warms it.



5. Some of the infared radiation passes through the atmosphere, and some is absorbed and re-emitted in all directions by greenhouse gas molecules. The effect of this is to warm the Earth's surface and the lower atmosphere.

