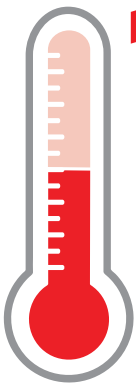


Just the Facts

Our Planet in Peril

Fifty years ago this month, the first Earth Day raised awareness about the environment and led to key protections. Yet today, much more needs to be done to stop the threat posed by climate change.

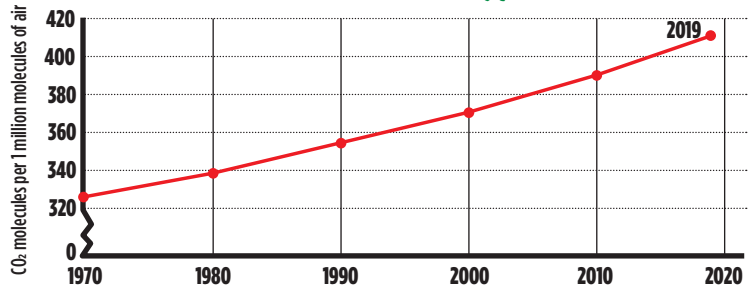


1.8°F

The rise in the planet's average temperature since 1880

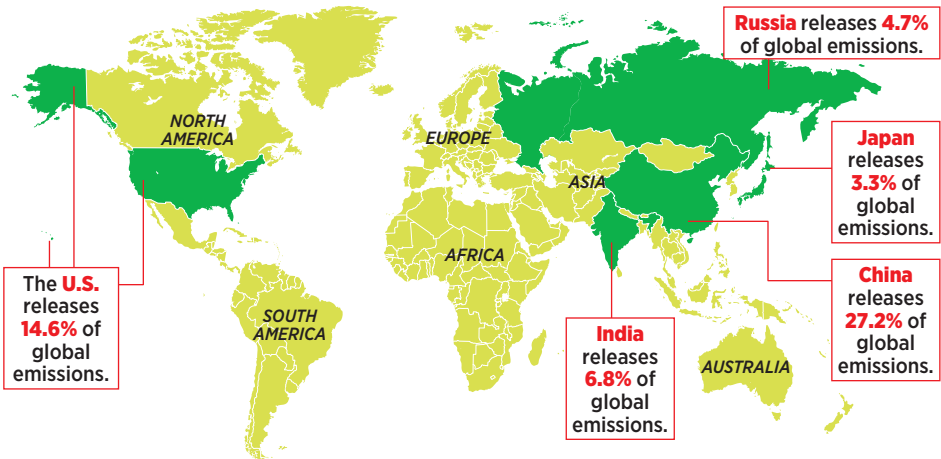
Levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) have been increasing in Earth's atmosphere.

CO₂ Levels Since 1970



The Planet's Top CO₂ Emitters*

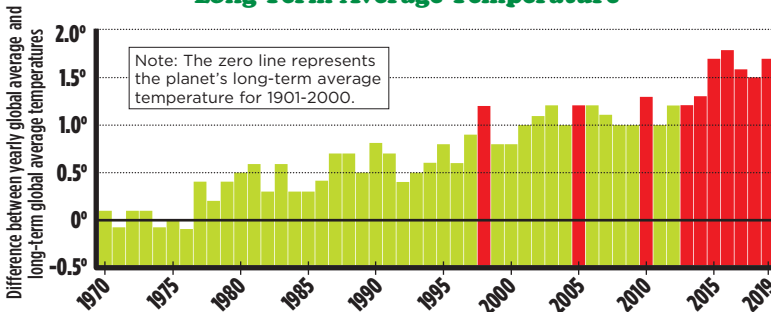
CO₂ is a greenhouse gas. Such gases are released when we burn fossil fuels (coal and oil, for example) to power homes, cars, and factories. This is the leading cause of climate change. These five countries emit the most CO₂ each year.



*Based on 2017 figures

The 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1998.

How Recent Years Compare With Earth's Long-Term Average Temperature



↓ 2%

Good news: Global CO₂ emissions fell by 2% in 2019 as nations reduced their use of coal-fired power plants. It's the biggest drop in 30 years!

Write About It! Use the information on this page to write an argument about whether individuals and governments should do more to reduce the threat posed by climate change. Include at least three facts as evidence.