

Climate change mythbusting

Nowadays, almost every single person has access to information which is just a click away. The rise of the internet means we can find answers to all our questions at the snap of a finger, whether the information we find is true or not. With regards to climate change, it's easy to be swept up in the flurry of material available, so hopefully this article will provide you with facts and figures and try to debunk a couple of the most notorious myths out there...

Phoebe Boersma busts some of the myths surrounding climate change.

Myth 1: Climate change is a natural process of our planet

I'm sure many of us have heard this one before, and it's certainly true that over the 4.5 billion years that the Earth has existed, its temperature has changed a lot! However, the type of warming we're currently seeing can't be attributed to natural cycles of warming and cooling. This is because the change occurring now has taken decades, whereas a naturally occurring change of this size would take thousands and thousands of years.

This accelerated warming must be ascribed to the carbon dioxide accumulating in the atmosphere of our planet, and it must be ascribed to the actions of humans. As we continue to burn fossil fuels, cut down forests and farm unsustainably, the global temperature will continue to rise. In fact, 17 of the 18 hottest years on record have taken place since 2001. The first step that must be taken in order to begin resolving climate change is to recognize it is a man-made problem, and that it is only us who have the responsibility and means to solve it.

Myth 2: Climate change is an issue for the future

This may be more of an excuse not to act on climate change rather than a myth that some believe. Trying to prevent further climate change seems like a hurdle that is too high to jump over, or an obstacle too great to overcome, and so it is acknowledged but no action is taken. Worryingly, the truth is it's now or never—drastic measures are needed now, as the world's leading climate scientists have cautioned that we have just 12 years to keep global warming under a limit of 1.5C, with the next few years and even

months being the most critical of all. Climate change is already affecting our food security, global health, home and environment, and we can't continue to put it off.

Myth 3: Scientists disagree over the cause of climate change

Contrary to popular belief, scientists are in agreement that climate change is happening and, unfortunately, is caused by humans. There have been numerous studies over the past decade into the scientific agreement of human-caused global warming; NASA found that these studies show 97% or more of scientists concur that the warming trends over the last century are due to human activities. In fact, one NASA climate scientist explained that they are '*more sure* that greenhouse gas is causing climate change than we are that smoking causes cancer'. Of course it's unlikely for there to be complete agreement on scientific issues, but on the topic of climate change, there is almost complete concurrence.

Myth 4: It's too late- the damage has been done

Of all the myths out there, this is perhaps the most dangerous one. It is not too late! The thing we must realise is that we need to act now, as this is a critical time to take action. As more and more people understand the severity of the crisis, it seems to become a bigger and more unsolvable problem, however research at universities like Stanford show that it is possible to transition entirely to using renewable energy and make fossil fuels obsolete by 2050. Tackling climate change must be a priority for both individuals and companies, and once this is achieved we can begin to reverse the consequences.

It's sometimes hard to know what the truth about climate change is. The fact is, as more and more people start to become educated about it, more and more action will begin to take place! Hopefully you've learnt something from this article, and that a few myths have been debunked.