

Understanding Climate Change



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A special thank you to the Mthimkhulu Village Centre and community representatives from Caledon, Hermanus, Kleinmond and Botrivier for their input on this material.

Weather vs. climate

When we speak of climate we often confuse it with the weather. Weather happens over a short period of time – it is raining in Cape Town but the sun is shining in Kleinmond. Climate is the weather over a long period. The Western Cape's rainy season is in winter, and Gauteng gets most of its rain in summer. Weather is happening day to day in terms of temperature, level of humidity and wind.

Climate can be defined as the 'average weather' over a longer period. Weather can directly be perceived by people but climate is not so easy to see.

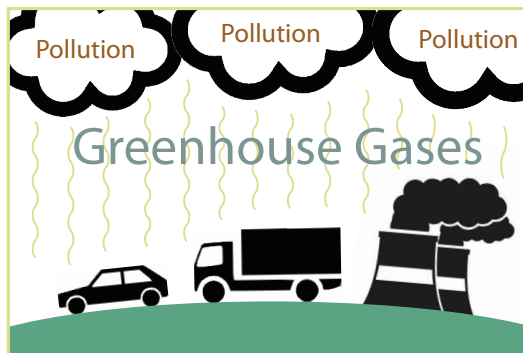
There are different types of climatic conditions on Earth. The Western Cape in winter is cold and rainy, we expect in summer the region to be hot and dry. In Gauteng the winter is cold and dry and the summer brings along the rain.

Even though the Cape climatic conditions in winter are supposed to be cold and rainy, we still get sunny and warm days. This is an example of daily weather.

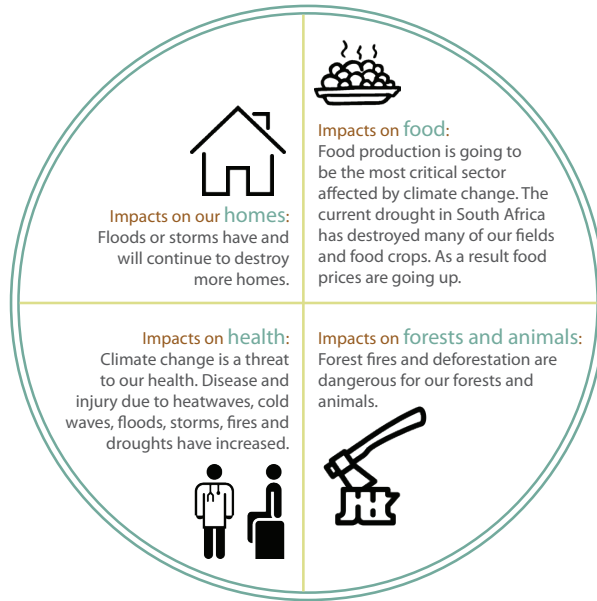
Climate change

Looking back at our childhoods we are able to see that the temperatures in summer and winter have changed and that the number of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have increased or have gotten stronger over the years. This is due to more and more pollution called greenhouse gases in the air, coming from cars on the road or the burning of coal and oil.

This change of weather over a long period of time is what we call climate change. Climate change may be limited to a specific region, or may occur across the whole Earth. Consequences of climate change can be rises in temperature, increased or decreased rainfall and extreme weather events such as storms and droughts.



How does climate change impact you?



What can you do about climate change?

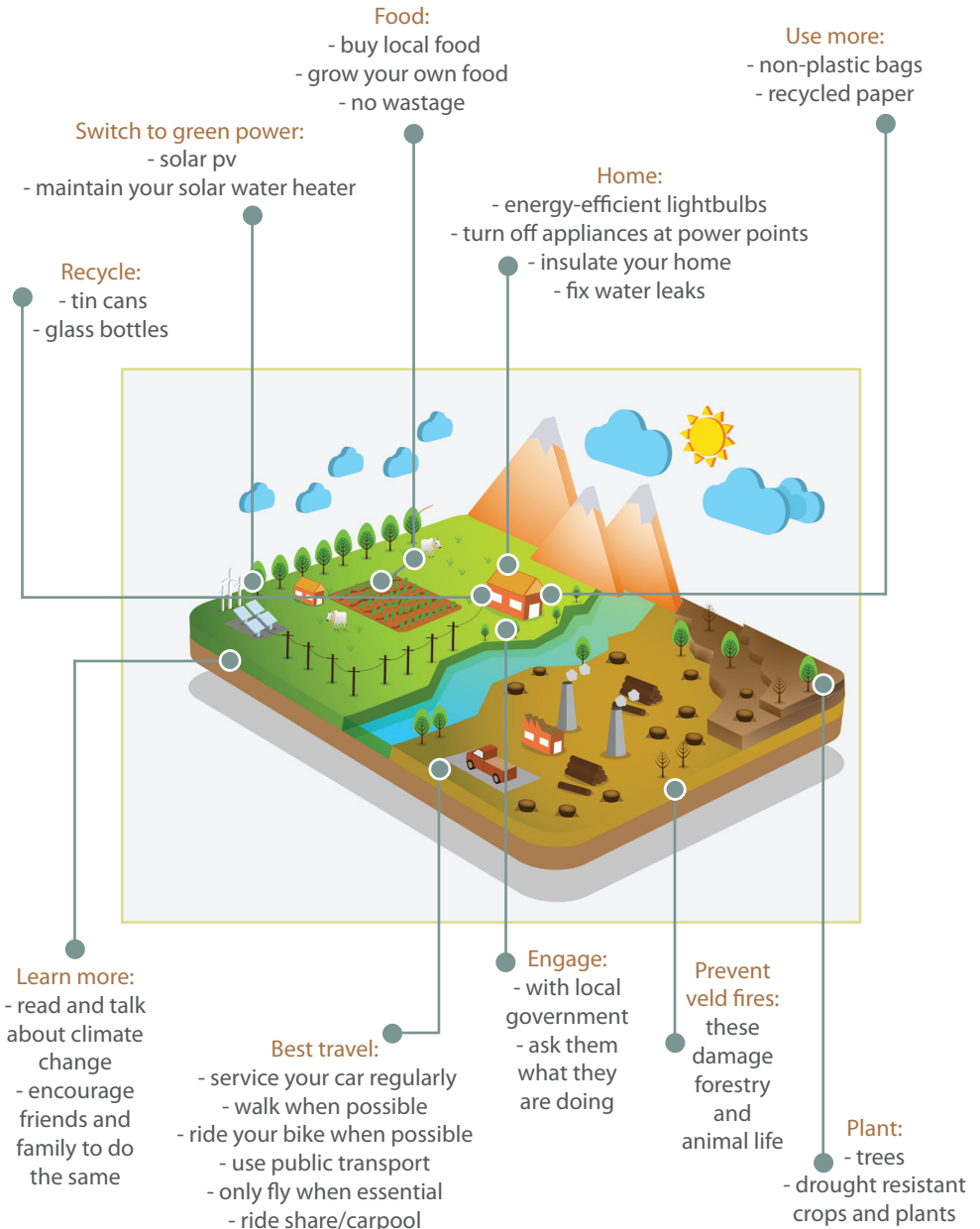
The impacts of climate change are inevitable. The only way to improve the situation is by reducing pollution and to adjust our way of living to be able to deal with climate change both in the short and the long term.

Reduce pollution coming from cars, energy and food production. Over 90% of South Africa's electricity comes from coal leading to air pollution. South Africa will have to find ways to produce electricity that generate little or no pollution, such as from capturing sunlight, wind and other renewable energy sources.

Adjust to the impacts of climate change to keep potential damage as low as possible. South Africans need to build houses that won't get washed away by heavy rains. We should also use resources such as the sun and wind to generate energy for our homes so that we increase our chances of survival should extreme weather events cause major damage to our roads and access to power lines.

The more we invest now into preventing even greater climate change from happening, the less climate change impacts we will have to adjust to.

How can we make a difference?



Project 90 by 2030 challenges South Africans to 'think and act differently'. We work with individuals, organisations, and decision makers to identify actions that can reduce their impact on the environment.