

The greenhouse effect and global warming

The inequality in the use of resources between MEDCs and LEDCs is shown by their carbon emissions. Countries that use a lot of fossil fuels¹ to produce energy to power² industry and provide electricity and heat for homes also produce a lot of carbon gases, as an unwanted by-product³. Carbon dioxide (CO₂), in particular, is given off⁴ when fossil fuels, such as oil and coal⁵, are burnt.

Plants and trees need CO₂ and use it up. However, if there is too much CO₂ due to factories and power stations⁶, combined with a reduction in the number of trees through deforestation, CO₂ builds up⁷ in the atmosphere.

This build up of CO₂ is believed to contribute to global warming⁸ through the greenhouse effect. That is why CO₂ is called a greenhouse gas⁹.

1. fossil fuels: *combustibles fossiles* 2. power (v.): *alimenter en électricité, faire fonctionner*

3. by-product: *produit dérivé* 4. is given off: *est dégagé/émis* 5. oil and coal: *pétrole et charbon*

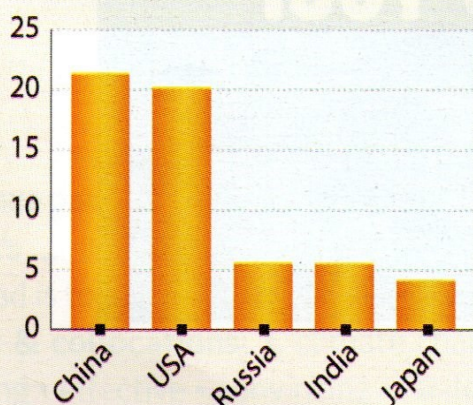
6. power station: *centrale électrique* 7. build up: *s'accumuler* 8. global warming: *le réchauffement climatique*

9. a greenhouse gas: *un gaz à effet de serre*

Read and react.

1. Why do some countries produce a lot of CO₂?
2. What can you conclude from the amount of CO₂ emitted by a country?
3. What absorbs some of the CO₂ in the atmosphere?
4. What about the CO₂ that isn't absorbed?
5. What does the greenhouse effect produce?
6. Who are the biggest producers of CO₂?

Global CO₂ emissions (in %)



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Sentence patterns: CO₂ emissions are an index of... • The more... there is, the more CO₂ emissions there are. • CO₂ emissions are proportional to... • Most countries that produce little carbon gases are...

Words & collocations: industrial activity • consumption of fossil fuel • burn fossil fuels • produce energy • power factories

The diagram shows the countries that contribute the biggest percentage of the world's carbon emissions.