

PAU16

Meltdown is a warning the world can't afford to ignore

The release of America's satellite images of Arctic sea ice provides unexpected, dramatic new evidence about the dangers of global warming.

These visions of dwindling ice cover confirm that changes in climate in the planet are progressing much faster than originally expected and what happens there is going to have an impact elsewhere in our overheating world, in particular to its rising sea levels.

It is not the actual loss of Arctic sea ice that is in danger, of course. Its melting will add nothing, directly, to rises in sea levels. But its dwindling will almost certainly have a profound knock-on effect mainly on the great ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland. Without sea ice to support at their edges, these sheets will break apart faster and faster and tip more and more ice into the oceans, once changes have been triggered at their edges, these will be transmitted into the hearts of these great glaciers at fast rates.

And here lies the threat to Earth: The destruction of the ice sheets will feed vast amounts of melt water into oceans and sea-level rises will be constrained to around 20 to 60 centimetres by the end of the century.

That figure now looks uncomfortably optimistic because some scientists put the likely rise at one metre or more by 2100. As a result, low-lying areas, including Florida and the Netherlands will undergo catastrophic flooding, while the Thames estuary could disappear and some cities including London and Portsmouth will need new flood defences.

And that is just the beginning. No matter what we do about carbon dioxide emissions -the key cause of this heating and melting- the world will continue to warm and its sea levels to rise beyond 2100. Reversing global warming will be a very long process.

However, we have, if nothing else, been warned.

1. Comprehension exercises (2 points)

1.a. According to the text (0.5 points)

- a. the actual loss of Arctic sea ice is not in real danger
- b. the threat for our planet is the rise of the sea level.
- c. by the end of the century, the total rise will be of 60 centimetres.

1.b. The real cause of global warming is (0.5 points)

- a. the melting of the ice sea
- b. the emissions of carbon dioxide.
- c. the dwindling of the great ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland.

1.c. In the future some areas will suffer enormous floods.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

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1.d. The sea water will continue rising for more than 100 years.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

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5. Write a composition of about 100 – 150 words on ONLY ONE of the following topics (3 points)

5.a. Is the future of human beings in danger because of the global warming?

5.b. Write about an unpleasant experience you have had.