**ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

The effect that humanity is having on the environment is becoming ever-more important. Through our actions we are destroying habitats and endangering the lives of future generations. At this point there is no denying the fact that our environment is changing. Hundreds of studies have been conducted to demonstrate that this is happening and it is having an effect on life around us. The biggest environmental problems facing our planet today are :

**Climate Change** :- The [effects of climate change are widespread](https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/effects-climate-change), as it will cause issues with deforestation, water supplies, oceans and ecosystems. Each of these have widespread implications of their own, marking climate change as the major environmental issue the planet faces today.

**Transportation:**- An ever-growing population needs transportation, much of which is fueled by the natural resources that emit greenhouse gases, such as petroleum. Transportation also contributes to a range of [other environmental issues](http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/6000/6300/6333/indicall.pdf), such as the destruction of natural habitats and increase in air pollution.

**Natural Recourse Use** :- Increased resource use is linked to a [number of other environmental issues](http://e360.yale.edu/feature/too_many_people_too_much_consumption/2041/), such as air pollution and population growth. Over time, the depletion of these resources will lead to an energy crisis, plus the chemicals emitted by many natural resources are strong contributors to climate change.

**Air Pollution**:- Air pollution is becoming an increasingly dangerous problem, particularly in heavily-populated cities. The World Health Organization (WHO) has found that [80% of people living in urban areas](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2016/air-pollution-rising/en/) are exposed to air quality levels deemed unfit by the organization. It is also [directly linked to other environmental issues](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/air/aq/health-and-env-effects-air-pollutions.pdf), such as acid rain etc. Animals and humans are also at risk of developing a number of health problems due to air pollution.

**Water Pollution** :- Fresh water is crucial to life on Earth, yet more sources are being polluted through human activities each year. On a global scale, [2 million tons](http://pacinst.org/app/uploads/2013/02/water_quality_facts_and_stats3.pdf) of sewage, agricultural and industrial waste enters the world’s water every day. Water pollution can have harmful effects outside of contamination of the water we drink. It also [disrupts marine life](http://www.water-pollution.org.uk/environment.html), sometimes altering reproductive cycles and increasing mortality rates

**Deforestation**:- The demands of an increasing population has resulted in increasing levels of deforestation. Current estimates state that the planet is losing [80,000 acres](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/earth-talks-daily-destruction/) of tropical forests per day. This results in loss of habitat for many species, placing many at risk and leading to large-scale extinction. Furthermore, deforestation is estimated to produce [15% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions](http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/deforestation).

**Ozone layer depletion** :- Ozone depletion is caused by the release of chemicals, primarily chlorine and bromide, into the atmosphere. A single atom of either has the [potential to destroy thousands](http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/csd/assessments/ozone/2010/twentyquestions/Q9.pdf) of ozone molecules before leaving the stratosphere. Ozone depletion results in [more UVB radiation](https://www.epa.gov/ozone-layer-protection/health-and-environmental-effects-ozone-layer-depletion) reaching the Earth’s surface. UVB has been linked to skin cancer and eye disease, plus it affects plant life and has been linked to a reduction of plankton in marine environments.

**Population Growth** :- Many of the issues listed here result from the massive population growth that Earth has experienced in the last century. The planet’s population [grows by 1.13% per year](http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/), This results in a number of issues, such as a lack of fresh water, habitat loss for wild animals, overuse of natural resources and even species extinction. The latter is particularly damaging, as the planet is now losing [30,000 species per year](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/extinction/index.html).

**Waste Production** :- The average person produces [4.3 pounds of waste per day](https://center.sustainability.duke.edu/resources/green-facts-consumers/how-much-do-we-waste-daily), with the United States alone accounting for 220 million tons per year. Much of this waste ends up in landfills, which generate enormous amounts of methane. Methane not only does this create explosion hazards, but methane also ranks as one of the worst of the greenhouse gases because of its high [global warming potential](http://apps.sepa.org.uk/spripa/Pages/SubstanceInformation.aspx?pid=65).

**Overfishing**:- [Overfishing](http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/overfishing) leads to a misbalance of ocean life, severely affecting natural ecosystems in the process. Furthermore, it also has negative effects on coastal communities that rely on fishing to support their economies.