

COP29 UN Climate Change Conference

The COP29 UN Climate Change Conference is 11–22 November 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan. Country leaders, experts and environmental campaigners will meet to discuss the urgent action needed to fight climate change.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises to check your understanding.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–j) with the vocabulary (1–10).

Vocabulary

1. global warming
2. a drought
3. a polar ice cap
4. a summit
5. CO2 emissions
6. finance
7. a target
8. developing countries
9. sustainable
10. to raise awareness

Definition

- a. the money needed for something to happen
- b. to help people understand the importance of an issue
- c. causing little or no damage to the environment
- d. a level that you intend to achieve
- e. the gradual increase in the world's temperature
- f. an important formal meeting between leaders of governments
- g. a long period when there is little or no rain
- h. a large area of thick ice that covers the North or South Pole
- i. the release of carbon dioxide gas into the atmosphere, mainly from burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas
- j. countries where people have lower income levels, less industrialisation and limited access to resources compared to richer countries

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We can see the effects of global warming all over the world. Polar ice caps are melting, and sea levels are rising. Extreme weather conditions, such as droughts and floods, are becoming more frequent. Climate change is a danger to human beings and all living things on Earth. Every year, there is a United Nations conference known as a COP summit, where world leaders meet to review the UN goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and to discuss what action countries still need to take.

What is a COP?

This year the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference will take place 11–22 November 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan. The event is also known as COP29 – ‘COP’ stands for ‘Conference of the Parties’. It usually happens in a different place every year.

The Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement was a very important moment in global climate change discussions. This agreement was made in 2015, during the COP21 summit in Paris. With this agreement, almost every country in the world promised to cut CO₂ emissions as quickly as possible, in order to limit global warming to well below 2°C, aiming for 1.5°C. However, despite the commitments made in Paris, the progress made is not enough. We are not meeting the targets we need to reach in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

What are the aims of COP29?

The goal of the COP29 conference is to take faster action to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement, and to increase the amount of money available to take action against climate change. The 2024 event aims to:

- encourage countries to set higher targets for reducing emissions, with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C
- increase finance to help developing countries reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

Young people and climate change

Young people have powerful voices in the fight against climate change, and the actions you take now can help create a more sustainable future. Simple steps like using less plastic, saving energy and raising awareness can help reduce CO₂ emissions and inspire other people. You could get involved in school climate projects or learn more about the science behind climate change and its solutions. COP29 brings together world leaders, but action by young people is also essential to create a better world for the future.

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best answer.

1. The UN aims to limit global temperature rise to _____.
a. 1°C b. 1.5°C c. 2.5°C
2. The conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, is the _____ UN Climate Change Conference.
a. 19th b. 25th c. 29th

3. 'COP' stands for ____.
- a. Conference of the Parties b. Climate Optimism People c. Countries Organising the Planet
4. The Paris Agreement was made in ____.
- a. 2015 b. 2019 c. 2022
5. The progress we are making towards meeting the targets agreed in the Paris Agreement is ____.
- a. very good b. OK c. not good enough
6. The 2024 conference aims to ____.
- a. produce more gas, coal and oil b. increase finance and support developing countries c. give electric cars for everyone at the conference

Task 2

Complete the collocations with words from the box.

countries	global	Agreement	conference
29	awareness	emissions	climate

1. warming
2. change
3. a climate
4. COP
5. the Paris
6. CO2
7. developing
8. raising

Discussion

What do you think is the most important action to fight climate change?

Answers

Preparation task

1. e
2. g
3. h
4. f
5. i
6. a
7. d
8. j
9. c
10. b

Task 1

1. b
2. c
3. a
4. a
5. c
6. b

Task 2

1. global
2. climate
3. conference
4. 29
5. Agreement
6. emissions
7. countries
8. awareness