

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today we're going to look at a topic you've probably heard a lot about – global warming and the environment.

First we're going to look at ways of brainstorming, taking notes and developing ideas.

Watch while we play some video that contains ideas about the causes and effects of global warming ...

While you watch, try to note down some of your ideas about what global warming is.

visual clip (you can play this from the website)

OK so you saw some ideas, and perhaps took some notes, during that clip. What were some of the ideas you saw?

What has caused global warming?

visual clip (you can play this from the website)

We saw gases in the air, cars, factory waste, and people cutting trees down.



So if you made those notes, you'd get an idea that these were the things causing global warming.

Now let's listen to someone talk about the causes...

Heat-trapping gases are building up in the atmosphere.

Heat-trapping gases are building up in the atmosphere. What else?

So what is global warming? It's the result of billions of decisions. It's caused by decisions made by individuals – like driving big cars rather than small cars. And it's caused by decisions made by corporations and nations, like dumping waste into the atmosphere.

Global warming is caused by about people using big cars, and people dumping waste into the atmosphere...

OK, so you've looked at the vision, and listened to the speaker, and you've made notes about some of the causes of global warming.

Now let's look for some of the effects...

visual clip (you can play this from the website)

So after watching that, you might be thinking that global warming is having an effect on weather patterns, and on nature.

Listen to the speaker...

Nature is already responding to global warming. There have been changes in global weather patterns.

Trees are flowering earlier. Birds are laying eggs earlier. Butterflies are moving up hills.

So there's been weather changes, and changes to the ways trees, birds and butterflies behave.

So we have a list of causes, and list of effects. You might have identified those things from a text you've read, or from listening to someone speak. This is how you can take notes.

Once you've got your notes, you need to be able to link those causes and effects in sentences.

Let's look at a couple of different ways.

The first and most basic way is just making a sequence of statements. This can sometimes be a powerful way of making a connection between things. Listen.

Heat-trapping gases are building up in the atmosphere. Trees are flowering earlier. Birds are laying eggs earlier, and butterflies are moving up hills.

Heat-trapping gases are building up in the atmosphere.
Trees are flowering earlier.
Birds are laying eggs earlier.
Butterflies are moving up hills.

From the sequence of information, we realise that birds are laying their eggs earlier because gases are making the earth warmer.

So a simple list of statements can show a cause and effect relationship.

But there are other ways too.

You can use the language of cause and effect. We can say:

X causes Y.

Driving cars causes air pollution.



There are many other word choices as well.

Driving cars leads to air pollution.

Driving cars results in air pollution.

Notice you can also turn the sentence around...

'Air pollution is caused by driving cars'.

'Air pollution is the result of driving cars'.

'Air pollution is due to driving cars'.

Listen to an example here ...

There have been changes in global weather patterns.

Trees are flowering earlier. Birds are laying eggs earlier. Butterflies are moving up hills.

So what is global warming? It is the result of billions of individual decisions.

He's talking about global warming.

Global warming is the result of billions of decisions.

Global warming is due to billions of decisions.

And remember we can turn the sentence around, and change the phrase:

Billions of decisions cause global warming.

Billions of decisions result in global warming.

Billions of decisions lead to global warming.

When you're writing about causes and effects, make sure you use a variety of these kinds of phrases. There are many to choose from. You should make lists of cause and effect language, and the kinds of vocabulary you can use to describe cause and effect relationships.

Now listen to another clip.

Trees are flowering earlier. Birds are laying eggs earlier. Butterflies are moving up hills.

So what is global warming? It is the result of billions of individual decisions.

When you're writing up your notes using cause and effect language, you'll need to be able to follow or track the subject of the text.

Let's look at that now.

"What is global warming? It is the result of billions of individual decisions".

The word 'it' here is called a referent. We use referents to identify and track subjects through a conversation or a piece of writing.

If you repeat the subject too many times, your work will sound boring.

Listen to this:

The woman came into the room. The woman sat down. The woman drank her tea.

Look at how we use referents:

The woman came into the room. She sat down. She drank her tea.

When you are reading, you'll need to be able to understand referents, and follow the subject through the text.

Other referents are this, that, these, those.

Here's the clip again. Listen to the way the referents are used.

What is global warming? It is the result of billions of individual decisions.

The word it here refers to global warming.

What is global warming? Global warming is the result of billions of decisions.

And here's another referent.

What is global warming? It is the result of billions of individual decisions.

You can't manage that at the scale of the individual.

He says:

You can't manage that at the scale of the individual.

He means:

You can't manage global warming at the scale of the individual.

But notice how the subject changes here.

What is global warming? It's the result of billions of individual decisions.

You can't manage that at the scale of the individual.

Managing the atmosphere has to take place at a global level. That's why it needs international agreements.

Managing the atmosphere has to take place at a global level.

The subject of this sentence is 'managing the atmosphere'.

That's why it needs international agreement.

So the 'it' here no longer refers to global warming. Now 'it' is referring to 'managing the atmosphere'.

That's why managing the atmosphere needs international agreement.

When reading and writing, you must be very careful to notice when subjects change, and to be clear about which subject is being referred to. This can be quite tricky sometime.

Next time you see a paragraph, try to highlight all the referents like:

it, this, that, these, those, he, she, they.

Then try to work out what subject they are all referring back to.

It's a great exercise, and it will help your reading, writing and speaking skills.

And that's all for today. Hope you keep enjoying your English studies and Study English! I'll see you next time.