



# Air Pollution: The Dirty Truth

# Air Pollution

Air pollution is the addition of gases, chemicals, and particle matter into the atmosphere. Air pollution **primarily comes from burning fossil fuels** such as natural gas, petroleum, and coal. A study has listed air pollution as the **cause of four percent of the deaths** in the United States.





# Air Pollution

**Humans are the main cause of air pollution.**

Industry, including factories and power plants, burn large quantities of fuel.

Burning coal and petroleum releases sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxide into the air. Airplanes, boats, and cars burn petroleum, releasing carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.

# Air Pollution

The waste in landfills releases methane. Sulfur oxides, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, and methane all have a very negative effect on air quality. These pollutants can also contribute to the greenhouse effect.



# Air Pollution

Some air pollution is not directly caused by humans: for example, animals emit carbon dioxide when they breathe, and volcanoes release sulfur oxide. However, most air pollution is linked directly or indirectly to human activity. This means that air pollution can be best controlled by modifying human activity to burn a smaller quantity of fossil fuels.

Answer the  
questions in complete  
sentences.

1. What is air pollution?
2. What causes air pollution?
3. What is an example of air pollution in the text?
4. What is at least one negative outcome of air pollution?
5. How can air pollution be prevented?
6. What is something you could do to reduce air pollution?



# Answers to air pollution questions.

## 1. What is air pollution?

Air pollution is the addition of gases, chemicals, and particle matter into the atmosphere.

## 2. What causes air pollution?

Air pollution primarily comes from burning fossil fuels such as natural gas, petroleum, and coal.

## 3. What is an example of air pollution in the text?

Industry, including factories and power plants, burn large quantities of fuel.

Burning coal and petroleum releases sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxide into the air.

Airplanes, boats, and cars burn petroleum, releasing carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.

The waste in landfills releases methane.

Animals emit carbon dioxide when they breathe, and volcanoes release sulfur oxide.

# Answers to air pollution questions (cont.)

## 4. What is at least one negative outcome of air pollution?

A study has listed air pollution as the cause of four percent of the deaths in the United States

## 5. How can air pollution be prevented?

By modifying human activity to burn a smaller quantity of fossil fuels.

## 6. What is something *you* could do to reduce air pollution?

Answers should vary, but may include: using less power (thus putting less demand on power plants); using cars less frequently; diminishing the amount of garbage so there will be less waste in the landfill.



# Related Material

**Please Note:** Links open in *Slide Show*. If you are in edit/creating mode you will need to “right click” the links below. Select “Open Hyperlink”.

- [Coloring Page: Think Green - Air Pollution](#)
- [Comprehension: Air Pollution \(upper elem/middle\)](#)
- [Word Search: Environment](#)
- [Experiment: Greenhouse Effect \(upper elem/middle\)](#)

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