

Climate describes an average of weather conditions in an area over a period of time, usually around thirty years. There are many different factors that determine the climate of a place, like...Latitude.

The tilt and curve of the Earth influence how energy from the Sun is distributed north and south of the Equator. It's hottest at the Equator where the Sun's rays are more direct and focused. Towards the Poles, the same amount of energy is shared over a wider area, making it cooler.

Elevation. Air temperature decreases with altitude. The higher you go, the colder it gets.

Distance from the sea. Water heats up and cools down slowly, so coastal places tend to be cooler in summer and warmer in winter, than places inland at the same latitude and altitude.

Ocean currents also influence climate as they transport heat around the globe, cooling or warming coastal regions. The world has these main climate zones. Polar climates are very cold and dry with long, dark winters and short summers. Temperatures rise above freezing for only a few months each year.

Temperate climates, like ours in the United Kingdom, have four clear seasons with warm summers, if we're lucky, and cool winters.

Arid climates are very dry and usually get less than 250mm of rainfall each year, creating areas of hot desert like the Sahara and cold desert like the Gobi. With cloudless skies, daytime temperatures in deserts can be extremely hot and night time temperatures below freezing.

Tropical climates close to the equator have high temperatures and year-round rainfall, ideal conditions for creating rainforests such the Amazon and Congo. Some tropical climates have two distinct seasons, one wet and one dry.

A Mediterranean climate has dry summers and mild, wet winters.

Continental climates are similar to temperate ones but have greater temperature extremes in summer and winter, because they are found inland, far from the ocean.

The climate is something that affects us all, from our economy, to the food we eat, to our leisure activities