Describing the world: weather and climate

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 climatological ____	**a** relating to the long-term statistical study of climate
2 anomaly ____	**b** a deviation from a long-term average or expected pattern
3 stochastic variability ____	**c** essentially random, unpredictable fluctuation within a system
4 teleconnection ____	**d** a statistical link between weather patterns in distant parts of the world
5 polar vortex ____	**e** a large area of low pressure and cold air near the poles
6 feedback loop ____	**f** a process where a change reinforces or counteracts itself
7 phenological shift ____	**g** a change in the timing of seasonal biological events, such as flowering
8 climate forcing ____	**h** a factor that drives changes in Earth's climate system
9 hydrological cycle ____	**i** the continuous movement of water through evaporation, precipitation and flow
10 albedo ____	**j** the proportion of light a surface reflects, affecting warming

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 A deviation from the long-term average is an anomaly / the norm.

2 Essentially random fluctuation within a system is stochastic variability / a fixed pattern.

3 A statistical link between distant weather patterns is a teleconnection / an isolated event.

4 A process that reinforces or counteracts itself is a feedback loop / a one-off event.

5 A change in the timing of seasonal events is a phenological shift / a permanent state.

6 A factor driving changes in climate is climate forcing / climate stability.

7 The continuous movement of water through the environment is the hydrological cycle / a single rainfall.

8 The proportion of light a surface reflects is albedo / absorption rate.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

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VOCABULARY PRACTICE
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1 model ____	**a** a feedback loop
2 attribute ____	**b** climate variability
3 disrupt ____	**c** an anomaly to a specific cause
4 amplify ____	**d** the hydrological cycle
5 destabilise ____	**e** a weather pattern
6 quantify ____	**f** a regional climate system
7 correlate with ____	**g** extreme weather risk
8 mitigate ____	**h** broader teleconnections

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ADVANCED | C1

4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

albedo | anomaly | climate forcing | climatological | feedback loop | hydrological cycle | phenological shift | polar vortex | stochastic variability | teleconnection

Long-term 1 _____ records allow scientists to distinguish genuine trends from mere 2 _____ or short-term 3 _____ that would otherwise be mistaken for significant change. Melting ice reduces surface 4 _____, reflecting less sunlight and accelerating warming further, a well-documented 5 _____. Disruption to the 6 _____ has been linked to a weakening 7 _____, occasionally allowing unusually cold air to spill into regions that rarely experience such conditions, an example of a broader 8 _____ linking distant weather systems. Meanwhile, ecologists have documented a consistent 9 _____ in many species, with flowering and migration occurring earlier each year, a pattern attributed to gradually intensifying 10 _____ from greenhouse gas concentrations.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Distinguishing signal from noise in climate data

Climate scientists face a persistent methodological challenge: distinguishing genuine long-term trends from the substantial stochastic variability inherent in any complex system. A single unusually cold winter, however striking, does not by itself contradict broader warming trends, since short-term anomalies are expected even within a warming climatological record. Attribution science has advanced considerably, allowing researchers to estimate the extent to which specific extreme events have been made more likely or more severe by anthropogenic climate forcing, though considerable uncertainty remains for individual events. This distinction between weather, which is highly variable day to day, and climate, the long-term statistical pattern, remains central to public understanding, even though it is frequently blurred in casual discussion.

1 What persistent methodological challenge do climate scientists face? _____

2 Why doesn't a single unusually cold winter contradict broader warming trends? _____

3 What has attribution science advanced considerably in allowing researchers to do? _____

4 Does considerable uncertainty remain for individual events? _____

5 What distinction remains central to public understanding? _____

6 How is this distinction often treated in casual discussion? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

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ADVANCED | C1

1 The reading was a clear deviation from the long-term average. _____

2 The change reinforced itself, accelerating further warming. _____

3 The flowering time shifted earlier each year. _____

4 The extreme heat was linked statistically to distant weather systems. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how scientists distinguish genuine climate trends from natural variability, distinguishing observation from inference.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ADVANCED | C1

ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

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

2 Precise terms

1 an anomaly 2 stochastic variability 3 a teleconnection 4 a feedback loop 5 a phenological shift 6 climate forcing 7 the hydrological cycle 8 albedo

3 Academic collocations

1 e model a weather pattern 2 c attribute an anomaly to a specific cause 3 d disrupt the hydrological cycle 4 a amplify a feedback loop
5 f destabilise a regional climate system 6 g quantify extreme weather risk 7 h correlate with broader teleconnections 8 b mitigate climate variability

4 Analysis

1 climatological 2 anomaly 3 stochastic variability 4 albedo 5 feedback loop
6 hydrological cycle 7 polar vortex 8 teleconnection 9 phenological shift 10 climate forcing

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Distinguishing genuine long-term trends from substantial stochastic variability.
2 Because short-term anomalies are expected even within a warming climatological record.
3 Estimate the extent to which specific extreme events have been made more likely or severe by anthropogenic climate forcing.
4 Yes.
5 The distinction between weather (highly variable day to day) and climate (the long-term statistical pattern).
6 It is frequently blurred.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 an anomaly 2 a feedback loop 3 a phenological shift 4 a teleconnection

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.