

acid rain is rainwater that has a pH of less than 5 because it has dissolved gases - like sulphur dioxide - in it. These gases are made mainly by burning fossil fuels.

atmosphere is the air that surrounds the Earth. It is held close to the Earth by gravity.

combustion (or burning) is a chemical reaction in which a fuel reacts quickly with oxygen to produce heat and light. Reactions that give out energy are called 'exothermic reactions' (ex = out, therm = heat). All combustion reactions are exothermic.

global warming is the gradual change in world climate caused by the greenhouse effect.

greenhouse effect is when heat energy is trapped in the atmosphere by 'greenhouse gases' like carbon dioxide. The Earth's surface gives off infrared radiation as it is warmed by the Sun.

oxidation reactions involve oxygen being added to another chemical.

pollution is an undesirable change in the environment caused by human activities. Pollution may affect the atmosphere, the water, or the land.

stratosphere is the second lowest layer of the atmosphere. It is up to 50 km thick. Ozone is made in the stratosphere by the action of ultraviolet radiation on oxygen molecules.

troposphere is the lowest layer of the atmosphere. Its average thickness is about 15 km. Most weather occurs in the troposphere.