

5.1 Climate evidence, energy budgets and policy

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

KEY WORDS mitigation • adaptation

Objective

Climate evidence, energy budgets and policy. Supported SL concept preparation; original classroom practice, not an official IB paper or assessed learner work.

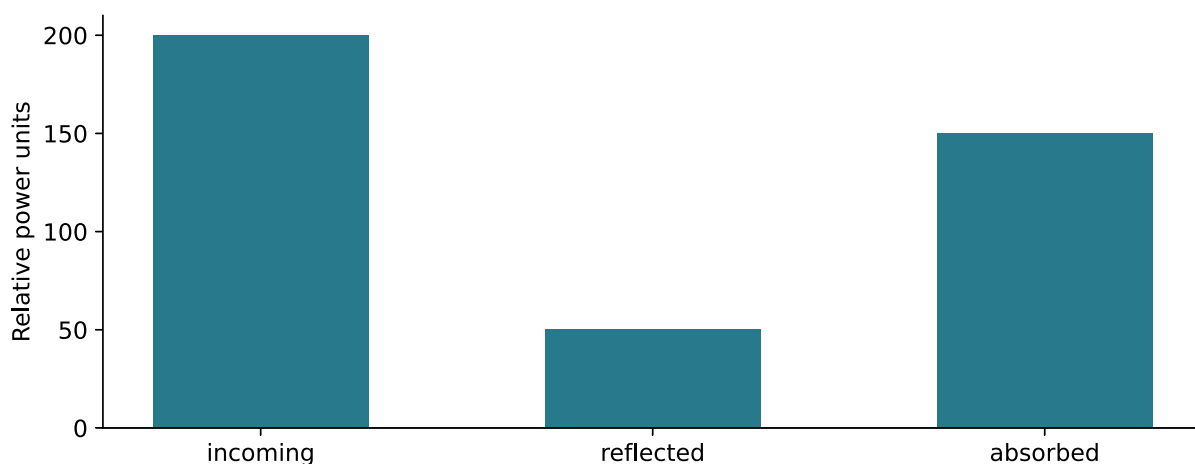
1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ What would explain this observation?

- One cold day does not disprove a warming climate. Weather describes short-term conditions; climate describes distributions over longer times and regions.
- Start with a prediction. State the quantities or features you would compare, then decide what evidence could distinguish two explanations.

■ Build the model

- The Earth energy balance includes incoming solar radiation, reflection, absorption and outgoing infrared radiation. Greenhouse gases absorb and emit infrared radiation. Feedback can alter the response to an initial forcing.
- **mitigation** : Actions addressing causes of environmental change; **adaptation** : Actions reducing harm from environmental impacts.



■ Choose evidence that can test it

- Distinguish mitigation, which addresses drivers, from adaptation, which reduces harm from impacts. A policy assessment needs evidence about effectiveness, cost, equity and uncertainty; one criterion is not the entire decision.
- Compare multi-year data using consistent baselines. State the region, timescale and uncertainty. At HL, connect a management decision to law, economics and ethics rather than treating these lenses as extra definitions only.

■ Work from known quantities

- State the known values and their units. Choose the relation because its assumptions fit this case, then rearrange before substitution.
- Known: a surface receives 200 power units and reflects 50. Absorbed input = incoming-reflected = $200 - 50 = 150$. Reflected fraction = $50/200 = 0.25 = 25\%$. A change in reflectivity alters the absorbed budget under this model.

Example:

Incoming energy is 240 units and reflected energy 72. Find reflected percentage. Use the same sequence: known quantities → model → relation → substitution → unit and interpretation.

■ Check the conclusion and its limits

- The greenhouse effect is not the same process as ozone depletion. A carbon footprint estimate depends on its system boundary.
- Return to the original observation. Explain what the result supports, which conditions it assumes, and one way to test a competing explanation.

Warn:

One local weather observation establishes a global climate trend. This claim is false: The greenhouse effect is not the same process as ozone depletion. A carbon footprint estimate depends on its system boundary.

Key:

Climate evidence, energy budgets and policy: Distinguish mitigation, which addresses drivers, from adaptation, which reduces harm from impacts. A policy assessment needs evidence about effectiveness, cost, equity and uncertainty; one criterion is not the entire decision.

2 Practice

2.1 Which action is adaptation to flood risk? Choose one answer.

- **A** Raising vulnerable electrical equipment above expected flood level
- **B** Only measuring global CO₂
- **C** Pretending the risk is zero

[1]

2.2 Incoming energy is 240 units and reflected energy 72. Find reflected percentage. Show the relation, substitution and units.

[2]

2.3 Decide whether this claim is true and justify: One local weather observation establishes a global climate trend.

[2]

2.4 Actions addressing causes of environmental change: write the technical term.

[1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Two fictional surfaces each receive 240 W/m^2 and reflect 60 and 96 W/m^2 . Compare absorbed inputs. Could this alone predict their equilibrium temperatures? [4]
