

34.1 Climate evidence, energy budgets and policy

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

KEY WORDS mitigation • adaptation

Objective

Climate evidence, energy budgets and policy. Original classroom practice for IB SL; not an official IB paper.

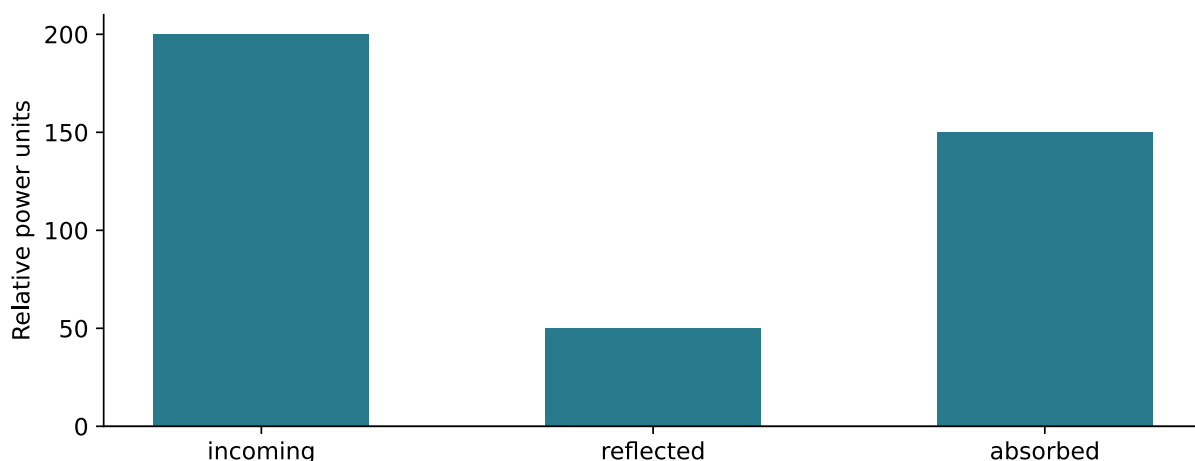
1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ 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.
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■ 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.

In the lab: 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**

- 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.

Your turn: Incoming energy is 240 units and reflected energy 72. Find reflected percentage.

■ **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.

Not true: One local weather observation establishes a global climate trend. Weather is a short-term local state; climate is the long-term statistical pattern. One cold day in one city cannot confirm or refute a global trend built from decades of worldwide records.

Key:

- The Earth energy balance includes incoming solar radiation, reflection, absorption and outgoing infrared radiation.
- Distinguish mitigation, which addresses drivers, from adaptation, which reduces harm from impacts.
- Watch for: the greenhouse effect is not the same process as ozone depletion.

■ **Write from a reflected share of 14 percent**

- Incoming energy is 200 units and reflected energy is 28 units.
- Find the reflected percentage. One local weather observation is not a climate trend.

2 Practice

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

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

[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: Weather is a short-term local state; climate is the long-term statistical pattern.

[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]
