

JIGSAW TASK: HOLOCENE VS ANTHROPOCENE

TEXT A – The Holocene

The **Holocene** is the name scientists give to the last about 11,700 years of Earth's history, the time since the end of the last big ice age. During this epoch, the climate became warmer and more stable compared to the glacial period before, and this stability can be seen in the layers of sediment and rock from that time. There were some smaller climate shifts, like the "Little Ice Age" between about 1200 and 1700 AD, but overall the Holocene was a relatively warm, calm period *between* ice ages. This quiet and predictable climate allowed agriculture, cities, and complex societies to grow, and human impacts on the planet were mostly local or regional and relatively slow.

[Adapted from: <https://ucmp.berkeley.edu/quaternary/holocene.php>]

- Read your text silently
- Choose **8 key words or short phrases** that help you remember the main ideas
- Write these 8 words on a separate piece of paper
- Turn your text over, but keep the list of 8 words in front of you
- Using your 8 words, explain your period in your own words. Do not read from the original text.



TEXT B – The Anthropocene

In the last decades, many scientists say we have entered a new geological epoch called the **Anthropocene**, which means 'the human epoch'. The term is still unofficial, because experts continue to debate whether it is really a new epoch. In the Anthropocene, human activity has become a major force that changes the Earth's climate, biodiversity, and water cycles at a very rapid speed. Population, energy use, pollution, and the use of land and water have all increased extremely fast, especially since the middle of the 20th century. This rapid growth has left visible traces in the geological record: in many places, we now find similar layers of concrete, plastic, metals, chemicals, and disturbed sediments formed during the same recent period. In the Anthropocene, we are no longer just living on the planet – we are actively reshaping its systems on a global scale.

[Adapted from: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/anthropocene/>]

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