

**Summary**

**Chapter 12: The Environment and International Relations**

*EQ: How does the natural environment influence international relations?*

* The environment has a major impact on international relations, and that impact will only continue to grow as human-driven climate change accelerates.
* Negative externalities, or the costs of a good or service not reflected in its price, are a source of problems in international relations. Environmental damage from industry, such as pollution and acid rain, is one significant example.
* Tragedies of the commons, in which individuals make decisions that benefit them in the short term but the aggregation of these decisions harm the wider community in the long term, are another major source of problems in the international community.
* Global climate change and ozone depletion will have major ramifications in the future, including flooding coastal areas and seriously impacting agricultural production.
* Contamination of the world’s freshwater resources is another major problem that humans face going forward.
* Oil pollution, threats to marine life, and overfishing in the oceans are all major problems currently playing out in the world’s oceans.
* Deforestation is a major problem on land, as it rapidly destroys biodiversity and contributes significantly to climate change over time.
* International efforts can have a major effect on environmental problems. Unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral efforts can all be helpful.
* Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can also play a meaningful role in protecting the environment today and in the future.
* The international community needs to be way of and cooperate on major environmental issues or the environment will become an increasing source of threats to people and states in the years ahead.