Weather vs. Climate: What's the Difference?

Join Finn the dolphin on a journey through the atmosphere—explore the patterns that shape our world!

- **Weather describes the short-term state of the atmosphere, including temperature, humidity, and wind, in a specific place at a specific time.**
- **Climate is the long-term pattern of weather in an area, calculated by averaging data collected over several decades.**
- **The Equator receives the most direct sunlight, which creates hot, tropical climates throughout the year.**
- **Latitude, distance from the sea, and altitude are the three main geographical factors that determine the climate of a region.**
- **Global climate change is currently causing a rise in average temperatures, which affects weather patterns and sea levels across the globe.**

Did you know? Did you know? While weather changes in minutes or hours, climate is the average of those weather patterns in a specific place over a very long time—usually 30 years or more! If you are wearing a raincoat today, that is weather; if you live in a place where it rains for most of the year, that is your climate.

Key vocabulary: Meteorology · Atmosphere · Precipitation · Temperature · Equator · Greenhouse effect