

The earth is surrounded by atmosphere. The **atmosphere** or air is made up of gases. The atmosphere is like a protective coating around the earth. The atmosphere filters out much of the sun's heat and light rays. If something were to happen to the atmosphere, the earth would burn up.

The earth also gives off heat which it has absorbed from the sun. This heat needs to escape back into the atmosphere. When the heat cannot escape back into the atmosphere, scientists say the earth has a '**greenhouse effect**'. In the greenhouses where plants are grown, the roofs are made of glass. The sun's rays shine through the glass of the greenhouse. The glass, though, prevents heat from escaping, keeping the greenhouse warm. That effect is good for growing plants; it is not a good effect for the earth.

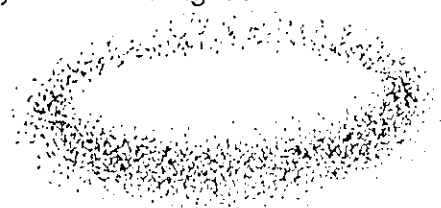
Many scientists worry that the pollution of the atmosphere is causing a greenhouse effect for the earth. The pollution is caused by chemicals and dirt that are created on earth. For example, in the making of plastics or in the burning of coal, pollution is made. The pollution rises into the atmosphere. This pollution causes the atmosphere to trap heat. When the heat cannot escape, the earth begins to warm up.

Over a long, long period of time, the heat can cause plant life to change. The heat can cause too much ice to melt, which could lead to parts of the earth being flooded forever.

A THEORY ON HOW THE SUN WAS FORMED

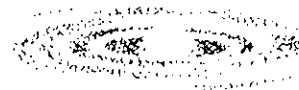
A **theory** is an idea which has not yet been proven. Scientists cannot prove exactly how the sun was formed, but many scientists agree on a theory as to how the sun came into existence.

The theory is that billions of years ago there were clouds spread over great distances. These clouds were in the universe. The clouds were made of hydrogen. By accident or from some type of pressure, the atoms in the clouds were forced together. As the atoms were forced closer and closer together, the atoms reacted with one another. The reaction of the atoms caused energy to be released.



A giant cloud formed.

The cloud became earth's sun.



From this cloud planets formed

