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COURSE NAME:

**Current Trend of the Ozone Hole**

ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**November 1st 2024**

**INTRODUCTION**

The ozone layer is a vital component of the Earth's atmosphere, situated within the stratosphere at about 10 to 30 miles (15 to 50 kilometers) above the Earth's surface. Its primary function is to absorb most of the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can harm living organisms. By filtering out these UV rays, the ozone layer plays an essential role in protecting human health and preserving biodiversity and ecosystems. Unfortunately, human activities, particularly those involving the release of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and other ozone-depleting substances, have significantly damaged the ozone layer. The chemicals released into the atmosphere rise up and eventually reach the stratosphere, where they undergo photodissociation, releasing chlorine atoms that catalyze the breakdown of ozone (O₃) molecules. This process has contributed to forming a notable "ozone hole," predominantly over Antarctica, which allows increased levels of UV radiation to penetrate the Earth’s surface.

The consequences of continued ozone layer depletion are alarming and far-reaching. Increased UV exposure can lead to serious health issues, including a higher incidence of skin cancers, cataracts, and weakened immune responses in humans. Additionally, elevated UV levels can harm wildlife, mainly marine ecosystems such as phytoplankton, which form the foundation of the oceanic food web. The disruption of these ecological systems can lead to improper growth patterns in plants, affecting agriculture and food security. Furthermore, the implications for climate change are profound. The depletion of the ozone layer can lead to increased temperatures globally, exacerbating existing climate issues and resulting in unpredictable weather patterns. As the stability of various ecosystems is threatened, the overall health of the planet and the future of countless species hangs in the balance. Therefore, addressing ozone layer depletion is crucial for maintaining our environment's integrity and ensuring life's survival.

**What is your opinion?**

The introduction underscored the critical role of the ozone layer in safeguarding life on Earth, as it acts as a protective shield against harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Unfortunately, this vital atmospheric layer is deteriorating alarmingly, primarily due to human-induced activities such as the release of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone-depleting substances. If we fail to take immediate and effective action to combat this environmental crisis, the repercussions could be dire, affecting ecosystems, human health, and the overall stability of our planet. The potential consequences of further ozone depletion include increased rates of skin cancer and cataracts in humans, as well as detrimental effects on wildlife, particularly in marine ecosystems where ultraviolet radiation can impact phytoplankton and other foundational species. Given the gravity of the situation, I firmly believe that we must enhance our collective efforts to address this pressing issue.

One of my primary recommendations is to significantly raise public awareness about the importance of the ozone layer and the threats it faces. Educational institutions, from primary schools to universities, should take the lead in initiatives aimed at educating students about environmental conservation and the specific actions that can be taken to protect the ozone layer. Furthermore, the media plays a pivotal role in disseminating informative content that can reach a broader audience, highlighting success stories and advocating for individual and community-level actions that can contribute to overall environmental protection. By fostering a well-informed public, we can empower individuals to make informed choices and support policies that protect our planet's atmosphere.

**Why this Topic be Important?**

I believe this question does not necessitate a detailed response, as I have previously elaborated on the crucial topics of the ozone layer and the ozone hole. Both play a vital role in maintaining the health of our planet and protecting it from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The ozone layer acts as a shield in the Earth's stratosphere, absorbing the majority of the sun's harmful UV rays. This is essential not only for the survival of countless living organisms on land and in the ocean but also for human health. Increased exposure to UV radiation can lead to serious health issues, including skin cancer, cataracts, and weakened immune systems.

The ozone hole, particularly over Antarctica, signifies the deleterious effects of human activities, specifically the release of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone-depleting substances. Addressing the threats to the ozone layer remains a top priority for environmental protection efforts worldwide, as it is essential for minimizing these impacts on both human populations and the diverse ecosystems that inhabit our planet. By protecting the ozone layer, we safeguard the environment and ensure a healthier future for all living creatures on Earth.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to present a series of comprehensive recommendations aimed at enhancing the protection of the ozone layer, which is crucial for safeguarding our environment:

- **Raise Awareness in Communities**: It is essential to implement community outreach programs focused on educating the public, especially those involved in activities contributing to ozone depletion, such as using certain refrigerants and solvents. Workshops, seminars, and informational campaigns can play a pivotal role in increasing awareness about the harmful effects of ozone layer depletion and promoting more sustainable practices within these communities.

- **Educate Students and School Children:** Integrating ozone layer education into school curricula can empower the younger generation with knowledge about environmental stewardship. Educators should develop engaging and interactive lesson plans that cover the science behind the ozone layer, the consequences of its depletion, and practical steps students can take in their daily lives to help protect it. Initiatives such as school projects, science fairs, and eco-clubs can reinforce this important message.

**Government Prioritization:** Governments worldwide must recognize the importance of ozone layer protection by incorporating relevant policies and regulations into their national agendas. This could include enhancing monitoring systems for ozone-depleting substances, setting stricter emission standards for industries, and providing incentives for research and development of alternative substances that do not harm the ozone layer. Participating in international agreements like the Montreal Protocol is crucial for coordinated global action.

- **Corporate Responsibility:** Industries and companies that engage in oil production and other activities resulting in carbon dioxide emissions must take proactive measures to minimize their adverse effects on the ozone layer. This can involve adopting cleaner technologies, investing in renewable energy sources, and committing to transparent sustainability practices. Corporations should also undertake regular assessments of their environmental impact and work collaboratively with environmental organizations to develop strategies to mitigate ozone layer harm.

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