

Electromagnetic Radiation (EM)

A kind of radiation consisting of waves that includes visible, infrared, and ultraviolet light.

Visible Light

The portion of the EM spectrum that can be seen by our eyes.

Infrared Light (IR)

EM radiation with a wavelength longer than the red of visible light. Is detectable by humans as heat.

Ultraviolet Light (UV)

EM radiation with a wavelength shorter than the violet of visible light.

Albedo

The fraction of light falling on a surface that is reflected back to space. Low albedo means most of the light energy is absorbed and little is reflected.

Greenhouse Effect

The trapping of solar radiation as heat in a planet's atmosphere. Visible light passes through the atmosphere and warms the surface of the Earth. The energy is reradiated to the atmosphere as IR light. This is absorbed by greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and water vapor.