

General Introduction - Same for all postcards and will present this only once

Hi there! My name is Diego Norena, and I'm in Homer, Alaska! You might wonder what I'm doing on the back of your postcard. I'm a student at the University of Alaska. While I've been here, I have learned a lot about Alaska's precarious position due to climate change, and I want to share what I've learned with you.

Before I came here, I was like many of my friends and family who have never been to Alaska, who think of it as a bastion of nature untouched by climate change... sort of protected by the ice and snow and unsettled wilderness. But while being in Alaska, I'm finding out that isn't the reality. Alaska as a whole, especially the Arctic, is something of a canary in the coal mine that will be affected by climate change first and can predict the impact of climate change on the rest of the world.

Here's what I mean by that. Since 1979, the Arctic regions have warmed nearly four times faster than the global average, and the changes in the Arctic don't stay in the Arctic; they will reverberate throughout the rest of the state and the world.

As the ice in the Arctic melts, studies show reduced reproduction and survival in small hibernating mammals. Migrating birds might also be threatened; climate change is shifting seasonal weather patterns, and the food sources birds rely on while migrating are unavailable. Nature's normal functions that have worked for thousands of years are rapidly changing, and it's a question of who can adjust and adapt.

All of this affects the rest of the world, too. As the ice melts, it can no longer reflect sunlight, and more heat is trapped in the atmosphere. Also, the oceans absorb more heat, resulting in higher ocean temperatures, which might alter the ecological dynamics of marine communities.

So, that's what I'm doing on your postcard! I'm here to offer a first-person view of what's happening here. I'd like to be your boots on the ground, a guide you can trust to show you how Alaska is changing and how you can help protect it!

Thanks for watching. Now, go see the stories I did about sea otters, sea ducks, and dall sheep.