

Overview

Students debate who should carry the burden of cutting emissions, the question presented in the “Who Is Responsible for Climate Change?” video.

Length

Two–three class periods

Materials

- [Who Is Responsible for Climate Change? \(World101\)](#)
- [The Paris Agreement \(World101\)](#)
- [Sources of Energy: A Comparison \(World101\)](#)
- [Who Releases the Most Greenhouse Gases? \(World101\)](#)

Instructional Plan

1. Show students “Who Is Responsible for Climate Change?”
2. Assign students, to countries, either individually or in teams. Distributing them among developed, major developing, and smaller developing countries, such as:

Developed	Major Developing	Smaller Developing
Australia	Brazil	Afghanistan
Canada	China	Belize
France	India	Indonesia
Japan	Nigeria	Maldives
United States	South Africa	Qatar

3. Have students imagine they are negotiating an additional treaty to supplement the Paris Agreement, trying to reach an agreement on how much emissions each country should cut.
4. As they research and prepare, have students consider:
 - What is the argument for having developed countries shoulder most of the burden?
 - What is the argument for spreading the burden equitably?
 - What would make it easier for some countries to cut emissions than others?
 - How should the tradeoff between promoting development and cutting emissions be balanced?

Responsibility Debate

- Is a bottom-up or a top-down approach to an agreement preferable? Why?
5. Have students take up the position of their assigned countries and debate the following claim:
Developed countries like the United States have a responsibility to shoulder more of the burden of cutting worldwide emissions.