
Climate Change : Policy | Lesson Plan

Overview

- **Length** - One 45-minute period, plus homework the night before. Second 45-minute period optional.
- **Grade level** - High school
- **Courses** - Civics, Global Issues, courses about climate change

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to articulate the debate over who should be responsible for combating climate change
- Students will be able to identify how the Paris Agreement addresses this question, and the benefits and drawbacks of that approach
- Students will be able to identify some of the ways in which countries are combating climate change

Materials

- World101: [Who Releases the Most Greenhouse Gases?](#) (1,140 words/ 4 pages)
- World101: [Who Is Responsible for Climate Change?](#) (2:53)
- World101: [The Paris Agreement](#) (1,215 words/ 4 pages)
- World101: [How Do Governments Combat Climate Change?](#) (optional)
- World101: [Climate Change Adaptations](#) (optional)
-  Climate Change Collection: Policy | Presentation
-  Climate Change Collection: Policy | Guided Reading Handout

Homework

- **Read:** [Who Releases the Most Greenhouse Gases?](#) (1,140 words/3 pages)
- **Watch:** [Who Is Responsible for Climate Change?](#) (2:53)
- **Read:** [The Paris Agreement](#) (1,500 words/4 pages)
- **Complete**  Climate Change Collection: Policy | Guided Reading Handout

Class Plan (Day 1)

1. (5 minutes) **Watch** - [What Is Climate Change?](#)
2. (5 minutes) **View/Discuss** - [Greenhouse Gas Emissions slides](#).
 - Ask: what is the difference between annual and cumulative emissions?
 - Ask: why is it important to count emissions both ways?
3. (10 minutes) **View/Discuss** [Who Is Responsible for Climate Change?](#)
 - Ask (from the guided reading handout): Summarize the argument made by Narendra Modi and other leaders of developing countries about who bears responsibility for climate change in your own words.
 - Ask (from the guided reading handout): Summarize the opposing argument made by some developed countries about how to address climate change. What tradeoff do they call for?
 - Ask (from the guided reading handout): How does the history of resource exploitation between developed and developing countries shape this debate?

- (5 minutes) **Review** - Guided Reading Handout
 - (#11) What is a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)?
 - (#14) Use the infographic (of a thermometer) to fill in the chart below
 - (#15) What are some shortcomings of current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)?
- (10 minutes) **Think-Pair-Share** - “Why do you think negotiators chose the approach of using NDCs, rather than negotiating each country’s responsibility as they did in the Kyoto Protocol?” [Examine the Comparing NDCs slide](#)
- (10 minutes) **Discuss** - Is the Paris Agreement the best way to combat climate change? If not, what should countries do instead?

Class Plan (optional Day 2)

- (5 minutes) **Present**  Slides: The Paris Agreement
- (15 minutes) **Read**
 - Half the class reads [How Do Governments Combat Climate Change?](#)
 - The other half of the class reads [Climate Change Adaptations](#)
- (15 minutes) **Discuss** in small groups composed of students who did both readings
 - Which strategies for combating climate change are available to any country? Which strategies might be too expensive for some countries to pursue?
 - Which countries are most affected by climate change? Which countries are best positioned to adapt?
- (10 minutes) **Think-Pair-Share** - “Taking into account what you have learned today, do you think the Paris Agreement is the best way to combat climate change? Has your opinion changed since yesterday? If so, how?” [Examine the Comparing NDCs slide](#)

If you have additional time, check out the  Classroom Discussion Guide: The Paris Agreement for connections and extensions

Standards

Educating for American Democracy Roadmap:

- What are the costs and benefits, and how are these defined, to different ideas of climate sustainability—for different peoples within the United States, and for the natural landscape? (CSGQ2.4B)
- How does the U.S. relate to the United Nations and other global governance institutions (e.g., WTO, IMF, WorldBank, NATO, WHO)? (CSGQ6.4E)

C3 Framework:

- D2.Civ.11.9-12. Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.
- D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.
- D3.4.9-12. Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.
- D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.