



ADVANCING FUTURES

Education for Sustainable
Development and Citizenship

The Climate is a Commons

THE CLIMATE IS A COMMONS Lesson Plan

Topic: Sustainability

Age: Upper Primary (5th and 6th grade)

Level: A2. The lesson is designed to be accessible and engaging for students with varying levels of English proficiency, but may be challenging for students with little or no prior knowledge of English vocabulary related to the environment and climate.

Sustainable Development Goals: 13: Climate Action, 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, 14: Life Under Water, 15: Life on Land.

Primary Objectives:

- Students will learn about the concept of a “commons”, specifically the climate as a shared resource that belongs to everyone on the planet.
- Students will review important vocabulary words related to the climate and learn new ones.
- Students will understand the rights and responsibilities associated with the climate as a commons and how they overlap.
- Students will be encouraged to take action to protect the environment and reduce their impact on the climate.

Estimated Time: Approx. 60-90 minutes

Introduction:

- Inform students they will learn about a special kind of resource called a “commons”, specifically the climate. The climate is a shared resource that belongs to everyone on the planet, and we all have a responsibility to take care of it.
- Ask students to think of any other examples. Can you think of some other examples of commons? (Allow students to brainstorm examples such as a park, a library, a swimming pool, etc.)

Activate Prior Knowledge:

- Start by reviewing some important vocabulary words:
 1. *What is the climate?* (Allow students to give their definitions)
 2. *What are rights?* (Allow students to give their definitions and give examples such as the right to education, the right to healthcare, etc.)
 3. *What are responsibilities?* (Allow students to give their definitions and give examples such as the responsibility to take care of pets, the responsibility to keep the environment clean, etc.)

Responsibilities:

- *The responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint by conserving energy and reducing waste*
- *The responsibility to recycle and properly dispose of waste*
- *The responsibility to use public transportation or walk/bike instead of driving alone*
- *The responsibility to advocate for policies that protect the environment*

- *Both rights and responsibilities involve taking care of the environment and being mindful of our impact on the climate.*
- *Both require us to be aware of how our actions affect others and the planet as a whole.*
- *Both involve taking action to create a sustainable and healthy environment for present and future generations.*

Rights:

- *The right to clean air and water*
- *The right to a stable climate*
- *The right to access to natural resources*
- *The right to a healthy environment*

Vocabulary Activity (optional):

- Now let's learn some new vocabulary words related to the climate and commons. (climate change, greenhouse gases, sustainability, conservation, renewable energy, and environmental policy.)
- Have students match the word with its definition, or use the words in a sentence.

Renewable energy	Energy that comes from natural resources like the sun, wind, and water that don't run out and don't cause harm to the environment.
Conservation	The act of protecting nature and using natural resources carefully so that they don't disappear or become damaged.
Climate change	A big, long-term change in the weather all over the world, caused by people doing things that harm the environment, like using too much oil or coal.

Environmental policy	A set of rules and plans for how we should take care of our environment, made by the government or other groups.
Greenhouse gases	Gases that trap heat in the air and cause the planet to get warmer, like carbon dioxide and methane.
Sustainability	Doing things in a way that doesn't hurt the environment, so that we can keep using resources like water and trees without running out.

Discussion: Rights and Responsibilities with the Climate as a Commons

- Discuss with students some examples of rights and responsibilities that we have with the climate as a commons and where they overlap. (Refer to the previous section for examples.)
- Allow students time to think of further examples. Use think, pair, share.

Think

Take a few minutes to think about any other rights we have to do with the climate

Pair

Talk to a partner. Did you think of the same ideas?

Share

Discuss the different rights and responsibilities we have to our climate as a group

Going Forward

What changes do we need to make?

Create your own story/dialogue/play/film/comic

Use one of the prompts below, or think of your own

- Emphasize that it is important for all of us to take action to protect the climate and reduce our impact, as a species, on the environment.
- Encourage students to think of ways they can personally make a positive impact on the environment, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and advocating for policies that protect the environment. How can they make a positive impact on other commons?

Create a story

- Using the following prompts ask students to create a story.
- Give them the freedom to choose the format. Suggest a dialogue/play/film/comic

1. *Jane and her friends learn about the impacts of climate change on their community and decide to take action by organizing a school-wide campaign to promote environmental awareness and responsibility.*
2. *When a major corporation announces plans to build a factory in their town, a group of students must navigate complex ethical and legal questions around their rights to clean air and water, and their responsibilities to protect the environment.*
3. *As a group of international exchange students explore a new country, they discover cultural differences in attitudes towards climate change and explore the role of individual and collective responsibility in addressing global environmental challenges.*

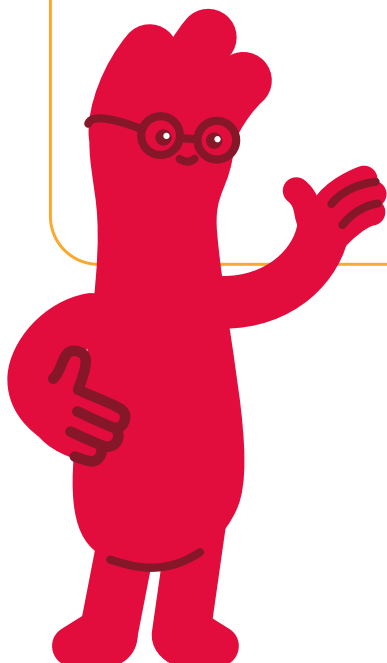
Encourage students to use the worksheet provided.

Conclusion

- The climate is a valuable resource that we all share, and we must take responsibility for its protection and preservation. By working together and taking action, we can create a sustainable future for ourselves and future generations.

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