

Global Warming Lesson

In conjunction with the movie “An Inconvenient Truth”

GRADES

6-12

PURPOSE

Students will be able to actively participate in stopping climate change and develop skills in working together.

TIME

1 to 4 class periods

LESSON SUMMARY

Students will engage with the information shared in “An Inconvenient Truth” and reflect on the implications to climate change. They will then discuss solutions and develop group action plans. Time permitting, they will then proceed with their action and achieve the goals that they set.

MATERIALS

“An Inconvenient Truth”

RYSE toolkit

PROCEDURE

1. Questions: Write the following questions on the board and discuss them before the movie starts. Have students jot down possible answers these questions during the movie for a more informed discussion later.

How serious of a threat is climate change?

How will climate change affect us locally?

How soon will we start to notice the affects?

Who will be most affected in our country?



Who will be the most affected world wide?

What industries or companies are contributing to climate change?

How is our school contributing to climate change?

What can we do to stop climate change?



2. Show the Movie: There are many places in the film that show interesting and complicated facts or statistics. Pause when a student would like clarification, or when a possible answer to one of the questions has been shared and discuss. You can write up answers under the questions as the movie proceeds. Depending on your time available you can pause a lot or only a couple of times.

3. Silent free-write: When the movie is over, ask students to turn to a fresh page in their notebook and free write their thoughts and feelings, like a journal. This is an exercise for the students to reflect without worrying about grammar, grades or clarity. Allow for five minutes of silent writing, in which students are asked to write whatever comes to them for the entire time. If they can't think of what to write, they can simply write "I can't think of what to write" until they can think of what to write. If they prefer to draw they can do that too. The point is simply to reflect.

If you are showing the film over more than one class period, consider allowing time for students to free-write their response at the end of each class to help them track their ideas from day to day. As an extension, you can also have your students edit their free-writes into poems and write them on illustrated posters.

4. Share: While no one is required to share, students can be encouraged and invited to share any or all of what they wrote. If everyone wants to share you can break into small groups to save time.

5. Answers: Return to the board and come up with more answers to each of the questions with a focus on establishing a thorough list of solutions for the last question, "What can we do to stop climate change?" For more ideas for solutions, you may want to pass around the RYSE toolkit and discuss the action ideas on pages 12-16 or have students do some internet research of their own. At the bottom of this lesson plan, some answers are provided. One commonly noted critique of the movie, "An Inconvenient Truth" is that the solutions offered in the movie are insufficient to solving climate change.

6. A solution for everyone?: Next interrogate the solutions. For each solution listed, ask who it would benefit, who it wouldn't benefit and who it would hurt. For example, nuclear power is being touted as a solution to climate change. However the uranium mining associated with nuclear power causes major health problems in the communities that live near the mines. In the US, these are mostly Indigenous communities. As a class, select 1-5 solutions with the least potential harm that could be acted on by students in your class.

7. Take Action: Form groups for each solution (or as a class work on one solution together). Have each group develop an action plan (see p. 27 and 28 in the RYSE toolkit for a sample action plan).

Your long term goal is stopping climate change.

The solution your group chose becomes the medium term goal of your action.

The first step for each group is to decide their short term achievable goal.

For example, if the solution chosen was to pressure automakers to make more fuel efficient cars, the short term achievable goal could be adopting a local dealer and writing them a letter or paying them a visit asking them to commit to only selling cars that get over 30 mpg. There are many more ideas in the RYSE toolkit for actions

that can be taken by middle and high school students as a short term or long term class project.

Please let us know of any successes or achievements! We can highlight them on our website so that other classes can see what you did and gain inspiration. Send your stories, pictures and feedback on this lesson to education@ran.org.

ANSWER KEY- These are only potential or suggested answers, not the “most correct” answers.

How serious of a threat is climate change?

Very.

How will climate change affect us locally?

Strange seasons, heat waves, droughts, floods, erosion, stronger storms, sea level rise, loss of plant and animal species, decreased water availability, more expensive food, spread of diseases.

How soon will we start to notice the affects?

It depends on where you live. Some communities are already experiencing many of the above affects. Some are not. Scientists don't have an accurate estimate of when each of these affects will occur where. There's a general scientific agreement that sea levels will rise at least 3 feet in the next hundred years.

Who will be most affected in our country?

People who don't have the money, political or community support and resources to move, rebuild or adapt to disasters will be the most affected. In New Orleans low income communities and communities of color were isolated, lacked resources to leave and received inadequate assistance when Katrina hit.

Who will be the most affected world wide?

People living in low elevation areas in countries around the world, notably in China, India, and Island countries like Tuvalu will be most affected by sea level rise. People living in Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada, Alaska, Tibet, Siberia etc. will experience or already are experiencing drastic land mass changes and biodiversity loss. Arid regions may experience more severe droughts and heat waves. While some will be more affected than others, global warming will affect everyone.

What industries or companies are contributing to climate change?

Coal Mining (Peabody Energy, Massey...)

Coal Fired Power Plants (TXU, Dynegey, Sithe Global, Duke...)

Oil Companies (ChevronTexaco, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Shell, Occidental...)

Auto Makers (Ford, General Motors, Toyota...)

Banks that finance dirty energy projects (Citi, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan Chase, Credit Suisse, Lehman brothers, Goldman Sachs...)

Logging Companies (GUNNS Limited, Weyerhaeuser, Abitibi, Georgia Pacific, Kimberly Clark...)

Agriculture (Cargill, Bunge, Archer Daniels Midland)

Animal Agriculture especially the Beef Industry

How is our school contributing to climate change?

By using energy, paper and oil.



What can we do to stop climate change?

- Pressure any of the companies that are contributing to climate change to change their practices through letter writing campaigns, meetings, demonstrations, media....
- Change to energy efficient light bulbs
- Turn off computers at night
- Get your school to switch to green energy company that uses solar and wind power
- Bike, walk, scooter, skate, roller blade...
- Use mass transportation
- Join the Green Fleets Program-get your school to only buy sustainable biofuels
- If you are going to buy a car, buy only a fuel efficient car
- Adopt a dealer- work with your local dealership to get them to only sell fuel efficient cars
- Start a recycling program at your school. Get your school to stop using paper from endangered forests and use 100 % post consumer waste recycled paper
- Spread the word: Talk to others about climate change and what they can do to stop it
- If your students all have computers, switch to paper free homework assignments and grading systems (check out turnitin.com, thinkwave.com)
- Check out the other campaigns in the RYSE toolkit!

