CLIMATE MARCH
Organize your community and take action on the climate change crisis.
Climate March

“You must take action. You must do the impossible. Because giving up is never an option.”
- Greta Thunberg, teen climate activist, September 2019

About the Activity

At age 15, climate activist Greta Thunberg began her “school strike for climate” outside of her home country’s Parliament in Sweden. A parliament is similar to the Senate and House of the government of the United States. Since then, she has become known internationally as a climate activist.

Climate activists work to make changes that will positively impact our environment. Greta has spoken in front of the United Nations, met with U.S. leaders, and led her own TED Talk. She has done all this because of her concern about the world’s climate crisis and our carbon footprint. The climate crisis refers to the increasing temperature of the world’s oceans, which will negatively impact all aspects of the environment. A carbon footprint measures the amount of carbon and its environmental impact. Individuals, businesses, and even countries have a measurable carbon footprint determined by the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are produced.

Like Greta Thunberg, you have a voice and the power to organize action on climate change in your community. State and local governments can also build programs to lower carbon-footprints and greenhouse gas emissions. It is our job as citizens to tell our representatives that climate change issues need to be a priority.

This activity will focus on youth climate change activism events, and offer tools for addressing concerns with local, state and federal governments.

Supplies

Supplies needed for the activity will depend on the goals of the participant. Supplies may include:

- Paper
- Pens and Markers
- Poster Board
- Smartphone or other method of capturing video and photos, and a computer or tablet

Grades: 4-8

Topic: Climate change, Civic engagement
Time: Planning: Several hours to several days;
Event: 30-minutes to 1-hour
Activity Steps

1. Decide the goal of your climate activism.
   - Do you want to educate the public?
   - Do you want your school board to use more energy-efficient light bulbs in their buildings?
   - Do you want to get your representatives to vote on a specific piece of legislation that covers climate change? (For instance, the Energy Innovation and Climate Dividend Act)

DID YOU KNOW? Thirty-three U.S. states have either released or are in the process of releasing climate action plans to reduce carbon emissions.

2. Plan your activism method.
   - Will you organize a letter-writing campaign?
   - Will you host a call-in event where you get pledges from members of your community to call representatives in support of policy-change on climate topics?
   - Will you lead an educational activism event on Zoom?
   - Will you organize speeches on the steps of your state capitol building? Or ask to meet with your legislators in person?

DID YOU KNOW? One of the major goals of the Paris Agreement is to limit the global temperature increase to under 2 degrees Celsius (about 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

3. Prepare for your event.
   Depending on what you have planned, you will need to prepare information to share. Whether it’s a list of talking points that you want to communicate, or a list of presenters you want to contact, there is a considerable amount of preparation that goes into scheduling any kind of event. Don’t forget to consider any logistical concerns, such as acquiring permits to use public spaces.

DID YOU KNOW? Greta Thunberg was inspired to act on climate change by seeing teenage activists in Florida protest school gun violence.

4. Spread the word.
   No matter which form of activism you choose, you want to inspire as many people as possible to participate and support you. Whether you share your goals on social media, or reach out to your local news and radio stations, it’s important to get the word out about what you’re doing.

DID YOU KNOW? By 2050, the Paris Climate Agreement aims to reach “climate neutrality.” This means that we will limit carbon emissions that produce greenhouse gases to that which can be balanced naturally in our environment.

5. Host your event.
   Elected representatives have the duty to listen to their constituents. Be respectful and polite, make a good impression, and maybe you can sway their opinions on climate change. Tell them your story and why you are passionate about climate change. Remember that you can make a difference. No matter how small your activism event is, you have the opportunity to make a change for the better.

DID YOU KNOW? The Paris Agreement was signed by 196 countries, including the U.S.naturally in our environment.
Bonus Activity

Letter-writing is a simple way to have your voice heard by your representatives in local, state and federal government. U.S. Senators and U.S. Congressmen can often be contacted through an online form, while most state and local representatives will have public email addresses available.

While email is an easy option, there is nothing quite like the experience of mailing out a physical letter to your representative. You can obtain a mailing address online, or by calling their office.

• Start your letter by introducing yourself. Be genuine, and talk about some of your interests. Our representatives love hearing from their constituents that they were elected to represent, especially youth.

• Next, share your concerns about climate change. Think about how it will impact your future.

• Finally, end your letter by requesting what action you want your representative to take. This is where you ask your school board to take up the use of energy-efficient light bulbs at all their locations, or ask your Member of Congress to support a specific bill. It is ok to ask for general mindfulness of climate change issues, but even better if you can give them a direct action to take.

• Make sure to sign with your name, and provide an address, email or phone number for them to reach out to you if they have further questions.
Test Your Knowledge

See how much you’ve learned about Climate Change Policy and Activism!

QUESTION 1
What is the maximum global temperature raise that the Paris Agreement finds acceptable?
- a. 1.5°C
- b. 2°C
- c. 2.5°C
- d. 3°C

QUESTION 2
Where did Greta Thunberg hold her first climate change protest?
- a. The United Kingdom
- b. The United States
- c. Sweden
- d. Finland

QUESTION 3
How many nations signed the Paris Agreement?
- a. 276
- b. 102
- c. 193
- d. 196

QUESTION 4
How many US states either have or are releasing climate action plans?
- a. 16
- b. 33
- c. 42
- d. 50

QUESTION 5
What are some good ways to contact your local representatives?
- a. Filling out an online form
- b. Email
- c. Handwritten letter
- d. All of the Above

Reflection Questions

Bonus questions to inspire wonder:

• What can one person do to impact climate change policy?
• What action can your state or local government take to impact climate change?
• What do you feel is the most important climate-related goal??
Investigate & Explore

Take your new knowledge to the next level.

Climate activism helped to push the United Nations into negotiating the international treaty on climate change known as the Paris Agreement in 2015. This treaty, which was signed by 196 countries, including the U.S., requires nations to put plans in place to reduce greenhouse gasses. It also specifies countries to commit financial resources to support climate change adaptation efforts.
Career Connections

There are several careers where you can be an advocate for action on climate change. Policymakers, conservationists, and environmental organizers all have the opportunity to impact laws on climate change.

• Conservation Scientists and Foresters

• Environmental Science and Protection Technicians

• Environmental Scientists and Specialists

• Environmental Engineers
  https://www.bls.gov/ooh/architecture-and-engineering/environmental-engineers.htm

• Legislators
  https://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/data-for-occupations-not-covered-in-detail.htm#Management%20occupations

• Political Scientists