



What's YOUR angle?

This project focuses on school-level democracy, using the issue of climate change to help students discover how participatory democracy works and the most effective ways to make their voices heard within this system.

When we were designing these packs, one of the students we interviewed said that he didn't feel 'kids could do anything about climate change anyway, because no one listens to us'. The idea of this pack is to make students with the same opinion feel differently - and see that they have an active role to play in preventing the escalation of climate change.

This project pack is designed to link with the ['Think Tank'](#) area of the website.

Climate change and youth democracy

Over the last two or three years, both DEFRA and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream have held competitions looking for 'climate change ambassadors' – young people who can spread the word about climate change among their peers. However, the UK's National Youth Parliament has decided not to focus on climate change as one of its key campaigns in 2006. This may change, but funding restraints mean there is currently no nationwide youth campaign on climate change. However, using this project pack will prepare students who may wish to investigate becoming a climate change ambassador or, if your school participates in the National Youth Parliament, bringing climate change to the fore in that arena. At the end of this pack you will find useful links should you wish to encourage your students to pursue these goals.

Engaging with the issues

The ['Think Tank'](#) area of the site is full of helpful information to help your class find out more about climate change.

As a guide, here are three broad questions you could use as central debates to this topic. This topic should end in a classroom debate focusing on one element of climate change.

- Changes in the Oceans will not affect our local area
- The effects of climate change will have no consequence for me
- We can not do much to help slow down climate change

Hear from an expert

The next step is to call a representative of your local Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth or WWF group and ask them to give a talk explaining their opinion on the issue under debate.

Student Interaction

How do your students feel about climate change? Encourage a class room debate. Are they nervous about climate change? Or do other political issues, such as the crisis in the Middle East, worry them more?

- What do they feel they can do about climate change?
- Do they feel they fully understand the issues?
- Do they feel the media is giving them a one sided view?
- Do they think individuals can make a difference?

Pick a topic

Divide students into groups and encourage them to share their opinions and focus on an issue that supports their argument. Some ideas are below.

- If you live by the coast, the issue might be coastal squeeze or rising seas.
- If you live inland, the issue could be broader – drought for example, or freak storms or typhoons like the one which struck Birmingham.
- Or it might be about a way to halt climate change - encouraging your school to invest in electricity saving light bulbs, start a 'walk and cycle – don't drive to school' campaign, call for recycling, or ask the firm which provides your school meals to try and reduce food miles by sourcing locally grown ingredients.

Persuade others

In groups, encourage students to construct a 'report' about their issue. This doesn't have to be a written report.

It can be filmed, recorded, made into a poster or turned into a webpage depending on what the group wants. Different media could be used from factual articles to poems and role plays.



Vote on your issue

The students must then persuade the rest of their class to get behind their argument. Once the class has voted on which argument they consider to be most important, the whole class can focus on finding ways to make a representation to the broader classroom debate.

Remember they can agree or disagree with the question. Maybe they don't think climate change will affect them - perhaps they have found an article or some science which they think proves climate change is a myth, or happening too slowly to affect them.

Useful websites

www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

The national youth parliament

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/climate_change/news/successes/index.cfm?uNewsID=20212

About Ben and Jerry's climate ambassadors

http://www.climatechallenge.gov.uk/get_involved.html

Ways young people can communicate climate change

<http://www.wwf.org.uk/researcher/issues/livingseas/index.asp>

<http://www.greenpeaceactive.org.uk/?CFID=4147648&CFTOKEN=91633330>

Greenpeace's active supporter network – find people to come and give talks here

<http://www.foe.co.uk/england/>

Get in touch with local campaigners here



What's YOUR angle?

We want you to think about the climate change issues which are most important to you and come up with an interesting, different and innovative way of explaining why.

For a list of topics, please click to go through to the [Think Tank](#) area of our website. Your teacher will guide you on which topics would be suitable.

Here are some ideas about how to present your topic to get you started:

Design a leaflet:

- Explain what the problem is
- Think about who you are targeting with your leaflet
- Include some photos or drawings
- Use different fonts to keep people interested
- Make your design colourful and exciting
- Use short 'key points' to stop readers getting bored.

Write an article:

- Make notes and ensure you have the facts at your fingertips before you start
- Write down four paragraph headings to keep things simple
- Include the five 'W' words in your first paragraph – who, what, why, when and where
- Interview some people who know more about the subject than you – a scientist or someone from an environmental organisation like Friends Of The Earth or WWF

Make a short film:

- Interview your friends and ask their opinions
- Select a target audience/ broadcaster/ schedule slot
- Visit places which relate to your topic
- Interview an expert
- Use music to give a sense of atmosphere

Design a web page (ICT Extension):

- Write a short article
- Upload pictures and other images
- Remember web pages should be simple and easy to read

Design a poster:

- Make your design interesting and snappy
- Make it bright and colourful
- Divide up the different bits of your topic and use different sub headings to stop people getting confused. For example if you are writing about food miles, you could use these subheadings:
 - What are food miles?
 - What do they mean for our climate?
 - How can we reduce food miles?
 - Which foods typically come from far away?
 - Which come from this country?