

Responding to a big issue like climate change can make people feel overwhelmed, even though there are lots of alternatives and solutions. In this module, we engage students to imagine the world they want.

This module draws on Climate Justice Project research including:

Avoiding Collapse: An agenda for sustainable degrowth and relocalizing the economy

www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/avoiding-collapse

A Green Industrial Revolution: Climate Justice, Green Jobs and Sustainable Production in Canada

www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/green-industrial-revolution

OBJECTIVES

- Students will view the current climate crisis as a call to action.
- Students will connect to the ecological story of our time and the implications for their future descendants.
- Students will be motivated to take action to make a better life and future for themselves and the people they care about.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social Studies 8, 9, 10, 11

Civic Studies 11

Comparative Civilizations 12

Geography 12

Social Justice 12

Sustainable Resources 12

English Language Arts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Communications 11, 12

Home Economics:

Family Studies 10, 11, 12

Visit <http://teachclimatejustice.ca/the-lessons/PLOs> to download a comprehensive list of BC Ministry of Education prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) that may be addressed with this resource package.

TOTAL SUGGESTED TIME

1 hour

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Digital projector and computer with internet access
- Some type of auditory cueing device (e.g. a bell or chime)



Imagining the Future We Want



Read aloud: “The human enterprise has already overshoot global carrying capacity and accelerating global change will soon force the world community to contemplate the end of material growth. If our best climate and environmental science is basically correct then humanity faces a choice between maintaining business-as-usual — in which case nature is likely to impose a chaotic implosion — or planning an orderly equitable contraction. In short, to achieve sustainability with justice we will have to deliberately scale back the global economy (or at least reduce the throughput of energy and material) and consider means to redistribute ecological and economic wealth at national and local levels.”

– William Rees, *Avoiding Collapse*

Many people see the climate crisis as a call to action – to make things better and to strive for climate justice. The transition away from fossil fuels can be a way to improve the lives of all people and to ensure the benefits and burdens of the transition are distributed equitably. As we make major changes to reduce our GHG emissions and adapt to climate change, there are many opportunities for well-paying jobs and innovation. We do not face a technological challenge so much as a challenge of finding the political will to make change.

The climate justice questions for this moment become:

- How can we build a sustainable future that strengthens our economy and society, and that doesn’t only benefit some at the expense of others?
- What things are young people doing to start this revolution?



Show video:

What can young people in your community do to react to climate change?
youtu.be/ldgPEUvjGSs



Activity: “The Double Circle”

This activity draws on Joanna Macy’s *The Work that Reconnects*, specifically Chapter 9 – “Deep Time: Reconnecting With Past and Future Generations”: www.joannamacy.net/theworkthatreconnects/guidebook.html

NOTE: The following exercise should have an atmosphere of shared space and ceremony. Student and teacher cell phones/mobile devices should be turned off and inaccessible during this time in order to maintain the feeling of a sacred space and eliminate distraction of focus. Teachers should also put great intention behind how they are speaking and the character of their cues for transition. The use of a bell or chime to signal the end of response time is highly recommended.



Create two concentric circles (an inside circle and an outside circle that encompasses it). There should be the same number of people in both circles. People in the inside circle face out, and people in the outside circle face in, so that everyone is facing a partner. Once students have made this formation, ask them to sit in silence for 10 seconds before they start the exercise to set the tone.

Throughout this exercise, when one person is talking, it is important for the listener to be totally present for them and to listen actively. Keep in mind that body language to indicate active listening will differ for people for cultural and other reasons; the important thing is for each student to bring all of their attention to what they are doing, saying and hearing.



Read aloud: The people on the inside circle – the person sitting across from you is your descendant. Through a miracle of fate, you are able to be face to face with your great, great, great, great, great grandchild – seven generations from now. The future is a very different world than it is today, and our present moment is known in the future as a pivotal one in the history of humanity. *[Insert current year here]* is a time of ecological disaster. Centuries of burning fossil fuels have altered the climate of our planet, and it is this present moment that determined the future for generations after.

Your descendant asks this question: “Ancestor, is what we’ve been taught by our teachers and learned in our history courses true? Is it true that in the times in which you lived, wars and preparations for war, hunger and homelessness, the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, poisons in the seas and soil and air, the death of many species... all these things were happening all the time? What was that like for you?”

Ask the person from the present to respond to the person from the future.
🔔 Ring a bell or chime to signal the end of the response time.

Ask the people in the outside circle to rotate clockwise to the next person in the inside circle.



Read aloud: The descendants ask a second question: “Ancestor, we have stories and films and songs that tell of what you and your friends did back in your time to bring important changes to the world for the better. What I want to know is how did you start? You must have felt lonely and confused sometimes, especially at the beginning. What first steps did you take? How did you take part in that change process?”


Ask the person from the present to respond to the person from the future.
🔔 Ring a bell or chime to signal the end of the response time.

Ask the people in the outside circle to rotate clockwise again.



Read aloud: The descendants ask a third question. “Ancestor, I know you didn’t stop with those first actions on behalf of the Earth, despite the challenges you faced. Tell me, what gave you hope? Where did you find the strength and what gave you joy to continue working so hard, despite all the obstacles and discouragement?”

Ask the person from the present to respond to the person from the future.

 Ring a bell or chime to signal the end of the response time.

Read aloud: Descendants, please stay where you are. Now it is your turn to talk, while your ancestor listens. Share what you thought and felt after all you have heard from your ancestors.

 Ring a bell or chime to signal the end of the activity.



Debrief exercise as a class. Students can respond to these questions verbally or in writing:

- What emotions came up in the course of this exercise?
- How did it feel to tell the story to your descendants, or to hear the story from your ancestors, in the context of “history”?
- What ideas came to mind when you described, or heard about, how we took action to address climate change?
- What came to mind when you spoke or heard about what provided hope when hardships or obstacles arose?
- What would you like to do in this present moment to make a better life and future for you and the people you care about? Be specific:
 - What can I do in my family?
 - What can we do as a classroom?
 - What can we do as a school?
 - What can we commit to now?

The opinions and recommendations made in these lesson plans and the linked reports and resources, and any errors, are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CCPA, BCTF or funders of the Climate Justice Project.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Climate Justice in BC: Lessons for Transformation was designed to provide teachers with classroom-ready materials to engage their students with how climate action intersects with social justice (“climate justice”). The curriculum features eight modules designed for grade 8-12 students to explore climate justice within the context of BC’s communities, history, economy and ecology. These lessons tie into subject matter and prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) already in BC’s curriculum (complete list at teachclimatejustice.ca/the-lessons/PLOs), while providing a framework to unpack modern social and environmental issues.

The topics are based on reports from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives’ Climate Justice Project – a research project that looks at the two great inconvenient truths of our time: climate change and rising inequality. (Climate Justice reports, shorter pieces and videos available at www.climatejustice.ca.)

Visit teachclimatejustice.ca for downloadable and online components of this curriculum, including PowerPoint files, links to videos and resources, and individual lesson PDFs.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these lessons to their particular classroom needs, or pull out specific activities as appropriate. Times allocated for each module are approximate and will vary greatly depending on the grade and composition of the class. While these lessons were designed for secondary students, most modules and activities are easily adaptable for upper intermediate students. Feedback is welcome and will help us refine these modules for subsequent editions.

MODULE SUMMARIES

Module 1: Introduction to Climate Justice
Causes and effects of climate change through a fairness and equity lens.

Module 2: Reimagining our Food System
Climate change and our food systems, how climate change may affect food production in BC and elsewhere, and social justice issues, such as vulnerability to hunger and migrant farm labour.

Module 3: Transportation Transformation
How community design encourages or discourages car use, and what we can do to better facilitate walking, biking and public transit options, create more complete communities and improve quality of life.

Module 4: Rethinking Waste
Moves beyond recycling and composting and looks at our culture of consumption and how it produces waste, both solid waste and airborne emissions like greenhouse gases.

Module 5: Fracking Town Hall
Uses a town hall simulation to explore the challenges of fossil fuel extraction and the bigger picture context of the push for a BC-based liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry.

Module 6: Green Industrial Revolution
Uses the mini-documentary *Town At The End of the Road*, to consider how resource sectors can be re-imagined as part of a green economy.

Module 7: Imagining the Future We Want
Uses a storytelling exercise and themes of intergenerational justice to discuss the challenges we face today and imagine how we can move towards a better future.

Module 8: Challenges to Change
Explores the essential elements of successful social change movements.

GLOSSARY

2°C – The amount of global warming above pre-industrial levels (200 years ago), which could lead to catastrophic outcomes for human populations (and countless other animal and plant species). The Earth has already warmed by 0.8°C above pre-industrial levels.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) – A heat-trapping molecule, and the principal greenhouse gas of concern to climate scientists. A growing concentration of CO₂ from burning fossil fuels is warming the Earth.

Carbon tax – A tax applied to the combustion of fossil fuels. BC currently has a carbon tax that amounts to about 7 cents per litre at the gas pump.

Climate change – The altering of climate patterns (e.g. more precipitation, more intense storms, floods or droughts) on Earth caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

Climate justice – A term for viewing climate change as an ethical issue and considering how its causes and effects relate to concepts of justice, particularly social justice and environmental justice. This can mean examining issues such as equality, human rights, collective rights and historical responsibility in relation to climate change.

Fossil fuels – Fossil fuels are the underground remains of plants and animals that lived millions of years ago, which can be processed and combusted for energy use. Examples include oil, bitumen, coal and natural gas.

Global carbon budget – An estimated maximum amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases we can emit into the atmosphere before passing the 2°C critical threshold of warming.

Global warming – The heating up of the Earth caused primarily by the burning of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas), which releases heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) – A gas that traps heat and contributes to global climate change.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) – Natural gas that has been converted into liquid for ease of storage and transportation.

Methane (CH₄) – A potent greenhouse gas, and the principal ingredient in “natural gas.”

Renewable energy – Energy that comes from resources that are continually replenished, such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves and geothermal heat.

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for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
BC Office

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The CCPA is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social, economic and environmental justice. www.policyalternatives.ca



British Columbia Teachers' Federation

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), established in 1917, is a social justice union of professionals representing public school teachers in BC, Canada. www.bctf.ca

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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