



# **Lesson Plan: Writing About Eco/Climate Emotions and Concerns**

by Bonita Eloise Ford, M.A., B.Sc.



Climate  
Mental Health  
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## Lesson Plan: Writing About Eco/Climate Emotions and Concerns

<b>Subjects and Topics</b>	<p>This lesson plan uses creative writing and discussion to explore eco/climate emotions and environmental issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is designed for high school English classes.</li> <li>• It would also be very suitable for social science classes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ It includes social science topics including: social awareness, social change, personal/environmental responsibility, responsible consumerism, individual action, personal well-being, and decision making. (These topics are in the provincial curriculum in Ontario, Canada.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additionally, it would be suitable for any science class that covers environmental issues, if a teacher was interested in social-emotional learning and writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Grade Levels</b>	<p>This lesson plan is designed for grades 9 to 12.</p> <p>Depending on the learning needs of the students, this lesson could be divided into two or more sessions; activities could also be modified. Suggestions are included throughout the “Lesson Procedures” and in “Modifications” below.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Learning about environmental issues can be a distressing part of a student's education. Not only do social-emotional learning skills support well-being and academic success, but they also contribute to one’s capacity to respond constructively to societal challenges.</p> <p>In this lesson, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify their emotions around environmental/climate issues.</li> <li>• Write to express their feelings and/or concerns about environmental/climate issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Essential Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it helpful to pay attention to eco/climate emotions?</li> <li>• How can writing be used as a tool to express our feelings and/or concerns about environmental/climate issues?</li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Climate Emotions Wheel” (in “Class Handouts” at the end of the lesson plan).</li> <li>• “Reading A” to “Reading F” (in “Class Handouts” at the end of the lesson plan).</li> <li>• “Gen Z Mental Health: Climate Stories” trailer (<a href="https://www.climatementalhealth.net/genzfilm">https://www.climatementalhealth.net/genzfilm</a>).</li> </ul>
<b>Anticipatory Set</b>	<p><b>FILM TRAILER AND SLOW BREATHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the class through three slow breaths: Inhale and count “1, 2, 3, 4, 5.” Exhale and count “5, 4, 3, 2, 1.”</li> <li>• Tell the class that this lesson touches on potentially challenging topics, such as ecological destruction, climate emergency, extinction crisis, death, and threats to</li> </ul>



	<p>the future. Throughout the lesson, students may take slow breaths on their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play the trailer for the film “Gen Z Mental Health: Climate Stories.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Duration:</b> ~5 minutes.</p>
<p><b>Lesson Procedure – PART 1</b></p>	<p><b>ECO/CLIMATE EMOTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the exercise (see script below).</li> <li>• “Climate Emotions Wheel” and “Reading A. Letter: Dear Students and Teachers” could be distributed on paper or projected on the board.</li> <li>• Students could be asked to write down a feeling on a piece of paper and pass it to you. Or, you could read out a feeling and ask students to raise their hands if they feel that way (repeat with several different feelings). The feelings could be written and tallied on the board.</li> <li>• Students could read “Reading A” aloud as a class or be given time to read silently.</li> <li>• If you know that some students in the class struggle with anxiety, you could guide the class through three “Slow Breaths” (see above) after PART 1.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher Script:</b> <i>You’ve probably learned about the state of the environment and the climate in science or in geography classes. How do you feel after watching the Gen Z film trailer? Choose a word from the “Climate Emotions Wheel.”</i></p> <p><i>Here’s a letter written by someone who works with youth climate activists. [Share “Reading A.”] Our emotions are a natural and healthy response to learning about global crises. They remind us we are part of the world that we live in and that we care about the life around us. When you think about our global environmental crises, how do you feel right now? Choose a word from the “Climate Emotions Wheel.”</i></p> <p><b>Duration:</b> ~10 to 15 minutes.</p>
<p><b>Lesson Procedure – PART 2</b></p>	<p><b>READINGS ON CLIMATE AND EMOTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the exercise (see script below).</li> <li>• “Reading B” through “Reading F” could be distributed on paper or projected one at a time on the board.</li> <li>• Students could read aloud as a class or be given time to read silently.</li> <li>• If you know that some students in the class struggle with anxiety, you could guide the class through three “Slow Breaths” (see above) after PART 2.</li> <li>• Also see “Modifications” below.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher Script:</b> <i>We’re going to read some short pieces of writing about the climate crisis and eco-</i></p>



	<p><i>emotions. All of these were written by youth activists. As you read each piece, answer the questions on the right of the sheet/screen.</i></p> <p><b>Duration:</b> ~20 to 40 minutes.</p>
<p><b>Lesson Procedure – PART 3</b></p>	<p><b>GROUP DISCUSSION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the exercise (see script below).</li> <li>• The “Discussion Questions” (see script below) could be projected on the board.</li> <li>• Discussion options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ You could lead a class discussion (this may work better for younger students).</li> <li>◦ Or, you could assign students to small groups and ask them to discuss and take notes to report back afterwards (this may invite older students to go deeper).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher Script:</b> <i>When we feel eco-emotions, it can help us to express our feelings AND to take action towards change. Sometimes we may focus more on feelings, and at other times we may focus more on action.</i></p> <p><i>A study found that feeling climate distress can lead us to taking climate action. Our feelings can actually motivate us to help create change. [See article under “Extension Resources” below.]</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <p><i>a. How does each reading, “B” to “F,” express feelings and/or try to create change? Give examples.</i></p> <p><i>b. For yourself personally, do you think it would help you to focus more on: feelings, taking action for change, or both? Why? (There is no “right” answer to this. Some of us focus more on feelings and others focus more on actions. It’s natural that different approaches work for different people.)</i></p> <p><i>c. Readings “A” to “F” show different writing styles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>personal reflection</i></li> <li>• <i>poem</i></li> <li>• <i>letter/opinion piece</i></li> <li>• <i>informational article</i></li> </ul> <p><i>For writing about the environment/climate, which style of writing do you like most? Why? (Again, there is no “right” answer. Think about which piece of writing you liked and what your own strengths are.)</i></p> <p><b>Duration:</b> ~15 to 20 minutes.</p>



<p><b>Lesson Procedure – PART 4</b></p>	<p><b>WRITING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the exercise (see script below).</li> <li>• Writing options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ You could give more in-class writing time and assign one page of writing (this might be better for older students).</li> <li>◦ Or, you could give less in-class writing time and assign one or two paragraphs of writing (this might be better for younger students).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Also see “Modifications” below.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher Script:</b>  <i>Look again at the writing piece you liked most. Write your own piece mimicking this style to express your feelings and thoughts about the environment/climate.</i></p> <p><b>Duration:</b>  ~15 to 30 minutes.</p>
<p><b>Closing and Assessment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put on the board “Today, an idea that was new to me...”</li> <li>• Ask the students to complete the sentence in three to five words. This could be done on paper (and given to you on their way out) or verbally (if there is time for everyone to speak).</li> </ul> <p><b>Duration:</b>  ~5 to 10 minutes.</p>
<p><b>Modifications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If class time is limited, you could: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus on the group discussion in “Lesson Procedure – PART 3.”</li> <li>▪ Then assign the writing as homework in “Lesson Procedure – PART 4.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If you want to split this lesson into two sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ In the first session, do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Lesson Procedure – PART 1.”</li> <li>▪ “Lesson Procedure – PART 2” with “Readings A, B, C, and D.”</li> <li>▪ Extension activity (optional).</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ In the second session, do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Lesson Procedure – PART 2” with “Readings E and F.”</li> <li>▪ “Lesson Procedure – PART 3.”</li> <li>▪ “Lesson Procedure – PART 4.”</li> <li>▪ Extension activity (optional).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>For Students with Special Needs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce the amount of reading in “Lesson Procedure – PART 2”:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Use only “Readings A, B, C, and F.”</li> <li>◦ Or, split the lesson into two sessions. Do “Readings A, B, and C” in the first session and do “Readings D, E, and F” in the second session.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To reduce the amount of writing in “Lesson Procedure – PART 2”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A student might do the readings and be asked to think about the questions without writing responses. The student could still participate in the group discussion (which covers similar questions) in “Lesson Procedure – PART 3.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● As an alternative to individual or in-class writing for “Lesson Procedure – PART 4”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A student might instead be asked to prepare a two to five-minute selfie video at home to share their feelings and/or concerns about the environment/climate.</li> <li>○ Or, small groups of two to three students might be asked to work on the writing assignment together.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● As an alternative to the group discussion in “Lesson Procedure – PART 3”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A student might instead be asked to write their reflections on paper.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Extension</b></p>	<p>Various extension activities could be added to lengthen this lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explore the connection between feelings and needs (this comes from Nonviolent Communication.) Ask the students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think about the climate crisis. Identify one feeling from the “Feelings when your needs are NOT satisfied” (in “Class Handouts” below).</li> <li>○ What unmet need is related to the feeling? Identify one need from the “Needs” (in “Class Handouts” below).</li> <li>○ Invite students to complete the sentence: I feel _____ because my need for _____ is not met. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For example: “I feel sad, because my need for sustainability is not met.”</li> <li>Or, “I feel scared, because my need for stability is not met.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Discuss how people cope with their feelings. Make a list together.</li> <li>● Do several rounds of “Slow Breaths” together (see above). Ask the students how they feel before and after the exercise.</li> <li>● Listen to one of the “Sound meditations” together (see “Extension Resources” below). Ask the students how they feel before and after the meditation.</li> <li>● Lead the “Breathing &amp; Moving with Our Climate Emotions” exercise (see “Extension Resources” below.) You might give the class two or three of the writing prompts from the exercise.</li> <li>● Watch the “Climate emotions resilience tips” video and/or the “Embers of Hope: Feelings and Action” video (see “Extension Resources” below).</li> <li>● Discussion questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why is it helpful to be able to identify and name our emotions?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How does a lack of awareness of our eco-emotions get in our way?</li> <li>○ Why is it important to have more healthy coping tools?</li> <li>○ Do you find that movement (like exercise, walking, or jumping) helps you cope when you feel strong emotions?</li> <li>○ Why do you think feeling climate distress motivates people to take climate action?</li> <li>○ Have you ever done something generous/caring/altruistic and noticed that it lifted your mood? Why do you think it helped?</li> <li>○ Do you think youth can make a difference in the community? Activism can take different forms. How might you bring an environmental message to the things you love to do? (Read the bios in “About the Youth Climate Circle” in “Class Handouts” below.)</li> <li>○ What actions do you want to take to help the Earth? What stands in your way of doing these things? (See “6 Tips to Help You Take Action for the Climate” in “Extension Resources” below.)</li> <li>○ How is taking care of yourself related to taking care of your friends? What if you only did one without the other?</li> <li>○ How is taking care of yourself related to taking care of the Earth? What if you only did one without the other?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extension Resources</b></p>	<p>How to talk to young people about climate emotions  <a href="https://www.climatementalhealth.net/parents">https://www.climatementalhealth.net/parents</a></p> <p>“Climate emotions resilience tips” video, climate emotions wheel, well-being tips, affirmations, and more  <a href="https://www.climatementalhealth.net/resources">https://www.climatementalhealth.net/resources</a></p> <p>Sound meditations  <a href="https://www.climatementalhealth.net/sound-meditations">https://www.climatementalhealth.net/sound-meditations</a></p> <p>Creative art therapies  <a href="https://www.climatementalhealth.net/artstherapy">https://www.climatementalhealth.net/artstherapy</a></p> <p>“Is distress about climate change associated with climate action?” article (with links to studies)  <a href="https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/distress-about-climate-change-and-climate-action/">https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/distress-about-climate-change-and-climate-action/</a></p> <p>“Breathing &amp; Moving with Our Climate Emotions” exercise and writing prompts  <a href="https://www.embersofhopebook.com/s/climate-feelings-practice-20239-20-23.pdf">https://www.embersofhopebook.com/s/climate-feelings-practice-20239-20-23.pdf</a></p> <p>“Embers of Hope: Feelings and Taking Action” video  <a href="https://www.embersofhopebook.com/embers-video">https://www.embersofhopebook.com/embers-video</a></p> <p>“6 Tips to Help You Take Action for the Climate” article and worksheet  <a href="https://www.embersofhopebook.com/s/how-to-help-2023.pdf">https://www.embersofhopebook.com/s/how-to-help-2023.pdf</a></p>



# Class Handouts





# Climate Emotions Wheel



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**ClimateMentalHealth.Net**  
based on research by Panu Pihkala: [bit.ly/3Ky4k6G](https://bit.ly/3Ky4k6G)



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## Reading A. Letter: Dear Students and Teachers by Bonita Eloise Ford

Dear Students and Teachers,

I realize that we all have different struggles, though when I was a teen and started having serious questions about the world, I would have appreciated talking about these things openly.

First, I think it's natural to have intense feelings about the state of the world. To feel anxious, sad, angry, overwhelmed, or heartbroken actually MEANS THAT WE CARE and we are tuned in to what is happening. Our ecological and climate crises are unjust and it's okay to not feel okay about it.

“The system” that puts profit before life is bigger than any of us individually. It's like an ocean-sized problem and we are each just a drop in a pond. This awareness can leave us feeling helpless, hopeless, and wanting to give up. (Those feelings are natural too.)

Second, when I think about the state of our planet, two questions come up regularly for me: 1. What is the most important thing I can do to actually make a difference? 2. How do I live a meaningful life (without hiding in denial or being crushed by guilt) knowing that so much is unraveling?

If you are an activist, then you probably have ideas about that first question. Yet there is no “perfect” answer and, in spite of this uncertainty, we are still being asked to give it our best shot.

Here is how I try to cope and create meaning in my life: I look for things that could possibly help the Earth and that also fill my heart.

I suggest that we each consider what we love to do—AND think about how to do that in ways that help—AND also imagine ways to amplify our impact. I believe in starting with what is accessible to us and also in the power of small choices adding up. At the same time, I think it's important we scale up our actions in groups, because this crisis is not one that isolated individuals can solve alone through small actions.

Here's an example: our Youth Climate Circle wrote the pieces you'll read in this lesson. At first, we only shared our writing within the group. Then, we talked about sending it to a local newspaper. Much later, I had the idea of writing this lesson—and we all agreed that this was an excellent way to share our ideas with more youth across the continent. Plus, writing this lesson helps me feel more hopeful. :-)

So, be creative with your actions and try out different versions of your ideas. And while trying and failing can feel daunting, remembering what is at stake in the world can motivate us to keep trying.

I hope we each find ways to take care of ourselves and to make a difference in our human and ecological communities. All of us—youth and adults—are figuring this out as we go. We're all in this together.

With hope and gratitude,  
Bonita

**Reading B. Personal Reflections: What Scares Me**  
by Orria

As a teenager, when I think of my future, the first things that come to me are working as an archaeologist, exploring the world once I'm out of school, then having or maybe adopting a few kids. Those thoughts make me happy and excited... and then I get sad. Life as we know it might not be around long enough for that dream to come true. The prospect of having kids terrifies me because I don't want them to have to deal with this mess and go through the same stress, grief, anger and even harmful thoughts that I deal with. Everything I do is overshadowed with the thought of "this action is killing the climate"—even while I'm doing dishes. I want some of these politicians and CEOs to take on my pain for a minute and to feel the fear in the youth that they are helping to cause.

All. Of. It. Scares the sh\*t out of me. There's no other way to put it. I'm scared of losing the coastal cities, I'm scared of losing the Canadian winter that I love so much. I'm scared of it getting so hot that all we know are droughts and water rations. I'm scared of the fires, of the starving animals that are going to go extinct. I'm scared of the atmosphere not being able to take everything we've put in it. I'm scared of how fast "too late" is coming.

This climate crisis is affecting us all differently, but similarly too. No matter what we do though, it's coming for all of us. We can't stop it if we don't talk about it and share ideas and learn from each other. Talking can be to educate ourselves and others or to take care of our health; sharing takes the weight off our shoulders. We aren't going to get out of this alive if we don't work together, and that starts with being open and honest about the problem.

How do you feel after reading this?

How does this reading express feelings? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

How does this reading try to create change? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

For writing about the environment/climate, do you like this style of writing? Why or why not?

Additional thoughts and/or images:



**Reading C. Poem: the mother**  
by Isaac Sinfield

death is a kind woman,  
despite, what most often thought.  
she is the reaper but not the harbinger.  
nor, is she the killer.  
she does not bring death, it only comes to her.  
she cries when she takes the hand of a child,  
it is so little in her own.  
such innocent beings, such tiny creatures.  
taken from a world so unkind,  
but she will keep them safe on the other side.

she never meant for this, she didn't want any of this.  
she didn't want for the world to slowly fall apart around her.  
she can't do anything but greet those taken with open arms.  
oh, so many taken.

death's friend, the mother, is weeping.  
it's a constant cry that leaves the mother's throat.  
her water will deplete eventually, turning murky and corrupt.  
from time to time, she chokes.  
oil drips down her cheeks as plastic fills her lungs.  
her children cannot swim any longer.  
she tries to ignore the 14 million tons dumped into her every year,  
but she is drowning.  
not by water but by filth and weight and blight.

the mother is angry that they cut and rip her hair,  
she is tired that they burn and singe her locks.  
her hair, the humans call trees.  
she was once so beautiful, her hair so long and green.  
her trees have fallen, processed and turned to oil,  
oh, the oil, they bleed her dry.  
10 million hectares of forest every single year.  
her hair may be gone soon.

the mother is boiling up, both in temperature and in anger.  
her body is melting, her oceans are rising and her children are  
losing their homes.  
her children, the most intelligent are at fault for it,  
they are destroying their home.  
she doesn't know how much time they have left,  
but she prays that they will do something to make it better.

be kind(er) to your mother.

How do you feel after reading this?

How does this reading express feelings? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

How does this reading try to create change? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

For writing about the environment/climate, do you like this style of writing? Why or why not?

Additional thoughts and/or images:



**Reading D. Letter/Opinion Piece: Dear Adults**  
by Clara

Dear Adults,

It is of great importance that Adults recognize that it is not only the younger generation's responsibility to address the climate crisis. We all need to work together in solving this issue as it has been a collective effort that has led us to the problems we face today. It is neither feasible nor equitable to place the expectations of making drastic and pressing changes solely on young people. Over-reliance on youth as primary leaders in this endeavor can have negative effects on their mental health, given that dealing with climate-related concerns can at times be emotionally challenging.

We've all been so lucky to live on and enjoy what our beautiful earth has to offer, but I am concerned for what the future will entail given the responses to the climate emergency. Many young people view adults as their role models. The belief held by some adults that the climate crisis is not their concern, as its most severe consequences won't affect them personally, can influence the younger generation to adopt a similar perspective. That mindset is extremely threatening for the future. If we continue down the path we are on, future generations will not be as lucky as we are. It is incumbent upon all of us, both adults and youth, to make positive changes to ensure that a bright future remains for the following generations.

But what might these changes encompass? Listening to help make the voices of youth heard is a great initial step. Youth, who mostly lack the power to vote, express our desires through our actions and it can be disheartening when it goes unnoticed. By supporting youth, our voices can reach greater lengths! Additionally, talking openly and honestly with each other about our concerns helps to bring more awareness. Understanding everyone's needs and different views about issues builds respect, developing stronger relationships and better teams to make positive changes. Last but not least, at times we tend to overlook the simple, everyday actions that collectively have a significant impact. "It's just one straw," said one billion people. It's easy to dismiss picking up one piece of trash, planting a native plant in your garden, or riding your bike as inconsequential. Yet, if done by **everyone**, across generations, these simple actions could culminate in substantial transformations of our environment.

Taking the necessary steps to address the climate crisis can be a

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Additional thoughts and/or images:



challenging journey, and it is often difficult to find hope that there will be a resolution. Yet, hope remains the driving force behind motivation—without motivation, changes will not be made. Throughout my own journey, I've discovered that it's the positive actions, big or small, made by the people around me that bring me the most hope. One touching moment stands out: when a young girl expressed her desire to help me plant native flowers for pollinators. Her inquiry not only reassured me that my efforts were making a difference for the environment but also that I was inspiring and motivating others. Reflecting on the impact I've contributed and witnessing the efforts of others helps me persevere through times when I can't find hope.

By continuing to play my part and serving as a role model, I hold onto the belief that others will join. The urgency of making a difference has never been greater, and we must act decisively now to secure a brighter future for generations to come.

Sincerely,  
Clara



**Reading E. Opinion Piece: It's Bigger than Gen Z**  
by Claire

As a 17-year-old graduating high school, I am sure many people my age can relate to me when I say that the climate crisis is overwhelming, terrifying and exhausting. Putting the pressure and responsibility onto Gen Z and youth to fix the climate crisis is irresponsible and frankly, unhelpful. Youth are not the only people or generation who are capable of making the required changes to revert the disastrous climate problems humanity is faced with. Putting this pressure and responsibility on us is careless. If all groups of all ages came together and made these changes as a united front, the climate crisis would slow and cease at a more efficient and faster rate. Dealing with the intimidating pressure of fixing a climate crisis on top of the normal struggles that all youth face (graduating high school, moving out, entering adulthood, etc.) is overwhelming, so I ask that adults join in the efforts youth are making instead of giving up on the environment and leaving it up to us to fix a problem that isn't going to magically improve until we all work together.

The main message I want you, the reader, to take away from this would be to keep an open mind, to have compassion for youth, and to make changes to help the environment, no matter how small. My generation is trying our best, but we alone cannot change the course of the climate crisis without help. Every change is one small step towards a future where we still have the diversity, vegetation and wildlife that we have now. For the sake of your future, my future, the future of next generations, please do not give up and leave the environmental burdens to my generation alone. Educate yourself and others, act with intent and kindness, and help us transition to a sustainable and secure future.

When I think of the climate emergency and my generation, one of the first things I think about is the fear around having children. A survey conducted in 2020 by Morning Consult showed that 26% of childless adults listed the climate crisis as a reason they choose not to have children, partially because of the massive water and carbon footprint, as well as how unfair it is to bring a child into a world where climate change and global warming are worsening. I have noticed this with my friends and peers as well, and it's an issue that will only become more present. Our fear of the future due to the climate crisis is preventing us from bringing life into this world. It's an attitude and issue that shows how serious the climate crisis is, and how it isn't just influencing the polar bears and sea level. Climate change affects everything and everyone and should not be ignored or dismissed.

How do you feel after reading this?

How does this reading express feelings? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

How does this reading try to create change? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

For writing about the environment/climate, do you like this style of writing? Why or why not?

Additional thoughts and/or images:





## Reading F. Informational Article: How Will YOU Fight the Climate Crisis?

by Isabelle Roberts

What actions can YOU take to help address the climate crisis? Here are some tips on how you can do your part, lead an eco-friendlier life, and make a positive difference.

1. Stop using single-use plastics. Plastic items like Ziploc bags, plastic bottles, and plastic straws often only get used once and then are thrown away. They are left on the ground, end up in landfills, or get blown into the wilderness where animals can get stuck or seriously injured. Plastic stays in the environment for centuries to come, which can release toxins into the soil and into the bellies of animals who have chosen the wrong snack. Do wildlife a favor and stop buying single-use plastics!
2. Drive less. This can be easy if you put your mind to it. Be conscious of your carbon footprint, cut back on carbon emissions, and limit fuel consumption. Refraining from making that short trip to the grocery store to get one item is a simple way. Choose public transit, car-pooling, limiting drives, or traveling by foot to your destination!
3. Eat less red meat. The meat industry is one of the world's top contributors to carbon emissions, water consumption, and habitat destruction. Choosing to leave red meat in the grocery store is an easy way to support lowering greenhouse gas emissions, as it lowers the demand for such food items.
4. Implement "scrappy cooking" into your daily routine. Food waste is becoming increasingly problematic due to the large amounts of food going into landfills. When food rots, it releases methane (a greenhouse gas) into the atmosphere, which contributes to climate change. Make it a challenge for yourself to cook meals using all the food in your fridge. It's like a clearance sale, everything goes—into your stomach!
5. Vote for politicians that make environmental protection a main priority. Voting is a powerful act. Getting politically involved in your community by voting is a way to encourage and support significant environmental change. Voting for candidates that have a large environmental platform can help boost your community's and even your country's efforts to battle climate change. If you are turning 18 soon, or are of age now, I strongly urge you to make your vote a good one!

How do you feel after reading this?

How does this reading express feelings? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

How does this reading try to create change? Give examples. You may underline words and sentences.

For writing about the environment/climate, do you like this style of writing? Why or why not?

Additional thoughts and/or images:





6. Think twice before shopping. Many fast fashion stores such as Shien and H&M produce clothing at mass rates, which contributes to water pollution, air pollution, clothing waste, and dangerous conditions for workers. Before purchasing clothing or other items, do some research beforehand to determine if it is from a company you truly want to support. Have a goal to limit your purchases at fast fashion stores, or stop these purchases entirely. Instead, shop at thrift stores or try your best to use the clothing you already have.

7. Use green energy. Many homes now run off of solar energy. Although this has a costly start-up price, it can significantly decrease your fossil fuel consumption and emission production. Wind energy is another sustainable energy source, however, is not accessible in many areas. You could talk with your family about saving up for solar panels. While we do have to get off fossil fuels, green energy is not perfect. The mining of minerals used in many of our technologies can be harmful to ecosystems and communities. By far, the greenest approach is still to reduce our consumption.

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## Feelings when your needs are NOT satisfied

- AFRAID \* dread \* panicked \* scared \* terrified \* worried
- ANNOYED \* frustrated \* impatient \* irritated
- ANGRY \* furious \* outraged \* resentful
- CONFUSED \* hesitant \* lost \* torn
- DISCONNECTED \* distracted \* indifferent \* numb \* withdrawn
- DISGUSTED \* hate \* horrified
- DISTURBED \* shocked \* troubled \* uncomfortable \* unsettled \* upset
- EMBARRASSED \* ashamed \* guilty
- FATIGUE \* burnt out \* depleted \* exhausted \* tired
- PAIN \* devastated \* grief \* heartbroken \* hurt \* lonely \* regretful
- SAD \* depressed \* despair \* disappointed \* discouraged \* heavy hearted \* hopeless
- TENSE \* anxious \* distressed \* nervous \* overwhelmed \* stressed
- VULNERABLE \* fragile \* helpless \* insecure
- YEARNING \* jealous \* longing \* nostalgic

Feelings list adapted from the Center for Nonviolent Communication, copyright 2005, [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org), [cnvc@cnvc.org](mailto:cnvc@cnvc.org).

## Needs

- MEANING \* purpose \* hope \* beauty \* wonder \* creativity \* harmony \* peace
- UNDERSTANDING & COMMUNICATION \* clarity \* awareness \* vision \* imagination \* learning \* growth \* honesty \* truth \* self-expression
- LOVE & COMPASSION \* empathy \* gratitude \* appreciation \* generosity \* sharing \* to contribute \* to be of service \* care
- RELATIONSHIPS WITH SELF & OTHERS \* respect \* responsibility \* trust \* acceptance \* belonging \* consideration \* integrity \* authenticity \* presence \* empowerment \* to be seen \* to be acknowledged \* freedom \* autonomy \* independence \* interdependence \* cooperation \* connection \* community \* equality \* mutuality \* support \* fun \* play
- SURVIVAL \* safety \* stability \* security \* health \* rest \* well-being \* sustainability

Needs list adapted from the Center for Nonviolent Communication, copyright 2005, [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org), [cnvc@cnvc.org](mailto:cnvc@cnvc.org).



## About the Youth Climate Circle

**The Youth Climate Circle** is a local group in which youth participants share their concerns about climate/environmental issues and collaborate on climate/environmental projects.

**Orria** is a grade 12 student and loves hockey, reading, theatre and music. She believes strongly in activism and speaking up for what you believe in. She started organizing climate protests in grade 8 and is a part of the Youth Climate Circle.

**Isaac** Sinfield has always had a love for nature and grew up exploring forests. They found their calling for climate action in grade 9, protesting and creating art on the topic. They have a background in the arts and working with young teenagers.

**Clara** is a high school student from Perth. Her pastimes include music, basketball, and soccer. Clara also enjoys the outdoors and gardening and has a love of nature and animals. She hopes to have a career which combines her love of math, science, and protecting the environment. Her interest in the environment and sustainability is reflected in membership in the Climate Network Lanark Youth Group, the Butterflyway project, and the Youth Climate Circle. Clara believes that many small acts of kindness can make a huge impact on the world.

**Claire** is in her first year at Queens University studying psychology. She loves working with kids and getting involved with the environment and has been advocating for climate action since grade 9.

**Isabelle** Roberts is a grade 12 student who is passionate about promoting awareness on environmental issues. Isabelle volunteers with Climate Network Lanark and is part of the Youth Climate Circle. She is a competitive curler for the Team Stoddart at the Huntley Curling Club and also competes as a hip hop dancer. Isabelle loves to listen to music, hangout with friends, and work out in her spare time. She is also a hard working student who plans to become a dietitian after high school.

**Bonita** Eloise Ford is the adult facilitator of the Youth Climate Circle and the author of the book “Embers of Hope: Embracing Life in an Age of Ecological Destruction and Climate Chaos.” Bonita supports youth and adults in coping with and addressing ecological and climate breakdown. She has a M.A. in Holistic Health Education and a B.Sc. in Biochemistry.

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## Contact Info

bonitaford@gmail.com  
www.livinghEARTH.net, www.embersofhopebook.com

## Give Feedback

If you would like to give us feedback on this lesson plan:  
<https://forms.gle/YqK2B7ofvZgE7UeG8>

