



# A SCIENCE, ART, AND CIVICS PROJECT FOR STUDENTS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS BACKGROUND

## BACKGROUND

With the new Administration comes profound promise. The Biden team's essential, early actions—including [rejoining the Paris Agreement](#) and [creating a critical National Climate Task Force](#) — signaled its commitment to aggressive climate action. Further, the Biden Administration's Infrastructure proposal calls for a focus on creating jobs while [building a clean energy infrastructure](#).

At the same time, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic reminds us that we are living in an unprecedented moment of both opportunity and crisis. An emphasis on an equitable and sustainable future and an overall, dramatic shift toward climate progress that protects all of us from the devastating effects of the climate crisis is exactly what we need right now!

### **We invite educators at all grade levels to be part of a wave of action!**

The full promise of this moment will only be realized if we all work together. Elected leaders will need our active support—and sometimes, when competing priorities arise, our pressure—to maintain the massive governmental efforts required to safeguard our future. **This is the moment for a hugely consequential wave of civic action on climate!**

Young people can't vote, but they have agency and a huge stake in what's happening. Across the globe, we've seen students take a transformative leadership role on climate in recent years. With this initiative, we offer a way for educators to **help students in the US voice their climate demands to Congress**.

In this advocacy program, students can create illustrated notes for their representatives in the Senate and the House that spotlight the climate impacts that matter most to them. Over 500 notes have already been sent to Congress. Our goal: submissions from all 50 states and US territories! After your students participate, we will send these notes to Congress, connecting students' messages with people in Washington who can fight for everyone's right to a healthy, safe, livable future!

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### **Learning outcomes:**

1. Students will learn the basics of climate science or supplement what they've already learned.
2. Students will develop research skills to learn who their members of Congress are and what their positions on climate legislation are.
3. Students will gain a basic understanding of how their own art and writing can be a powerful expression of civic action, drawing attention to climate change issues and solutions.

*\* Modifications noted throughout student worksheets for K-6th grade and 7th - 12th grade and recommended resources listed below.*



**Materials required:** A blank piece of paper, drawing utensils, camera (for capturing and submitting student work. If possible, Educators will also need a computer to share a short (1.5 minute) introductory video at the start of the project (linked below under Resources.)

**Time required:** Recommended for one class period for younger grades and two class periods for older grades -- one focused on guided research and one for letter writing and illustrating.

## GETTING STARTED

Here's a summary of the steps in this project. Detailed instructions are in the student worksheets linked below.

**STEP 1:** Students learn about climate science, fossil fuels and why we must act immediately. Resources below are designed for a variety of grade levels to introduce climate science or to supplement what older students will have already learned in class.

**STEP 2:** Students research who represents them in Congress. Older students have the option to use the resources below to further explore their representatives' stances on climate issues.

### Discussion prompts:

- Do your congressional representatives support policies that reduce carbon pollution?
- How have they supported climate justice and equity?
- Do they support the Green New Deal?
- Have they committed to the No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge?

**STEP 3:** Students can practice expressing themselves clearly and creatively through short, handwritten, illustrated notes sharing their views with members of Congress. They can also visit our online gallery [here](#) to be inspired by letters that have already been sent to Congress from other students, ages 5-18.

### Art & Writing Prompts & Tips:

- What climate impacts matter to you the most—such as your family's health, your community, our natural environment?
- What makes you feel hope or concern for the future?
- Students can make art about these questions or anything else related to climate change.
- Is your letter a thank you for what your representative has already done in Congress or a push to do more? (Or both?)
- For best image quality we recommend using a blank, unlined sheet of paper and doing a color scan of the finished letters. "Genius Scan" is a free smartphone app that works beautifully. We will color print all notes and mail them to members of Congress.

### STEP 4: Show us your students' work!

You can send us your students' work by [filling out this form](#).

Educators with multiple submissions can send a google folder with their class' work to [climateart@climatemuseum.org](mailto:climateart@climatemuseum.org). Please be sure to include the student's name, age, and state or territory in each file title. *(For privacy purposes, we will only display students' first names, ages, and states or territories of residence.)*



If you have any questions, please email us at [climateart@climatemuseum.org](mailto:climateart@climatemuseum.org).

### STEP 5: Civic action at work!

1. Students' letters will be sent to Washington by the Climate Museum.
2. Letters will appear in our online gallery on [our website](#) (click on their state to find their names).
3. We will feature selected notes across our digital platforms, including our landing page, so that your students' work can inspire their peers across the country!
4. Share this program with your fellow educators!
5. Your school (or individual students) can also share student work on social media to help spread the word about the urgent need for climate action in Washington! Make sure to tag @climatemuseum and use the hashtag [#ClimateArtForCongress](#)

[K-6th grade worksheet](#)

[7th - 12th grade worksheet](#)

## RESOURCES

### Climate Science

- Alliance for Climate Education's [Our Climate Our Future](#) video series
- NASA's climate education's site [Climate Kids](#)

### Talking About Climate Change With Young People:

- [Your Guide to Talking With Kids of All Ages About Climate Change](#) (NRDC 2019)
- [6 Tips For Talking To Kids About Climate Change](#) (NPR 2019)
- [How to talk with kids about climate change](#) (Yale Climate Connections 2020)

### Civics

- **Learn Who Represents You in Congress**  
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>
- **Sunrise Movement Green New Deal Summary:**  
<https://www.sunrisemovement.org/green-new-deal/?ms=WhatistheGreenNewDeal%3F>



- **Congress.gov Green New Deal House Resolution 109 List of Cosponsors:**  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/cosponsors?searchResultViewType=-expanded&KWICView=false>
- **No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge:**  
<http://nofossilfuelmoney.org/>
- **Climate Scorecard created by Vote Climate U.S. PAC**  
<https://voteclimatepac.org/117th-congress-climate-scorecard/>

## Climate Museum

- **Climate Art For Congress Homepage**  
<https://climatemuseum.org/climateartforcongress>
- **Climate Art for Congress Gallery**  
<https://climatemuseum.org/climateartforcongress>  
\*scroll down to the map to see submissions by state
- **Climate Art for Congress Introductory Film:**  
<https://vimeo.com/504978712>
- **Climate Art For Congress Submission Form**  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7wjGXcxMGw5gquey2uf11SprTZ-3CVqasX7EDR6F\\_pHuf\\_DEg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7wjGXcxMGw5gquey2uf11SprTZ-3CVqasX7EDR6F_pHuf_DEg/viewform)  
(you can also email a google folder of student work to [climateart@climatemuseum.org](mailto:climateart@climatemuseum.org))

## Questions?

Email us at [climateart@climatemuseum.org](mailto:climateart@climatemuseum.org)