



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

## BACKGROUND

Students who scan the news cannot miss all of the headlines about devastating climate change impacts around the world or the latest on Congressional decisions about **investing in climate solutions now that will be life-changing for the future**. An ongoing, urgent, bold prioritization of climate progress—supporting climate justice and clean energy, keeping fossil fuels in the ground, and protecting 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 critical, collective action!

In this art and advocacy project, students can create illustrated notes for their representatives in the House and the Senate that spotlight the climate impacts that matter most to them. After your students participate, we will send their notes to Congress, connecting their messages with people in Washington who can fight for everyone's right to a healthy, safe, livable future!

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 U.S. voice their climate demands to Congress. The full promise of this moment will only be realized if we all work together, asking elected leaders to safeguard our equitable and sustainable future.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Learning Outcomes

#### **Students will:** \* Goals specific to 7-12 students

1. Learn the basics of climate science.
2. Create artwork that illustrates their climate concerns and demands.
3. Gain a basic understanding of how their own art and civic action can draw attention to climate change issues and solutions.
4. Write a compelling letter to their members of Congress.\*
5. Develop research skills to learn who their members of Congress are and what their positions on climate legislation are.\*
7. Follow current events, tracking news stories on Congressional discussions and legislation focused on climate -- i.e., green energy solutions, climate justice issues, climate change-caused pollution, and more.\*



*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 or downloadable worksheet (linked below), drawing utensils, phone or 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 two class periods: one focused on guided research and one for letter writing and illustrating. Could easily be expanded to encompass additional current events and civics learning. **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.

## INSTRUCTIONS

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 2a: Who represents your students in Congress?**

Students can identify their members of Congress using the websites linked below.

### **STEP 2b: Older students can research their representatives' stances on climate issues.**

The depth of this research will vary greatly with grade level.

#### **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 3a: Encourage your students to voice their opinion!**

Students can practice expressing themselves clearly and creatively through a short, handwritten note expressing their views to members of Congress. It's what they think that matters! Students can



also visit our online gallery of letters that have already been sent to Congress [here](#) for inspiration from other students, ages 5-18.

## STEP 3b: Harness student creativity to make an impact

Students can create an illustration on the rest of the paper. Students can use the prompts below or other sources to make a climate change focused letter.

### 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?
- 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.

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

When the letters are complete, you can share them with us 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.

Please note that 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 color printed and 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!
6. Make sure to tag **@climatemuseum** and use the hashtag **#ClimateArtForCongress**
7. If you have any questions, please email us at [climateart@climatemuseum.org](mailto:climateart@climatemuseum.org).

[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

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

### 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](#)
- **No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge**  
Students can learn if their representatives have committed to the **No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge** making it clear they won't accept campaign money from or be influenced by Big Oil at <http://nofossilfuelmoney.org/>
- **Climate Scorecard created by Vote Climate U.S. PAC**  
Students can check out their representatives' [Climate Scorecard](#) created by Vote Climate U.S. PAC and explore in more depth how their representatives have voted on past climate legislation.

### Climate Museum

- **Climate Art For Congress Homepage**  
<https://climatedemuseum.org/climateartforcongress>



- **Climate Art for Congress Gallery**

<https://climatedemuseum.org/climateartforcongress>

\*scroll down to the map to see submissions by state

- **Climate Art for Congress Introductory Film**

<https://vimeo.com/504978712>

- **Send illustrated letters to the Climate Museum**

[Submission Form](#)

You can also email a google folder of student work to [climateart@climatedemuseum.org](mailto:climateart@climatedemuseum.org)

## QUESTIONS?

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