

SCHOOL STRIKE FOR CLIMATE



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Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the 'school strike 4 climate' movement which began in Sweden with the work of Greta Thunberg and has since spread to many other countries. Students are encouraged to think about the merits of school strikes as a tactic, and the ways in which support can be built for environmental protests.

Learning Objectives

- To find out about how young people are organising in the 'school strike 4 climate' movement.
- To think about why Greta Thunberg's example has been inspirational for so many, and why the movement spread so far.
- To think about the different ways that protestors can be seen, heard, and get their message across.

United Nations Sustainable Development Links

- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Climate Action

Curriculum Links

- Citizenship, KS 3-4

British Council Core Skills

- Digital Literacy
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Student Leadership
- Citizenship



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Activity one: Group Discussion

Split the class into small groups and pose the following questions. After 5-10 minutes, bring everyone back together to compare answers. The aim of this discussion is to ensure students are familiar with the key facets of climate change, and to encourage discussions about the different ways that climate change can be tackled- both through individual choices and through political campaigns.

- What is climate change?
- What causes it?
- What impact does it have on the world and on people?
- How does it make you feel?
- What can be done to stop it?

Activity two: Presentation

Requires: slides 2-3

Preparation: Set up the PowerPoint

Use the following information and the pictures on slides 2 and 3 to introduce students to the 'School Strike for Climate' movement, and Greta Thunberg.

Greta Thunberg was just 15 when she first decided to start a 'school strike.'

In August 2018, just one month before the Swedish general elections, she refused to attend school and instead sat outside the national parliament (the 'Riksdag') with a sign that announced that she was on strike to protect the climate. She said she would refuse to return to school until Swedish politicians passed laws that reduced the amount of carbon dioxide that Sweden would produce.

Since the election she has returned to school, but she still goes on strike every Friday. Her example inspired many other students in Sweden, who began to join her. She was invited to speak to politicians and business leaders around the world, and gained a lot of attention in the media for her actions.

Students around the world decided to follow in Greta's footsteps, and now students from many different countries coordinate their Friday protests. All of these students are demanding a reduction in carbon emissions, but they also focus on issues which are important to them locally as well. Students in Australia, for example, are trying to prevent a new coal mine from being opened.

On March, 15th, 2019, over 1 million people took part in school strikes and protests in over 130 countries. Some people are very critical of these protests as they think students should be in school, and should protest in their own time instead. However the students who are protesting say that it is such an important issue that missing a day of school is justified.

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Activity three: Young People's Role in Protest

Requires: Slides 4 and 5

Preparation: Ensure that the videos from slide 4 can be played

- Show the students the two videos contained on slide 4.
- Put the students into different small groups than they were in for activity one, and ask them to move to different parts of the classroom.
- Have them look at the questions on the final slide, and discuss these for a few minutes.
- Bring the entire group back together, and go through each of the questions seeking answers from different students. Encourage students to respond to one another, and explore disagreements.

Activity four: Walkout Roleplay

Requires: Source 1 from the worksheet, Paper and pens, potentially computers

Preparation: Print out the worksheet, ensure that there are means available for creating different props either on paper or on computers.

- Ask students to read the guide to organising a walkout. (Source 1 on the worksheet)
- Ask students to imagine that they are organising a school walk out as part of the School Strike For Climate.
- Ask the class to split into four different teams (either take volunteers or split people up- the former is perhaps more desirable but if you have shortages on particular teams you may have to nudge people). These are the design team, the publicity team, the protest organising team, and the parents and teacher outreach team.
- Each team will have to make a plan or a prop (such as a poster or a social media page or a template letter).
- Encourage students to work in a democratic way- if they disagree on an idea, ask them whether they can vote on it to decide what they should do?
- Once they have created these they will come back together and explain their choices to the rest of the class.



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Source 1

This is an extract from a guide to organising a school strike, hosted by the **#fridayforfuture** campaign. www.fridaysforfuture.org

SCHOOL #CLIMATESTRIKE

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT

Students are walking out of school and going on #ClimateStrike to call on governments to keep warming below the unacceptably dangerous level of 1.5 degrees Celsius and protect our future.

WHY

Heat waves, floods, and hurricanes are killing hundreds and devastating communities across the world. Climate change is already a deadly reality. Governments are meeting for the UN climate talks right now in Poland, and despite the latest stark warning from climate scientists that we have only 12 years to reverse course, politicians are ignoring their call. What use is it learning facts if adults ignore them? That's why Greta and her fellow students are walking out of school to teach politicians a lesson in leadership.

WHEN

Every Friday.

WHERE

Your school, a government office, anywhere you feel.



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FOR STUDENTS

- 1. Talk to your parents** explaining what you are doing and why, and ask them to support you.
- 2. Record a video** telling your story, and post it on social media tagging your friends, YouTube influencers, leaders, and others -- calling on them to join the **#ClimateStrike**. **Use these hashtags too: #ActNow #FridaysForFuture**
- 3. Make a sign** calling for whatever you want your leaders to do on climate. It could be "100% clean energy!" or "listen to science!" It's your call -- be creative!
- 4. Talk to your schoolmates and teachers** - tell them why you care about climate change and ask them to join you on **Friday's #ClimateStrike**.
- 5. Share this toolkit** with anyone who's interested in supporting or finding out more.
- 6. Join the #ClimateStrike** on a Friday. ***Make sure to agree a specific time in advance so everyone knows when to join!*** When the time comes, walk out of school in whatever way you think best.
- 7. Once you've walked out - choose what is right.** You might want to hold a quick rally on the school steps. Or you might want to sit on the steps outside your local politicians' office and demand they take urgent climate action.
- 8. How this has an impact - share photos and videos** of the **#ClimateStrike** on social media, and tag your leaders.
- 9. Please keep the #ClimateStrike peaceful and non-violent at all times.**



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TEAMS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Design team: The design team will create a poster that can be used to advertise the demonstration around school and the surrounding area. The poster will need some text which explains why you think people should join the protest. It will also need an image to capture people's attention (you could design a logo yourselves or find a picture online that might be appropriate). Try to find some other posters and images that other students have made on the 'Fridays for Future' and 'School Strike 4 Climate' websites for inspiration.

Publicity team: The publicity team will plan how to spread the word about the demonstration online. You will either need to create a social media page for your group or an action plan that you will share with everyone.

What might be a good tactic for reaching other students and getting them involved? How might you be able to get attention from the media for what you do? Is it better to have a page, so you have a single voice to invite students to an event and speak 'as a campaign', or to set up a group so that everyone can talk with each other? Is it better to use social media or create a website? What might prevent some students from attending and what is a good way to address these issues?

Protest organising: The protest team has to plan out what would happen on the protest. You will come up with a plan and let the rest of the group know about it.

Where would it be? Is there an important building you think it should be near? Would there be a march or would it be stationary? Would you want people to speak- who would they be? Would it be a traditional march or would it look different? What might be eye-catching?

Parents and Teacher outreach: This team is responsible for trying to get parents and teachers on board with the protest. You will need to create a plan or a template letter to share with the rest of the group.

What would be the best way of doing this? In some schools, students have sent a delegation to see the principal/headteacher. In others, the student council has tried to get the heads on side. Some campaigns have created draft letters which students can give to teachers and parents. What do you think would be best? What kind of ideas do you think teachers and parents might listen to which will get them on side?



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