

'Whatever it takes': students at 50 US high schools launch climate initiative

Level 2: Intermediate – Teacher's notes

Article summary: A youth-led initiative is demanding change. The Green New Deal for Schools requires districts to teach climate justice, update buildings, and plan for extreme weather (and more). Students also share their experiences.

Time: 60–90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Collocations

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. Write the term "climate change" on the board and elicit its meaning. Then, put students into small groups and ask them to discuss the questions based on their own experience. Monitor and add any useful words or phrases on the board.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to complete the activity in pairs. Once they have completed it, ask them to compare their answer with other pairs. Check answers with the class and elicit other information students might have about the words.

Key:

1. propose
2. justice
3. suppress
4. wage
5. rage, raging
6. resilient
7. aggravate
8. fossil fuel, fossil fuels
9. misconstrue, misconstrued
10. severe
11. advocacy
12. escalation

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to read the text and complete the task. Encourage them to highlight the relevant information in the text.

Key:

1. a youth-led climate justice group that is demanding that schools teach climate justice
2. heatwaves, wildfires in Maui, tropical storm in southern Texas
3. Georgia's law suppressing education on climate justice and race
4. the "positive" aspects of fossil fuels
5. It compares climate activists to Nazis.
6. They are fighting to reintroduce climate education after it was removed.
7. knowing young people can't vote to elect the people making these big decisions about their futures
8. to help schools expand and develop learning materials, hire staff and modify campuses

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise in pairs. Have them share their knowledge and encourage them to use a collocations dictionary if possible. You can also ask them to scan the article to find some of the phrases in the article.

Key:

1. academic
2. scorched
3. threatened
4. wildfires
5. aimed
6. factual
7. graduation
8. unsure
9. unequal

- b. Ask students to complete the questions individually or in pairs. Then, have them ask and answer the questions in pairs. Encourage them to add reasons for their answers. Answers will vary.

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Key:

1. *education*
2. *extreme/severe/tropical*
3. *gender/income/racial*
4. *heating/warming*
5. *clear/detailed*

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to read and reflect on the students' statements as they note down their ideas. Encourage them to support their opinions with examples. Then, put students in pairs or small groups and have them discuss the statements using their notes.

6. In your own words

- a. Give students time to research. It is okay if they do the research in their language. Have them make notes. Then, ask them to reflect on the area they feel needs to change.
- b. Ask students to follow the steps to plan their petition. You can also encourage them to look at examples of petitions online. Once students have written their first draft, ask them to exchange their texts and peer edit before sharing it with the rest of the class (on a digital or physical wall). Encourage students to sign all the petitions they would like to support.