



# Climate Advocacy Lesson Plan

**Topic:**

Climate Awards Advocacy Letter Writing

**Duration:**

90 - 150 minutes

**Materials Needed:**

- Writing materials (for students)
- Internet

**Grade Level(s):**

9-12

**Standards:**College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards:

- R.CCR.5. and R.CCR.6. Reading: Craft and Structure (grades 9-10)
- R.CCR.5. and R.CCR.6. Reading: Craft and Structure (grades 11-12)
- R.CCR.7. and R.CCR.9. Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (grades 9-10)
- W.CCR.1., W.CCR.2., and W.CCR.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes (grades 9-12)
- W.CCR.4., W.CCR.5., and W.CCR.6. Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing (grades 9-12)
- SL.CCR.2. Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration (grades 6-12)

**Outline:**

1. Getting Started (15 Min)
2. Reflect (15-30 Min)
3. Brainstorm (15 Min)
4. Write (15-30 Min)
5. Revise (30 Min)

## Climate Advocacy Writing - Overview

“To avoid the worst of climate change, we must deploy solutions much faster than ever before,” Iranian-American activist, [Sophia Kianni](#), recently [wrote](#). As the youngest member of the United Nations Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, Kianni understands the coordinated effort deploying these solutions requires. But “fortunately,” she says, “we have a talented and relentless group of climate leaders ready to make this happen—young people.”

Dear writers, join young people around the world telling leaders how and why we need climate action *now*. In a letter of 400 words or less, tell a political leader, legislator—or even your school principal—why their focus on climate is vital to our planet and to *your* future. Consider questions such as:

- How might climate change affect your life and the lives of future generations?
- What impacts are you experiencing already in your part of the world?
- What do you want the legislators of your country to know about your feelings on this issue?

Pick up the pen, and write a letter for change.

## 1. Getting Started (15 Minutes)

[The Nature Conservancy](#) offers a wealth of information on climate/environmental concerns and conservation efforts by region of the world, and then by country within that region. Under the “About Us” tab, click “Where we work” and locate your country within the list of options.

Have your students explore individually, or select places collectively as a class, and have students jot down information that is interesting to them as it comes up. If your students’ home area is not available, ask them to select another place that is important to them or of interest. The search feature looks like this:



Take breaks to ask students to share compelling facts or tidbits.

## 2. Reflect (15-30 Minutes)

Have students individually select one climate issue to focus on—encourage them to pick something that impacts the local region or impacts them personally. Next, have them write a reflection on how that climate issue affects them, referencing the following questions.

1. In what ways is climate change a larger issue than your individual choices?
2. What personal observations of climate change are beginning to bubble to the surface for you—or have already impacted your community in major ways?
3. What local environmental issue do you want to raise awareness about?
4. What story can you tell? What information and emotional qualities in your writing will inspire others to care—and then to act? In what ways has this issue impacted you personally?
5. How does the topic of climate change—or the particular aspect of the climate that is of personal interest to you—affect you emotionally? How does it impact your thoughts about the future for yourself, younger generations, other species and/or the environment?

If you have time for sharing, ask students to each read aloud a response to one of the questions.

### 3. Brainstorm the Three P's (15 Minutes)

Tell students that (nearly) all captivating advocacy letters have three elements in common: The Three P's! Have students guess what the three P's stand for, and then talk about the importance of each. Next, have students jot down their thoughts for each P—*before* starting their letter in earnest.

1. **PERSONAL:** Make it personal. What example from your life can illustrate why this topic deserves attention? How does this topic impact you, your family, your community, your future? Try telling an anecdote (brief story) or describing an experience to bring this topic to life.
2. **PERSPECTIVE:** Offer your perspective. What is your main point? Tell your letter recipient in clear terms why this topic is so important.
3. **PROOF:** Back it up with proof. What research—data, statistics, or studies—can help support your perspective?

### 4. Write (15-30 Minutes)

Invite your students dive into the letter writing process, following these guidelines:

#### Writing Guidelines

1. Address your letter to a specific recipient (examples: Dear Senator X, Dear Prime Minister Y)
2. State your age early on! Your voice as a young person holds greater sway.
3. If your letter pertains to a specific project or piece of legislation, tell the recipient what it's called. For example, if you're in Australia, writing about the efforts of young people to hold their elected officials accountable, you might reference the noteworthy legal fight around [Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act](#). If you're in Nepal, writing about land protection, you could reference [the innovative reforestation program](#) that has transformed the Nepalese countryside. Or in the US, you might refer to one of the [executive actions](#) President Biden could take to curb climate change.
4. Send your letter! Look up the address and send a physical copy in the mail. You also might consider submitting your letter to a local or national newspaper for publication.

If students are having trouble getting started, invite them to brainstorm responses to these questions:

- How might climate change affect your life and the lives of future generations?
- What impacts are you experiencing already in your part of the world?
- What do you want the legislators of your country to know about your feelings on this issue?

NOTE: It's important to be cautious when sharing any amount of personal information on the internet. For safety and privacy reasons, the version of the letter that you publish on Write the

World should NOT contain: your last name, school name, home address, or any form of contact information (phone number, email address, social media). You MAY include: your first name (or pseudonym), age/grade, city, state, and country. Should you end up sending a copy of the letter to your nation's leader (which we hope you do!), you can add these personal details back in.

## 5. Revise (30 Minutes)

Keeping a letter under a given word count can be challenging. Assign reviewing pairs or groups and have students peer review one another's drafts, then make revisions based on the feedback they receive.

### **Peer Review Questions**

- What aspect of this letter did you find most compelling? How did the writer make you care about this topic?
- Does the writer state their perspective in a clear way? Would further defining their opinion strengthen this letter?
- Are there places where the writer could add evidence to back up their opinion?
- If the letter is over 400 words, what do you suggest cutting?
- What words of encouragement do you have for this writer as they continue improving this draft?