



## Climate Project FAQ

### How does this course align with state and national standards?

State standards provide a framework to address climate change in the classroom, whether or not your state's standards explicitly address the topic. The evidence of a changing climate is recognized in many science standards, such as [NGSS](#) (Next Generation Science Standards), and is included in disciplines such as geology, biology, and chemistry. Most states have integrated environmental and sustainability issues into social-studies standards, focusing broadly on the interactions between humans and their environments. Climate-change knowledge is particularly relevant in the areas of geography, civics, economics, and government.

Even if your state standards don't specifically mention climate change, weaving this knowledge into existing curricula will help students as they prepare to be informed citizens, workers, and leaders in a society affected by climate change. [Click here to learn more](#) about standards alignment in Climate Project.

### There is skepticism about climate change in my students/school/community. How do I approach teaching this topic?

People have a wide range of background knowledge and lived experiences relative to climate—these perspectives are powerful tools but can be complicated to navigate. Here are some tips to help facilitate positive engagement:

- Take the role of lead learner: No one has all the answers when it comes to climate change. Model effective inquiry by adopting an “I don't know, but I do know how to find out” ethos. Doing so promotes discussion grounded in evidence and curiosity.
- Connect to local issues: Grounding the content and activities in local concerns, interests, and cultural knowledge will help students build connections between their experiences and climate content in a way that encourages common understanding and recognizes students' backgrounds and values.
- Practice testing claims: Facilitate exploration and proactively challenge information and preconceived notions students might have about climate to help them become more adept at evaluating and making evidence-backed claims.

### I don't have time to teach a dedicated climate course. How can I incorporate these materials in my class?

Climate Project lessons are designed to be flexible and easily integrated into your classroom setting. The course can be taught as a full-semester program for a comprehensive investigation or through standalone lessons, allowing teachers to tailor the curriculum to meet specific learning goals, schedules, and student needs and interest.

## **I'm a history teacher, not a climate scientist. How can I teach my students about climate change?**

Embracing the mindset of lead learner in the classroom will help you guide students as they explore the complexities of climate change for themselves. The course encourages educators to teach students how to ask the right questions, find answers, and test claims to come to their own conclusions. Modeling for students how to turn “I don’t know” into “I don’t know but I do know how to find out” demonstrates that learning isn’t just acquiring facts, it’s a matter of constantly engaging with and questioning the world around us.

## **How do I manage student misconceptions about climate change?**

Misconceptions about climate change are widely circulated, and evaluating the information we interact with online, on social media, and in our communities is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced. Climate Project’s claim-testing series helps students understand the importance of questioning the information they encounter and builds the reasoning skills they need to evaluate what to believe. These activities teach students not *what* to think, but *how* to think, an essential skill not just in discussions about climate change but also in their everyday lives as digital citizens.

## **I'm a science teacher. What are some of the ways I can use Climate Project materials in my class?**

Climate Project supports students in understanding the causes and consequences of—and the solutions to—climate change. This knowledge gives students a more complete understanding of the many scientific disciplines involved in climate science, including chemistry, biology, geology, and physics. Weaving Climate Project lessons into these subjects is a powerful way to help students integrate the science of climate change with the knowledge of how to effectively support climate action.

## **Students in my class are feeling anxious/depressed/apathetic about the subject of climate change. What can I do?**

Feelings of anxiety, doom, and depression leave little room or motivation to work on the challenges of climate change.

Climate Project is built around *climate optimism*. Climate optimists see big challenges as a call to action and believe there is still something we can do to make our shared future better. The course develops this mindset by exploring the ways that optimism is justified, evaluating innovative technologies to determine the most promising paths forward, and connecting climate knowledge to their own communities and contexts to create plans for real action.

## **Where can I get support for teaching this course?**

Climate Project comes with all the supports of any OER Project course. Check out the Course Guide and Course Outline for more details on materials and approach.

Several opportunities for live and virtual professional development are available throughout the school year to help teachers get familiar with our tools and courses. All our professional-development options are freely available online and have been approved for clock hours in most states in the US. Click here to see the [Climate Project professional learning schedule](#).

The [Climate Project Online Teacher Community](#) is active, open, and brings together the collective wisdom and support of thousands of helpful people. Here you will find educators teaching Climate Project across grade levels, subjects, and regions.

To get in touch with the OER Project team directly, reach out to us at [team@oerproject.com](mailto:team@oerproject.com).

## **Do you have any tips on how to integrate local issues related to climate into this course? Where is the best place in the course to do this?**

Grounding climate education content and activities in local issues builds student engagement and connection to community identity and cultural values. Communities across the country and around the world experience the impacts of climate change in different ways, and learning about the impacts of climate change in their own area is one way to help students connect with and add context to the issue. In Unit 2, students research a climate impact of their choice. This is a great place to encourage students to study local impacts. In Units 3 and 4, students can research and evaluate adaptation and mitigation solutions relevant to local issues while in Unit 5, they have the opportunity to carry out community-based civic action projects. Identifying climate-focused careers in local industries, exploring local climate policy, and identifying regional experts and policymakers can amplify the power of student action.

## **How can I facilitate conversations about climate inequality?**

The impacts of climate change very widely, and understanding the ways that climate change can make existing inequalities worse is an important part of creating strategies for the future. Climate justice and environmental justice are inextricably linked to discussions around the causes, impacts, and solutions to climate change.

Climate Project introduces students to climate justice and environmental justice through a research-based approach that has students evaluate sources to create their own understanding of the concepts. Students explore the need for adaptation solutions and think critically about global, local, and individual action. Case studies from around the world provide examples that illustrate the varied and unequal impacts of climate change. Equipping students with background knowledge and opportunities for critical thinking and personal reflection can help create a dynamic and supportive environment for discussing climate inequality.

## **How do the Climate Project course materials differ from other climate materials?**

Climate Project is another open education resource (OER) course from OER Project. Like all OER Project courses, it is free, open to public use, and adaptable to the needs of your classroom. Climate Project is more than a repository of resources on climate change—whether you're teaching the full course or standalone lessons, the activities, articles, videos, and tools work together in a cohesive and comprehensive way.

This is a course focused on solutions and student action, designed to inspire students to think about the role they can play in solving climate change. Climate Project recognizes that information surrounding climate change is complex and constantly changing, so rather than tell students *what* to think, we help them build new understandings of *how* to think through key literacy skills and inquiry-based activities.

And we support teachers the whole way. Check out opportunities for professional learning, stop by our teacher community, or drop us a line to say hi.