CLIMATE PROJECT

Climate Project Extension FAQ

What is the Climate Project Extension?

Climate Project Extension is the first comprehensive course of its kind. It's a course that focuses on inspiring social studies students to develop and take civic action toward reaching word-wide net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This three-week-long supplemental unit is specifically designed for AP® World, AP® Government, AP® Geography, and other social studies curricula.

Climate Project Extension is about impatient optimism and helping students discover what they can do to help the world reach zero carbon emissions. Students begin by developing an evidence-based understanding of the global climate problem and current and potential solutions, and end with a set of policies and actions they can implement in their communities, schools, and personal lives.

Why climate?

Climate change is here, and its effects on all aspects of the well-being of humans, plants, and animals—as well as their habitats worldwide—are measurable. But it's not too late to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, and our best mitigation resources are today's students.

More than 80% of parents and 86% of teachers in the US support teaching climate change in schools. Currently, 37 US states recognize human-caused climate change somewhere in their state standards. However, many teachers don't teach it, not because of political or administrative pushback, but because they don't feel they have the subject-matter knowledge or materials needed to confidently cover it.

Why carbon?

There is no bigger contributor to climate change than carbon. About 50 million tons of it are produced by human activities each year. The good news is that humans are amazing adaptors and innovators and we have the tools, technology, and knowhow to get to net carbon zero in this century.

Where does it fit?

Climate change is not just a science problem. Many of the skills and tools needed to implement solutions are practiced in the social studies and other disciplines. Climate Project Extension is designed to fit into high-school AP® World, AP® Government, AP® Geography, and other social studies classroom settings.

Climate Project Extension guides students through solving the problem of how to get the world to net zero carbon emissions. Students work through evidence-based research focused on five Grand Challenges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Using this information, they select an innovation, career path, or policy direction to develop, and then create plans for implementing their solutions.

A semester-long Climate Project course will be available in 2023. It will give students additional opportunities to dig deeper into the Grand Challenges to reaching net-zero, explore the wider issues of climate justice as it relates to greenhouse gas emissions, and to further drill down into the needs of their local communities.

How much climate or science knowledge do I need to teach this?

Zero. This is not a climate science course.* Developed with social studies teachers in mind, this course is about understanding the global carbon problem and potential solutions to achieving net-zero carbon emissions. Students use this information to develop local policy recommendations and action plans that contribute to solving the global problem.

**Although the Climate Project is not a climate science course, it is an excellent follow-on to a climate science unit for teachers and students who want to further their understanding of how to apply what they learned about the science of climate change to developing policies and innovations to solve the carbon problem.*

How is the course structured?

Climate Project Extension is designed to guide students from the general to the specific; from the global problem to local action. It takes them from global emissions sources to the local actions that make an impact, that are suitable to their community, and that spark their own interest. The course and all the material in it are built around this throughline, which has three stages:

1. **Understanding the problem:** First, students learn there is a problem, identify its causes, and take up a call for action to help the world get to net-zero.
2. **Researching the Grand Challenges:** Students use the framework of Grand Challenges to discover a wide range of potential strategies for addressing the problem. They research the possible solutions and then investigate action opportunities for overcoming the obstacles.
3. **Presenting at the Climate Summit:** Students then develop presentations that showcase their research and propose potential actions, which they present at a Climate Summit attended by fellow students. The Summit provides feedback and collaboration opportunities.

What will my students get out of this course?

Students will:

1. Articulate the fundamentals of climate change and why we must get to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. (content, comprehension)
2. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of one of the five Grand Challenges as it relates to the goal of getting to net-zero. (content, comprehension)
3. Evaluate potential solutions and obstacles for getting to net-zero using evidence and argumentation skills. (evidence, assessment)
4. Create materials that identify and communicate potential climate solutions and action opportunities in their community and in their own lives. (application, communication)

Is this a good news or bad news climate course?

Good news. This course embraces impatient optimism and helps students discover that they *can do something* to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.

Is this course going to tell us that everyone must stop using fossil fuels and only eat vegetables?

No, we will not solve this problem without market-friendly innovation or by just halting all carbon-emitting activities. The course recognizes that the world will still need fossil fuels, cows, and cement. But we can find new ways to grow things, make things, heat, cool, and move people and things around (many already exist!). If you live on Earth today, you have contributed to the carbon problem. And now you can contribute to the solution by understanding the scope of the problem and learning about the amazing innovations that present realistic solutions for our modern world. Climate Project teaches students to use evidence and critical-thinking skills to determine what's right for *their* community, careers, and lives.

Is this just another repository of activities and articles on climate change?

No. Climate Project is another open education resource (OER) from OER Project. Like all OER Project courses, it is free, comprehensive, and cohesive. Whether you're teaching the **extension course** or semester-long course (available in 2023), the lessons, activities, articles, videos, and tools work together to form a complete curriculum for your classroom.

What do you mean by *free*?

We mean nothing, nada, zero, free, ever. OER Project is committed to turning the idea of open education resources on its head. We produce high-quality curricula, teacher resources, PD, a teacher community, and student materials and make them freely available to everyone, everywhere. Period. It's the way OER should be.

How do I get teacher support?

More than curricula, OER Project is a community of teachers, administrators, scholars, and learning scientists that supports, inspires, and evolves together as we pursue our passion to educate, no matter how challenging the circumstances. To this end, we offer many opportunities for teachers to get and give curriculum-aligned support and enhance their practice on their terms.

OER Project Teacher Community: The OER Project Online Teacher Community is active, open, and brings together the collective wisdom and support of thousands of helpful people. Here you will find groups dedicated to specific OER Project courses, grade levels, and interests.

Live and virtual professional development: Several opportunities for live, virtual professional development are also available throughout the school year. The OER Conference for the Social Studies brings together thousands of educators, historians, experts, influencers, authors, and more to discuss education challenges and ideas for K–12. OER Project also offers several live, virtual professional development sessions aligned to the courses and curricula. These sessions help teachers get familiar with our tools and courses and get ready to use them in the classroom. All these professional-development options are freely available and accessible online and are approved for clock hours in most US states.

Coming soon—Teaching Climate Project: in 2023, additional immediate support will be available in our online professional development course for teachers *and administrators*. It is aligned with the Climate Project curriculum and includes easy-to-follow training videos, examples, and advice *from fellow educators* to get up and running quickly and continue your development on your terms.