

Climate Stories Project Education Workshop Lesson Plan

Intro

This lesson plan provides a framework for conducting a [Climate Stories Project](#) (CSP) education workshop in high school or college classrooms. The workshop can be adapted to meet the needs of classes of different subjects, students of different ages, available timeframes, varied curricula, and can also be adjusted for use in non-school settings such as community forums. Workshops are most successful with participants who have at least a basic understanding of climate science. More information can be found at the CSP [Education Page](#).

Learning outcomes

CSP workshop participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize and talk about personal observations of and responses to climate change.
- 2) Engage with climate change as a present-day social issue, rather than simply a subject for scientific study.
- 3) Conduct, record, and share a climate story interview with a member of their community and/or a member of a front-line climate change community.

Materials:

- 1) Printed forms for students, from the [Classroom Resources](#) page on climatestoriesproject.org. Use of the forms is explained in lesson plan.
- 2) Recording devices (smartphones or audio recorders) and camera.
- 3) Access to computers with audio editing software, such as Audacity ([free download](#)) and Skype (if remote interviews are required).

Suggested Workshop Format:

Before the first classroom session:

- 1) **Consider how you will integrate the CSP workshop into your curriculum.** Will you piggyback on a science lesson about climate change? Will you tie it into a creative writing project?
- 2) **Decide how much time to dedicate to the project.** 1-2 weeks is ideal but anything more than one classroom session is possible.
- 3) **Make a list of potential interviewees in or around your community** (or in front-line climate change communities if interviews can be held over Skype) and start contacting them. Interviewees should have a good understanding of climate change and its local impacts. Examples of interviewees include farmers, natural resource professionals, public health workers, or scientists (make sure they are willing to talk about their own experiences and personal observations, not just their research findings). Elders with a strong connection to the natural environment can be a fantastic resource for sharing observations of long-term changes. Be sure to get permission from interviewees to be recorded and to have their interviews edited and shared. Depending on available time, logistics, and age of students, interviewees could come into the classroom, students could meet interviewees out of school, or interviews could be conducted over Skype. Coordinating schedules can be time-consuming, so be sure to give plenty of time before the interview(s) to get everything set up.

- 4) **Optional HW assignment** before workshop: Have students listen to an interview on climatestoriesproject.org and take notes on the interview using the [Questions for Classroom Interview Study Form](#).

The following activities should be divided into two or more sessions:

- 1) **Students discuss what aspects of their local environment or community are important to them** (ex. a particular river, mountain, forest, hockey pond, seasonal activities, etc.) and what impact they think climate change is having on these. Students can discuss ways in which they could observe climate change occurring (journal of leaf color changes, for example).
- 2) **Students learn and practice interview skills.** Teacher and student volunteer can model “good” and “bad” interviews, then elicit from students why they were good or bad (listening/not listening, reading questions one after the next from a list, asking follow-up questions, etc.). To practice, students can interview each other about simple topics such as hobbies, family, career plans, etc. and can practice recording interviews using phones or other devices. Students should use the [Interviewing Tips](#) form to help them practice and plan. It’s important to emphasize that good interviews about climate change encourage the interviewee to relate specific anecdotes, imagery, and feelings which illustrate personal responses to the changing climate, for example living through a flood, or not being able to ski due to lack of snow. You can demonstrate how students can rephrase questions in different ways to move the narrative from distant (I read about climate change in the news) to personal (my house was flooded by a severe out-of-season thunderstorm).
- 3) **Students plan their interview questions;** depending on the interview structure this may be done with the whole class or in groups. It can be valuable for students to come up with their own questions, but if this is not feasible questions can be taken from the [Tell Your Story](#) page. Questions can be written onto the printed [Interview Information Form](#).
- 4) **Students conduct and record the interview,** in or out of class depending on the workshop structure. Students should take notes on the [Interview Information Form](#) and follow guidelines from [Interviewing Tips](#) and [How to Conduct a Climate Change Interview](#) to help them get good results. Note that if time or capacity is limited, students can simply conduct the interviews and take notes instead of recording. Other activities, such as writing assignments, can follow from these interviews.
- 5) **Students edit the interview** using software such as Audacity (time permitting). Interviews published on the CSP website or social media should be 2-3 minutes long. Consult the [Audio Editing Guidelines](#) page for help.
- 6) **Students share the interview** on CSP website and/or through other online platforms or social media. Edited (or unedited if need be) interviews (and a photograph of the interviewee) can be uploaded to the [Tell Your Story](#) page. Encourage your students to share the interview even if it is not “professional” quality.
- 7) **Have a debrief session** to discuss what students learned, and what was surprising and/or challenging about the project. Students and teachers can fill out and submit the CSP [Evaluation Form](#).