



Grade-Banded Examples of Climate Change Learning for Action

Children of all ages should feel empowered to make personal decisions/changes for the greater good. Students have the concern and the capacity to engage in systemic change.

Engaging with adults to solve problems helps students build communication skills and creates another context for interdisciplinary learning. Students of all ages can and should be encouraged to explain why they personally think a problem exists, back up their claim(s) with evidence, and propose their own solutions. Many ELA and math standards connect to action-based learning, as students must write, read, speak, and use numbers to explain why and how certain actions should be taken.

School teachers and administrators should make every effort to take students' proposed solutions seriously, and find ways to support the implementation of those solutions - or help them find additional resources that can better support the implementation of a workable solution.

Consider developmentally-appropriate opportunities for children to take action, based on a child's ability to understand, process, and respond to issues on different scales of place, time, and organization, as well as science standards for their grade level. Students of all ages can benefit from mapping their world to understand different scales of action and the impacts of their actions. As the child progresses through school, their agency and actions can grow wider in reach as their understanding of the world changes. While students may benefit from models and examples of action, over time, they will lead the decision-making process of which actions to take.

When asking children to decide how to take action, be mindful of family culture and constraints that may exist in their home lives. Consider what actions may or may not be in their immediate control. It may be helpful to frame actions that individuals can take, compared to actions that we can collectively take based on school norms and policies, and the interplay between those two things. This focus on collective action, as well as individual action, helps empower students and reduce feelings of eco-anxiety and despair in the face of global climate change.

Examples of individual vs. collective action "I and We Statements" include:

- I don't let the water run when I brush my teeth. We conserve water in the summer to manage for less precipitation and ensure plants also get needed water.
- I put my food scraps in the compost bin. We use compost to help our garden grow and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills at the same time.
- I make decisions that reduce my environmental impact when it is in my power to do so. We make decisions as a class to reduce our collective environmental impact, like turning off the lights when we leave our classroom.

[See also C3 Framework, Civics Dimension - Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles](#)

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| Grade Band | Developmental Capabilities | Agency for Change | Examples of Action | NGSS Standard Connections |
|------------|--|--|--|--|
| K-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of view Cultural norms Cause/Effect Creation/Destruction Ownership/Sharing Personal moral understanding | Affecting change at the individual, family, or classroom scale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter cleanup on school grounds Reduce/Reuse/Recycle/Upcycle in the classroom or at home Family or Class Notice and Wonder walks | K-ESS2-2 K-ESS3-3 2-LS4-1 |
| 3-5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairness Rights/Responsibilities Persuasion | Affecting change at the individual, family, or classroom scale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composting Building rain gardens Removing invasive plants Maintaining a school garden Water use monitoring Classroom energy audit Advocating for classroom policy | S3-LS4-4 4-ESS3-1 5-LS2-1 5-ESS2-2 5-ESS3-1 |
| 6-8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rights/Justice Identity and value development | Can make significant change at the school or local community scale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cafeteria food menu audit Waste monitoring/reduction School energy audit Habitat restoration Advocating for district policy changes | LS2-1 LS2-2 LS2-3 LS2-4 LS 2-5 ESS3-1 ESS3-2 ESS3-3 ESS3-4 ESS3-5 |
| 9-12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social justice Political beliefs Civic discourse Ethics and values Global human rights | Able to understand and act in a larger scale (regional or national levels) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green school building design proposal Citizen science projects Writing to/meeting elected officials for policy change Science communication on social media -Connecting with national youth activist groups -Speaking at local council meetings | LS2-7 LS4-6 ESS3-1 ESS3-2 ESS3-3 ESS3-4 ESS3-5 ESS3-6 |

Further Reading:

- [National Academy of Education: Civic Reasoning and Discourse](#)
- [NOAA Stewardship Definitions](#)
- [Movie - Youth Activism Organizations](#)
- [Pandemic Leads to Groundswell of Youth Activism](#)
- [Social Studies C3 Framework](#)