

Welcome
to the



TCL
**Learning
Lab**

Teacher Guide

Climate Change is NOT a Dirty Word

How to Communicate about
Climate Change in Challenging Times

Climate Change is **NOT** a Dirty Word

Overview

There are a few audiences that are less receptive to the ills of climate change. Climate Change can be a political red flag for some, yet climate change is science. This concern can complicate efforts to provide information and engage in conversations about the growing effects of the climate crisis on our communities. Some people can become affronted when “climate” and “change” are linked. Such leering complicates the efforts to provide information and engage in a conversation about the growing effects of the climate crisis on their communities.

This appendix will provide educators with resources and strategies to introduce climate change in “unfriendly” arenas.

A Strategy for Success

- **Step 1-** Start a conversation; begin by asking the audience about their favorite outdoor place or activity. After a few minutes of discourse, implore the audience to imagine themselves in that area silently.
- **Step 2-** Conclude the meditation and invite the audience to illustrate their special place.
 - Utilize this TCI Climate Action Toolkit (CAT) [Thermochromic Pigment](#) to assist in illustrating.
 - Utilize paper and writing utensils or digital images to exemplify their special place.
- **Step 3-** After the presentations, continue the discussion by presenting the climate challenges that could threaten the “special places.”
 - Allow audiences to share out. Encourage them to share their fears, concerns, and possible solutions concerning an environmental issue. Provide a space for them to note their thoughts.
 - Conduct a [Three Lens Activity](#) using one of the environmental concerns raised in the previous discussion
- **Step 4-** Reflect. Allow your audience time to reflect.
- **Step 5-** Educate, Empower, and Activate.
 - Impress upon your audience the importance of education – learn about the contributing factors of climate crises in your community.
 - Utilize any of the [TCI Learning Labs](#) for instructional support
 - Freely access any of the [Our Beautiful Planet](#) videos and movie guides.
 - Define the terms [mitigation and adaptation](#).
 - Allow the audience to discuss possible solutions.
 - Utilize the TCI Climate Action Toolkit (CAT) [Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies](#) as a resource.
 - Empower your audience to share their concerns with members of the community. Suggest one of these two Climate Action Toolkits:
 - [Host a Town Hall](#)
 - [Community Conversations](#)
- **Step 6-** Take action. Encourage your audience to do something personal or on a larger scale to tackle climate change.
 - Access any of these [Climate Action Toolkits](#) for action on a personal or small-scale.
 - Complete any action projects suggested in Lesson 5 of each learning lab.

Reframing the Climate Change Conversation

Suggestions for reframing climate change discussions for different audiences.

Traditional Talking Points	Reframing Suggestions
Climate Change Impacts	Identify changes people have seen; ask, <i>What changes have you seen?</i>
Sustainable	Cleaner, healthier, safer
Ending climate change	<i>Solving</i> climate change
Communities impacted or affected by climate change	Community vulnerability and resiliency
Global climate change	Focus on local impacts and extreme weather events
Corporate responsibility	Focusing on economic benefits, such as energy efficiency and cost saving; increased demand from younger generations to purchase environmentally friendly products and services
Climate change is anthropogenic or caused by human activity	The power of humans to solve climate change
Climate justice or environmental justice	Public health
Debating or lecturing about climate change using scientific jargon.	Listening to stories of changed about others' lived experiences of climate change and its impacts.

Suggestions and Additional Resources

- Suggested instructional activity: **Community Interviews**
Often when we seek to communicate about climate change, we are trying to impart our scientific knowledge to someone else, making it seem as though we believe we know more than them. This method of communication can quickly turn into a debate or argument and turn others off from the conversation. An informational interview is one way to start a conversation built on listening and validating the experiences of community members rather than trying to sway opinions. These interviews help students study and validate the impacts of climate change on their local landscape and allow community members to engage in climate conversations by bringing the effects of climate change to their attention in a new way.
- Sources and additional classroom resources:
 - [“Don't call it climate change. Red states prepare for 'extreme weather'”, Politico](#)
 - [“Talking Climate Change in Red States”](#) (video), Climate One
 - [“Messaging guru offers list of words to use and avoid to build support for climate solutions”, Resilience.org](#)
 - [“Radio stories increase conservatives' beliefs that Republicans are worried about climate change”, Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#)
 - [“\[...\]Common Scientific Terminology Confounds Public”, United Nations Foundation](#)
 - [Climate Outreach Communications Handbook](#), IPCC