

Letters to Tomorrow Lesson Plan



in partnership with



Ages 10+ Lesson Length: 1 hour

Learning Objectives:

- To understand how humans have created the climate and nature emergency
- To explore possible futures
- To investigate how our actions create change
- To communicate ideas by writing a letter to a future person



The Great Big Green Week (GBGW) is an annual, week-long celebration of community climate action and progress, aiming to create a visible public mandate for action to address the climate and nature crises. GBGW is coordinated by The Climate Coalition (TCC), the UK's largest group of people dedicated to action against climate change. GBGW involves the coalition's 140 members, plus local community groups, and a range of diverse partners. Great Big Green Week 2022 will be held from 24th September - 2nd October 2022.

As part of Great Big Green Week 2022 we are inviting young people to write a letter to a person that they love, outlining their hopes and dreams for that person's future, and the action they are taking to protect what they love from the impacts of climate change.

This lesson plan combines the latest science with innovative visioning activities to help support schools, community and youth groups to run creative letter-writing activities during the GBGW. The outcome of these activities is a letter, written to a person in the future, which can be submitted to the GBGW website as well as shared locally. The Climate Coalition will use any letters uploaded to the website to show political leaders what ordinary people care about and demonstrate the call for more action on climate. More ideas for what you could do with the letters your students write are included at the end of this lesson plan.

Key Resources - [Presentation](#), [Example Letters \(page 5-6\)](#), [Future Visioning Activity \(page 7\)](#)

Further activities linked to the Ministry of Eco Education - [Who's in charge?](#) / [Who does the Earth belong to?](#) / [Is the future already written?](#)



Activity 1: Where Are We Now?

Length: 10 minutes

Curriculum Link: Science - Carbon Cycle / Earth and Atmosphere
Geography - Climate Change

(Slide 2 in the provided presentation)

Stories are powerful tools to help share ideas and help people remember facts. Work with a friend and use the following words to help craft a story explaining how humans created the climate and nature emergency. You don't have to use every word. Teachers might need to explain words.

Fossil Fuels - Industrial Revolution - Carbon - Temperature - Extreme Weather - Floods - Nature - Inequality - Cooperation

Share your story with another pair. Teachers choose one pair to share their story. Possible extension - What words are missing from this list?

(Slide 3)

Carbon is a key ingredient in the climate emergency. This graph is called the Keeling Curve and shows how the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has changed over the past 800,000 years. Where are we now? How much carbon is in the atmosphere? You'd have to go back more than 2 million years to find carbon dioxide the same level as it is today. The world was a very different place then.

For 100s of years, we've known how carbon dioxide helps trap heat. Since the industrial revolution the world has become 1.2°C warmer.

Activity 2: What Kind of Future?

Length: 10 minutes

Curriculum Link: Geography - Possible Futures

(Slide 4)

What kind of future will there be?

(Slide 5)

Our actions today create the world we live in tomorrow. Our behaviour today as a world means we're on a pathway to warming but the amount of warming depends on what changes. Here are Ed Hawkin's Warming Stripes, they show how the world has gotten warmer since the industrial revolution. There are a variety of possible futures. The world could stay below 1.5°C or we could reach 3 or 4 or 5°C.

(Slide 6)

Solar Punk is a creative vision of the future, imagining a green and healthy world, full of renewable energy and rich in biodiversity. Solar Punk uses art to help people imagine what this world looks like and how we could live differently.

Future Visioning Activity (page 7) - Use the script to guide students through a visioning activity to use their imaginations to create a view of a positive and thriving world in 2050. When you finish the visioning activity, ask children to share what they saw with their neighbour.

Activity 3: How Do We Get There?

Length: 10 minutes

Curriculum Link: Citizenship - Human Agency / Society

(Slide 8)

Play the Individual vs System Change video. People often say individual actions aren't enough, that we need governments to make change happen. Are these two sides of the same coin?

(Slide 9)

Professor Mark Maslin from UCL has created a list of possible actions to help us explore what we can all do. Which is the most important? Which is the least important? How many of these are you already doing?

Activity 4: Letter Writing

Length: 25 minutes

Curriculum Link: English - Writing

(Slide 10)

It's now time to write a letter to a person in the future. Imagine you're writing a letter to someone in the year 2030. You should include ideas about the future you want for the person you are writing to, and about what needs to happen in the present to make that future a reality. You could write about what you are already doing, or what you want to see adults doing right now. Think about your hopes and dreams for the future.

Explore the example letter and discuss possible approaches to writing your letter. Direct the young people to use the ideas raised in the previous activities to help them.

Who will you write it to? Your future self? A friend or family member? What will be the key messages? As the children start writing their letters prompt them to share their letter with their neighbour. If suitable, read a sentence or paragraph from a student's letter with the class.

Safeguarding Note

If the letters are going to be uploaded to the Great Big Green Week website, or used externally in any other way, the letters should contain no more than two pieces of identifying data (e.g. only signed with first names, and not include any contact information).

What Next?

Length: 5 minutes

(Slide 11)

Your letter is a powerful tool to communicate your hopes and dreams for the future of the world.

As part of the Great Big Green Week we invite schools and youth groups to submit their letters to the Great Big Green Week website. The Climate Coalition will use these letters to show political leaders that ordinary people all over the country want more action on climate change.

[Visit the website in September to find out how.](#)

As well as submitting our letters to the website there's so many other ways we could share what we've done. Discuss with your neighbour what else we could do with our letters.

Could we ...

- Create a physical or virtual display of letters for parents (maybe including recordings of students reading out their letters)
- Take the letters out into the community - a display in a local library, or invite the local press to come and talk to the students about their letters.
- Invite your MP into school to read the letters and talk to the students about the future they want.

Make a plan for what you'll do next.

Additional Resources

(Slide 13)

The Climate Spiral is a creative visualisation of historically observed changes in global temperature. The original version quickly went viral, being seen millions of times on social media. A version was even used in the opening ceremony of the Rio Olympics.

(Slide 14)

The Climate Action Tracker thermometer shows how governments policies and actions put us on track for 2.7°C of warming whilst the most optimistic scenarios mean the world might get 1.8°C warmer. Is the world doing enough?

(Slide 15)

The NOW series is made up of 5 micro-docs which cover a range of topical environmental challenges of 2020 that have been neglected by mainstream media. This includes 'Plastic-Free Periods', 'British Farming', 'Fishermen's Kisses', 'Slow Fashion' and 'Climate Optimism'. Each episode is led by our innovative Generation of Now (the people driving environmental action), and we explore the work of many incredible organisations, charities and companies, including City to Sea, Finisterre, National Farmers Union, Global Optimism and Cornish Plastic Pollution Coalition.

Example Letter 1

Dear Grandad John,

I hope you're well!

You'll be 80 now in 2030 but I'm sure you'll still be playing football with me at the park and riding your bicycle around town.

With the warmer temperatures I hope they fixed your house and made it cool to stop us all overheating. But in the winter we have the heating on so much, it costs so much. I hope they made everything run on cheap and clean renewable energy.

I dream about cycling to school without any cars on the road. Streets with no noise from cars and more sounds of birds. Streets with trees we can eat apples from and streams we can swim in.

I hope the future is a happier place for everyone.

Big Hug,
Tim, 12

Example Letter 2

Dear my best friend Sam,

What will we be doing in 2030? I hope we found time to go on that adventure and explore the great barrier reef before it all disappears. Swimming with all the colourful coral and bright sea life.

I hope they found a way to stop it bleaching and all the fish have come back to life. I hope people eat more sustainably and stop eating all the fish.

I can't wait for incredible plant based food to be the norm in school and everyone to enjoy my favourite dish of chickpea curry with spinach and potatoes.

I can't wait for a future which makes everyone happy and able to live their best life.

All the best

Daisy 16

Example Letter 3

Dear 21 year old Jenny,

I'm writing this letter to you from 2022 a year after the COP26 conference in Glasgow, the world is 1.2°C warmer and we keep experiencing more heat waves and flooding. Governments said they'd do lots but is it enough?

I wonder where you live and what you're doing now. Did you go to university? Did you ever finish that puzzle?

I hope we stopped the world getting warmer and kept temperatures below 1.5°C. I hope the world is a fairer place with everyone having access to clean water and energy.

I hope we made the people in power realise how important it was to create a healthy and green future and save the bees.

I'm mostly eating plants now and only occasionally have meat as a special treat. I feel so much healthier and happier about life.

I cycle most places and really enjoy the freedom of riding everywhere. I hope they build more cycle lanes and make it easier for everyone to cycle.

I want to see more trees, I hope we all start planting more trees.

Love Jenny 13

Future Visioning Activity

Get comfortable, place your feet on the floor, sit up right. If you want to, close your eyes.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Again in and out. Notice the sounds around the room, the rhythm of your breathing.

We're going on a journey through time, to a future world. It's up to your imagination what this world looks like.

We don't know what the future holds but our actions today create tomorrow. On our journey we're travelling to a positive future, a green world full of life, laughter and happiness.

Imagine you fall asleep tonight in your bed, at home ...

Magically, you wake up in 2050, you've not aged but the world has completely changed. Everything that needed to happen to make the world

You get out of bed and go downstairs to breakfast. What do you eat? What music is on the radio? What stories are on the news?

You decide to go for a walk. You step out of your front door. What does the world look like? What can you smell? What can you hear? You start walking. Where do you go? Who do you see?

You soon find yourself on a hill looking out over where you live. What does it look like? How are people getting about? What are people doing?

The sky starts to change and soon your day in this future place is ending. You make your way back to your house and bed and fall asleep again. In your sleep you drift back in time, back to today, knowing you can come back to this future place anytime.

Let yourself come back to this year, this time and this place. Take your time, reconnecting with your breath, with your weight on the chair, hearing the sounds in the room.

When you are ready, open your eyes, stretch your body.