

Lesson Plan: Listening Comprehension: Talk by Climate Activist, Greta Thunberg

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As a **Middle School** and **High School English Language** teacher, you can use a talk about climate change and an associated comprehension quiz to help you teach **listening comprehension**. This lesson plan uses the TED talk, “The disarming case to act right now on climate change” by Climate Activist, Greta Thunberg, for listening comprehension followed by answering **inferential questions**, detecting **emotive undertones** as well as **answering narrow focus questions** about the **vocabulary** used. This lesson plan also includes an exercise of writing a response to the speaker via an informal letter, thereby allowing the students to **articulate their own thoughts and opinions** on the matter of **climate change activism** and to combine those with the information they have gathered.

Thus, the use of this lesson plan allows you to integrate the teaching of a climate science topic with a core topic in **English Language, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or Functional English**.

Use this lesson plan to help your students to:

- Listen carefully and comprehend a spoken text (a talk) in English
- Answer narrow focus as well as broad stroke questions related to the spoken text
- Write a letter to the Climate Activist, Greta Thunberg, in response to her speech

About the Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Discipline: English Language, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or Functional English

Topic(s) in Discipline: Listening Comprehension, Inferential Questions, Emotive Undertones, Vocabulary, Creative Writing, Letter Writing

Climate Topic: Introduction to Climate Change, Climate Activism

Location: Global

Access: Online, Offline

Language(s): English, Transcript available in 34 languages

Approximate Time Required: 45-60 min

1 Contents

1. Reading (10 min)

A brief introduction to the Climate Activist, Greta Thunberg, whose talk will be examined for listening comprehension in this lesson plan.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/47467038>

2. Video (~11 min)

A video talk by Greta Thunberg to use for listening comprehension and follow-up exercises. The transcript for this talk is available in 34 languages.

This can be accessed at:

https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate?language=en

A questionnaire (~25 min) based on the talk for in-class discussion can be found at the end of this lesson plan as separate printable pages.

3. Optional Homework Assignment (25 min)

A suggested homework assignment of writing an informal letter as a response to the talk by Greta Thunberg following the in-class discussion.

A guideline for writing an informal letter can be accessed at:

<https://owlcation.com/academia/Examples-of-how-to-write-informal-letters-in-English-Personal>

4. Suggested questions/assignments for learning evaluation

- What is significant about Greta Thunberg's arguments on climate change?
- Do you also see yourself as a young activist for climate change?
- What do you do, or would like to do, to counter climate change?

2 Step-by-step User Guide

Here is a step-by-step guide to using this lesson plan in the classroom/laboratory. We have suggested these steps as a possible plan of action. You may customize the lesson plan according to your preferences and requirements.

1. Topic introduction and preliminary discussion

Begin with an open discussion in your class based on the following questions:

- What do you think of climate change?
- What do you think of your role as a child/young adult in reducing climate change?
- Do you find yourself having different views than your family or friends about climate change?

Use a news report, '[Greta Thunberg: 16-year-old climate activist inspired international youth movement](#)' by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), to introduce them to Greta Thunberg, the speaker of the recorded TED talk, which is the primary text. Thunberg is one of the most well-known faces in climate activism and is herself of school going age. Discuss her primary achievements, her personal struggles, and her arguments for activism among young adults.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/47467038>

2. Listening comprehension and discussion

Play the video of Greta Thunberg's TEDxStockholm talk titled, '[The disarming case to act right now on climate change](#)'. Allow them to listen to it in its entirety. The recording is about 11 minutes long. Encourage them to listen carefully and try to gather their overall impressions of the speech and speaker, as well as to note down or retain important pieces of information.

This can be accessed at:

https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate?language=en

Then give them a questionnaire (the questionnaire can be found at the end of this lesson plan as separate printable pages), which is based on the video, in print form, to answer on their own as per the instructions for each question.

Play the video recording once again so that they can correct their answers. You may spend some time discussing their responses.

Answer Key:

1. c
2. a
3. d
4. Asperger's, OCD, selective mutism
5. She can only classify things as black and white and is not good at lying
6. 15%
7. IPCC and the Paris Report
8. Media persons, politicians, common people, and some climate scientists
9. Sixth mass extinction, 200 species
10. Rich countries need to cut down on their emissions so that poorer countries can increase their standards of living and build infrastructure already available in rich countries
11. b
12. To show that action on climate change is required now or future generations will blame the current generation for their condition
13. a
14. Because we already know the facts; now it is time to act/ There may not be a future, so what is the point studying for it
15. d

3. Optional Activity or Homework Assignment

Use the link, '[How to Write Informal Letters in English \(With Examples\)](#)' by Owlcation.com, to introduce your students to the basic rules of letter writing (salutations, sign off, and structure). Instruct the students to use this format to write a letter (homework assignment) to Greta Thunberg as a response to her talk.

The guideline for writing an informal letter can be accessed at:

<https://owlcation.com/academia/Examples-of-how-to-write-informal-letters-in-English-Personal>

To complete this assignment, ask the students to think about climate change and how individuals can change the situation. Direct your students to use their impressions of Thunberg's speech, coupled with their own ideas about climate change activism and their view of themselves as activists to form the bulk of a letter that they will address to Greta Thunberg. Instruct the students to include the following points in their letters:

- a. their choice of what they found most important in the talk
- b. how they feel about the issue of climate change
- c. what they do (or wish to do) about climate change

Thus, this letter writing exercise enables two crucial skills to be tested and reinforced: one, the ability to glean and summarize information from an external source, and two: the ability to articulate one's thoughts and opinions on an important issue and connect that to the information obtained.

4. Questions/Assignments

Use the tools and the concepts learned so far to discuss and determine answers to the following questions:

- What is significant about Greta Thunberg's arguments on climate change?
- Do you also see yourself as a young activist for climate change?
- What do you do, or would like to do, to counter climate change?

3 Learning Outcomes

The tools in this lesson plan will enable students to:

- practice listening comprehension from a spoken text in English
- learn to catch overt and implied information in a spoken text
- combine the gleaned information and one's personal opinions and articulate it in writing
- practice writing an informal letter as a response to the speech/spoken text
- integrate a climate science topic with a core topic in English Language

4 Additional Resources

If you or your students would like to explore the topic further, these additional resources will be useful.

1. Reading; 'Greta Thunberg: New beetle named after climate activist'

A news report by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50182815>

2. Reading; 'What is the Paris Agreement?'

By the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

This can be accessed at:

<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement>

3. Reading; 'About the IPCC'

A description of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/about/>

4. Reading; 'The Story of 16 Year Old Climate Activist Greta Thunberg'

A blog by Tabitha Whiting in Medium.com.

This can be accessed at:

<https://medium.com/@tabitha.whiting/greta-thunberg-i-promised-myself-i-was-going-to-do-everything-i-could-to-make-a-difference-cb6fade1904>

5 Credits/Copyrights

All the teaching tools in our collated list are owned by the corresponding creators/authors/organizations as listed on their websites. Please view the individual copyright and ownership details for each tool by following the individual links provided. We have selected and analyzed the tools that align with the overall objective of our project and have provided the corresponding links. We do not claim ownership of or responsibility/liability for any of the listed tools.

1. Reading; 'Greta Thunberg: 16-year-old climate activist inspired international youth movement'

A news report by the [British Broadcasting Corporation \(BBC\)](#).

2. Video; 'The disarming case to act right now on climate change'

A video recording of Greta Thunberg's TEDxStockholm talk, featured by [TED.com](#).

3. Reading; 'How to Write Informal Letters in English (With Examples)'

Published by [Owlcation.com](#).

4. Additional Resources

[BBC](#)

[UNFCC](#)

[IPCC](#)

[Medium.com](#)

Questionnaire:

1. Choose the correct option: What was the earliest definition of climate change that Thunberg heard?

- a. A natural phenomenon
- b. Global warming and pollution
- c. Something humans had created by their way of living
- d. The result of industrialization

2. Choose the correct option: What were some of the earliest instances of advice Thunberg was given to stop climate change?

- a. Turn off lights and recycle paper
- b. Stop radioactive waste from leaking into water
- c. Use less electricity and water
- d. Learn to live with less money

3. Choose the correct option: Which of these best describes her feelings with respect to climate change when she was about 10 years old?

- a. joy
- b. hope
- c. anger
- d. incredulity

4. Fill in the blanks: What illnesses was she diagnosed with as a teenager? _____, _____, and _____

5. Answer in one line: In what way does her inability to understand the adult world affect her personally?

6. Fill in the blank: Rich countries need to reduce emissions by _____ % annually.

7. Fill in the blanks: What important reports and resolutions on climate change does Thunberg refer to? _____ and _____

8. List: What groups of people does she hold to blame the most for the climate crisis?

9. Fill in the blanks: We are in the midst of the _____ mass extinction with about _____ species goes extinct every single day.

10. Answer in one sentence: What does Thunberg mean by “climate justice”?

11. Choose the correct option: What, according to her, is the cause of apathy among common people regarding climate change?

- a. lack of money
- b. lack of facts
- c. lack of infrastructure
- d. lack of will

12. Answer in one sentence: Why does Thunberg invoke her hypothetical children and grandchildren?

13. Which of these is part of Thunberg’s activism:

- a. striking outside the Swedish government
- b. asking her classmates to not attend school
- c. becoming a climate scientist
- d. stopping to eat properly

14. Answer in one line: Why is school education not important to her as far as climate change is concerned?

15. According to her, what do we need more than we need hope?

- a. less extinction
- b. more knowledge
- c. less plastic usage
- d. more action