

Why Teach about Climate Change?

Today, it is easy to notice the politicization of science in public discourse. This is common in conversations related to climate change, and transcends politics to affect the general public's understanding of the topic. One way to overcome this politicization is to shift the way people learn about it, starting with our students here in New York City. Addressing climate change in the classroom can ensure that the next generation is equipped with the skills required to tackle this crisis head on. Teaching about climate change can also instill a sense of stewardship and expose students to various emerging fields of study and industries as they begin to plan for their futures.

Teaching about climate change can engage students in arguably the most important decisions of our time by discussing the most up-to-date scientific research and current local city initiatives. With a potentially scary or intimidating topic like this, the Department of Environmental Protection's module presents information in a way that remains hopeful and productive while avoiding the "doom and gloom" narrative that sometimes dominates these conversations, with a focus on accuracy and science. Through an exploration of climate topics, supported by place-based lessons, we can encourage a deeper connection to New York City, and empower students to make responsible decisions, both big and small. Whether it's the decision to recycle a plastic bottle instead of throwing it in the trash, to start a green team at school, or to choose a career in the environmental field, teachers have the power to greatly influence students and the future of this planet. We hope that these resources help you prepare your students to face the intensified effects of climate change.

This module connects to New York State Learning Standards, including the Next Generation Science Standards and the Amplify curriculum. Please see this module's **Standards Connection Document** for information on how each lesson connects. These are lessons that can be taught in and out of the classroom. Each lesson includes a description, list of objectives, vocabulary, materials, background information, methods, discussion questions, and extensions. Each lesson builds on the one before, so we recommend going through the module in order; however, the lessons can also be used as stand-alone pieces if you prefer to pick and choose lessons relevant to your class based on topics. You might choose to start this module by presenting the **Climate Change Introduction Slides**, which are designed to provide your students with an introduction to climate change in NYC. You'll also find three **Green Jobs in the Field** articles, which highlight the work of local professionals across different sectors, including Mark Chambers, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, Eleanor Blakeslee-Drain, the co-Founder of Berry Brook Farm, and Jennifer McDonnell, NYC DEP's Resource Recovery Program Manager. Finally, be sure to explore the **Climate Resources** document for an extensive overview of the many amazing classroom resources, articles, studies, local exhibits, videos, podcasts, children's books, and opportunities for student action. For a full list of works cited in this module, see the next page.

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