

ACTIVITY PLAN

# Responding to Climate Change



Document

**!** NOTE: Please read “How To Use These Materials” for additional support in teaching and adapting this media literacy activity.

**Grade Level:** High School and College

**Objective Options:**

- Students will critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets in seeking solutions to problems related to a changing climate.
- Students will analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.
- Students will cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of an author’s message.
- Students will differentiate between facts and opinions in political party platforms.

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**Standards Options**

C3 Framework Social Studies Concepts	D2.Civ.6.9-12
	D2.Civ.12.9-12
Common Core ELA Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

**Vocabulary:**

climate change, Paris agreement, energy, renewable, hydraulic fracturing, carbon

**Media Type(s):** website text



*Republican Platform excerpt on climate change, Republican Convention Webpage, 2016*



*Democratic Platform excerpt on climate change, Democratic Convention Webpage, 2016*

### **Preparation and Materials:**

\*All materials can be downloaded from the PLS website <http://www.projectlooksharp.org>

#### **Preparation:**

- Download and review the *How to Use Materials* section associated with this activity.

#### **Materials for the Lesson:**

- Two *Student Handouts*

#### **Additional Support:**

- From the website, view [Media Decoding Examples](#) demonstrating classroom media analysis.
- Download the [Key Questions for Analysis](#) for supporting questions.
- [The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy](#) and the [Do-It-Yourself](#) online guide are both available from the homepage.

**Time:** 30-50 minutes (dependent on number of questions used)

### **Activity Procedures:**

- Select among possible questions on the next page based on your objectives in teaching to social studies content and/or ELA/media literacy skills.
- Use the selected questions to lead students through a constructivist media decoding process of the two handouts with informational text. Background information about the media documents is included at the bottom of the next page. Example student answers are included on the last page.

## **CONNECTIONS**

### **Connections to Project Look Sharp Materials Related to Climate Change & Energy Use**

Media Constructions of Sustainability: Food, Water & Agriculture  
Media Constructions of Sustainability: Finger Lakes  
Media Constructions of Sustainability: Lower Elementary  
Media Constructions of Sustainability: Upper Elementary  
Media Constructions of Sustainability: Middle School  
Media Constructions of Global Warming  
Media Constructions of Chemicals in the Environment  
Media Constructions of Resource Depletion

## **DECODING Q'S**

### **Possible Questions for Media Document Decoding**

*Select among these based on your teaching objectives. Make questions document-based (i.e. According to this image or video...)*

#### **Social Studies**

- What state, national and international laws and regulations are referenced in this platform and what action on these laws is proposed in response to climate and energy concerns?
- What are some recommendations for civil society and economic market solutions to dealing with climate change in this platform?
- What are some possible intended and unintended outcomes should these platform proposals be implemented?

#### **ELA**

- Summarize the positions of each Party platform in each excerpt on climate change.
- What additional information might you need to make an informed decision about these very different proposals to deal with climate change?

#### **Media Literacy**

- Give some examples of facts and opinions in each platform.
- Who might benefit from this message and who might be harmed by it? Is your answer fact or opinion?
- What is my interpretation of this platform and what do I learn about myself from my reaction?

#### **Follow up Evidence Questions & Comments**

- Where do you see that?
- Say more about that
- How do you know that?
- What makes you say that?
- Does anyone have a different idea?

## **BACKGROUND & SOURCES**

These excerpts comprise small portions of the total platforms for each Party. Here are some statistics demonstrating the relative importance each Party has given to climate change in their platform statements. In the 66 page Republican platform there are nine instances of the word "climate" related to climate change and two paragraphs devoted specifically to climate change. In the 51 pages Democratic platform there are 43 instances of the word "climate" related to climate change and three pages devoted specifically to climate change in sections titled "Global Climate Leadership" and "Securing Environmental and Climate Justice."

"The 2016 Republican Party Platform." GOP. Republican National Committee, pp. 20 & 22. 2016. Web. 19 Oct. 2016.

"The Democratic Platform - 2016 Democratic National Convention." 2016 Democratic National Convention. pp. 27-28. Web. 19 Oct. 2016.

**POSSIBLE ANSWERS**

**Social Studies**

**Question:** What state, national and international laws and regulations are referenced in this platform and what action on these laws is proposed in response to climate and energy concerns?

**Possible Answers: Republican:** State – Regulation of hydraulic fracturing, methane emissions and horizontal drilling will be respected. National – Nuclear Waste Policy Act will be implemented to store nuclear waste. International accords – The Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement must be ratified by the Senate. **Democrat:** State – Hydraulic fracturing will be prohibited where states oppose it. National – Allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate hydraulic fracturing. International – Fulfill the Paris agreement to keep global temperature increases to “well below” two degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

**ELA**

**Question:** Summarize the positions of each Party platform in each excerpt on climate change.

**Possible Answers: Republican:** The Republican Party platform suggests that climate change is not a pressing issue. It opposes regulation of carbon emissions from fossil fuels, a major source of the greenhouse gases that heat the earth. It supports increased energy production “of all forms of energy that are marketable in a free economy.”

**Democratic:** The Democratic Party platform stresses the profound threat that climate change poses for future generations. It calls for “extensive regulation of fossil fuel emissions to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and they support “getting 50 percent of our electricity from clean energy sources within a decade.”

**Media Literacy**

**Question:** Give some examples of facts and opinions in each platform.

**Possible Answers: Republican:** Fact – Quote from the 1994 Foreign Relations Authorization Act; the Department of Defense goal of generating 25% of its electricity from renewables by 2025; federal judge ruling that the BLM can't regulate hydraulic fracturing. Opinion – “Climate change is far from this nation’s most pressing national security issue;” “We firmly believe environmental problems are best solved by giving incentives for human ingenuity and the development of new technologies;” “Energy exports will create high paying jobs throughout the United States, reduce our nation’s trade deficit, grow our economy, and boost the energy security of our allies and trading partners.”

**Democrat:** Fact – 15 of the 16 hottest years on record have occurred this century; Donald Trump has called climate change a “hoax”; California and the West have suffered years of brutal drought. Alaska has been scorched by wildfire. New York has been battered by superstorms, and Texas swamped by flash floods. Opinion – “We cannot leave our children a planet that has been profoundly damaged;” “Democrats reject the notion that we have to choose between protecting our planet and creating good-paying jobs. We can and we will do both;” “These efforts will create millions of new jobs and save families and businesses money on their monthly energy bills.”