

## CLIMATE JUSTICE, HOPE AND ACTION

### Chris Rankin

Friends of the Earth (2021) *Climate Justice, Hope and Action*, resources for Key Stage 3, London: Friends of the Earth, available: <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate/ks3-resources-climate-justice-hope-and-action> (accessed 14 February 2022).

*Climate Justice, Hope and Action* is a set of free, online, Key Stage 3 (KS3) teaching resources developed by Friends of the Earth. The resources aim to provide a pedagogical framework for teaching global issues as well as a wide range of practical teaching ideas aimed at empowering students while developing their critical thinking. The underpinning approach to this resource is active hope; a life philosophy developed and articulated by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (2012). In their book the authors identify three stories of our time. Story one, 'Business as Usual', is told by the majority of policymakers and corporate leaders of our time and involves development through unhindered economic growth. Story two, 'The Great Unravelling', is one of environmental pessimism with subplots of resource depletion, climate change, growing inequalities and the mass extinction of species. Story three, 'The Great Turning', outlines the beginning of a new revolution where unfettered industrial growth is slowly replaced by 'a life sustaining society committed to the recovery of the world' (Macy and Johnstone, 2012: 26). This resource sits firmly within the third story and places pupils in the centre of the narrative as light bearers of active hope and participants in a quiet revolution.

The resource is organised into six topic areas covering subjects such as Art, Drama, English, Geography; History, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE); Religious Studies; Science; and Technology. Each topic area has lesson plans for different subjects, PowerPoints and printable resources and is mapped to the KS3 curriculum in England and Northern Ireland. Teachers have the option of delivering one-off lessons to complement their existing schemes, using a range of lessons as part of a cross curricular unit or picking and choosing those lessons suitable for a whole school

environmental week. Before getting stuck into the issues those delivering the lessons are encouraged to introduce pupils to a range of grounding activities, recognising the challenge of eco-anxiety and preparing pupils to engage without feeling overwhelmed with guilt or fear.

The ‘Celebrating People and Planet’ section focuses on using Geography and Art to develop gratitude and a sense of wonder for what the world offers. The lessons’ ideas are interactive and engaging and encourage pupils to see the best in the world and how they can appreciate it. I particularly liked the Art lesson plan and how it introduces pupils to the artists’ view of the world before encouraging them to create their own masterpiece.

The ‘Climate Changing’ section takes four different subject approaches to the climate change debate including getting pupils to write news reports, a critical thinking reflection on the relationship between knowledge and power, and a writing response looking at case studies of how individual action has been significant in History. While some of these activities would be challenging to some pupils there is a real emphasis throughout the resource in getting pupils to engage with the issues rather than giving them easy answers. In some cases, possible pupil responses are differentiated into bronze, silver and gold.

The ‘Digging Deeper’ section provides resources for Drama and Technology as well as Geography, and encourages pupils to think critically about the stuff we consume, the impact our lifestyle has on the planet and whether consuming more makes us happier or more miserable. These activities seem particularly relevant for pupils at KS3 as they start to manage their own money and make decisions on how to spend it.

The ‘Switching Track’ section focuses on renewable energy and gives pupils the opportunity to use the knowledge they develop in Science and Geography to develop a vision for the future where economic development and environmental stewardship are part of the same outcome. While the concept of renewable energy is already fairly well resourced, the approach is often Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-based with an

emphasis on technology and the career opportunities available. These lesson plans take a more personal approach looking at case studies and encouraging a critical engagement with the issues rather than expecting pupils to embrace renewable technologies with blanket approval.

The final section, ‘Be the Change’, introduces pupils to a model of how change happens and who the agents of change are locally and globally before empowering pupils to be the change they want to see. Although this section is mapped to PSHE, the lesson plan could easily be adapted to become a plenary for the end of any of the other lessons.

This resource has been thoughtfully put together to act as a road map for pupil engagement. It is set within a sound framework and puts pupil wellbeing at the forefront of the climate conversation. The critical approach is obvious throughout and pupils are encouraged to engage fully and think deeply. The move away from shame and fear towards gratitude and wonder as key motivators for change is also refreshing and marks the beginning of a new approach where pupils engage with key local and global issues not because they have to but because they want to. This resource deserves a wide audience and thoughtful delivery in the classroom as teachers work with pupils to become agents of change for a more sustainable world.

## References

Macy, J and Johnstone, C (2012) *Active Hope*, Novato, California: New World Library.

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