

Global Leadership and Climate Change

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SUBJECT(S): International Business, Management

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

Students will begin by discussing their knowledge on climate change and sustainability efforts. Then they will read the article, “Climate Change: Troubleshooting in China and Beyond” from the Knowledge@Wharton website and watch an accompanying video. The article and video highlight one of the biggest issues facing global leadership; the issue of climate change in a rapidly developing world. Students will work in groups to develop their own strategies to combat this issue.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- International Business, II. The Global Business Environment
- International Business, IV. Global Business Ethics and Social Responsibility
- Management, V. Ethics And Social Responsibility
- International Business, VII. International Management

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Why British Youth Say ‘Brexit Is a Disaster for Our Country’”](#)
- [“What’s Your Climate Career Ambition?”](#)
- [“Volkswagen’s Smog-filled Scandal”](#)
- [“Venezuela’s Eugenia Carmona on the ‘Complete Chaos’ Afflicting Her Country”](#)
- [“The Role of Business in ‘the Biggest Issue We Face as a Planet’”](#)

- “The Low-carbon Economy Is a High Global Priority”
- “The Greatest Risks Facing Our World Economy”
- “The Global Climate Strike and How Business Is Responding in the Face of Activism”
- “The Extreme Truths About Global Climate Change”
- “Take 5: The Economic Impact of the Coronavirus”
- “Public Policy: Tackling Today’s Challenges”
- “Educator Toolkit: Sustainability and Recommerce”
- “Creating Tasty, New Foods that Help Sustain Our Planet”
- “Climate Change Causes a Crisis in the Coffee Market”
- “Can Renewable Energy Solve the Global Climate Change Challenge?”
- “5 Ways the World Will Look Different in 2030”
- “10 Truths from Leaders in the U.S. Climate Movement”

Common Core Standard(s): Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, Knowledge of Language, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Technology and Digital Media, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, Collaboration and Comprehension, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Objectives/Purposes: To have students devise a strategy that leverages their global leadership skills to work together to solve one of the world’s most pressing issues facing the energy economy. Please note that this lesson plan was updated with more recent content in 2018.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: “Climate Change: Troubleshooting in China and Beyond”

Video Glossary: [NGO](#), [Renewable Energy](#)

Other Resources/Materials:

- Planet Supreme Master TV.com, Planet-Earth, Our Loving Home, Global Cities: United Leadership On Climate Change (http://suprememastertv.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=pe&wr_id=138&goto_url=&sca=&sfl=wr_subject%7C%7Cwr_content&stx=global+cities&sop=and&page=1#v)

Activity:

1. (5 mins) Begin this lesson by leading a discussion of all of the things students know about climate change and sustainability movements in their community.

2. (20 mins) Have students read the article, “Climate Change: Troubleshooting in China and Beyond.” As they read, have them answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Then have students work in groups to discuss their answers. Then discuss answers as a class.
 - What are some of the problems the international community is having solving climate change?
 - Competing national interests, shortages of technological know-how, cross-border disagreements about who should pay for environmental degradation
 - Who are the world’s two largest carbon emission producers?
 - China and the U.S.
 - Consider this: “Many goods consumed in the U.S. are produced in China, so shouldn’t it also bear some responsibility for China’s environmental degradation?”
 - What are some reasons to be hopeful that the issue of climate change may take a positive turn in both China and the U.S.?
 - On the U.S. side, there is greater friendliness toward international law today than in the last decade and the country’s new generation of green vigilantes is pushing environmental agendas more aggressively than their forebears. In China, the government has acknowledged the economic and social risks of environmental degradation, and although environmental law is weak, it has been improving rapidly from a low baseline. It also has helped that the Chinese government recently named sustainable development as one of its core interests, helping to galvanize various factions, from local governments to inter-government organizations.
 - What are some legal problems facing climate change?
 - Currently at an international level, there’s little that is being done legally to confront thorny climate change issues, noted Wang Mingyue, professor of law and executive director of Tsinghua’s Center of Environmental Law. Global laws look good on paper, but fall short on implementation, particularly since countries often have competing or even contradictory interests in the laws themselves.
 - The situation is only marginally better at national levels, Wang added. For proof, look no further than China. There has been a slew of environmental laws in China as the country’s leaders have slowly become more aware of the need for greater environmental protection. But the laws often have more bark than bite, said Wang. One key reason is that environmental awareness in China is still low, leading to weak enforcement of these laws. According to Wang, this

should be a call to action for a host of stakeholders — including government agencies, politicians and corporate executives — to increase their involvement in environmental issues.

- What are some of the benefits of a carbon tax in China?
 - Currently, 70% of China’s energy comes from coal. A carbon tax could raise the price of coal and make other, more eco-friendly types of fuel more attractive, ultimately lowering carbon emissions, according to Cao. What’s more, “simulations show that the impact [of such a tax] on the overall GDP would be small.” The money raised from such a tax could be invested in research and development and education. As she reckoned, NGOs can improve environmental education at a grassroots level, while acting as policy watchdogs and incubators for new ideas.
 - NGOs in the U.S. have stressed the role they have played as the public’s voice in environmental protection. They bring together the best scientists, policy analysts and other experts, raise important but uncomfortable issues, and play a significant role in pushing for legislation and filing lawsuits to strengthen enforcement.

- What achievements have U.S. NGOs made?

Tying It All Together: (11-20 mins) Watch the video, “Global Cities: United Leadership On Climate Change.” Discuss the video and article. Make sure students understand how the problem permeates on a global level. If there is time, allow students to get into groups to discuss the video and strategies for global cooperation on this issue that incorporate principles of global leadership.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: Think of ways that you can be more sustainable in your daily life. Can you switch from water bottles to reusable containers? Do you recycle? Can you take public transportation in your area?

You might also have students review some of the following WGYP articles as extended reading on globalization and leadership: “[China, the World Stage and Your Role as a Global Citizen](#)” and “[Understanding Global Leadership in the Year of the Protester](#).”

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: For background, I recommend reviewing the Wharton Global Youth Program articles “The Greatest Risks Facing Our World Economy,” “A Senator, a Snowball and Global Climate Change,” and “Can Renewable Energy Solve the Global

Climate Change Challenge?” that are linked at the top of the plan before doing a deeper dive into climate change. All the linked WGYP articles come at climate change from different angles and many provide student insight into the issue. It is important to engage students from the beginning. The opening activity is useful to do this and for students to share if they participate in sustainable programs or if they see a need to. From there, the reading is a nice transition into the video and the topic will introduce students to subjects that affect the world on a global scale and the difficulties in cooperation at that level.

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