

Lesson Plan

# Climate Change: International Agreements

## Length

one 45-minute period

## Grade Level

High School

## Learning Objectives

Students will understand that there are significant challenges faced by negotiators of international climate agreements.

[How Are International Agreements Helping Fight Global Warming?](#)



[How the Paris Agreement Helps Stop Climate Change](#)



[Handout](#)



## Homework

- Read/watch "How Are International Agreements Helping Fight Global Warming?"
- Watch "How the Paris Agreement Helps Stop Climate Change"
- Complete the homework handout

## Class

- (10 minutes) Place students in small groups. Have them work together to use last night's reading to fill out the graphic organizer in the class handout comparing and contrasting the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.
- (15 minutes) In their groups, have students consider the discussion questions on the handout.
  - Why was the Paris Agreement designed this way?
  - In what ways did the Paris Agreement improve on the Kyoto Protocol?
  - What issues does the Paris Agreement not fully address?
  - How might you adjust the Paris Agreement to better address these issues?
- (10 minutes) Have students share out their answers to the discussion questions
- (10 minutes) Have students begin brainstorming the homework assignment (below)

## Homeowork

Have students write an answer to the following prompt:

*Design a new climate agreement, one that builds on and improves upon the Paris agreement. Be sure to address:*

- *What new features should it include?*

- *How will it balance the interests of all countries?*
- *How will it get around the problem of free riders?*

## Optional Extension

Over the next few days conduct the Global Climate Change Policy simulation, which is available in both a [U.S. National Security Council \(NSC\) version](#) and a [UN Security Council version](#).

## Vocabulary

greenhouse gas

any gas that absorbs heat in the atmosphere and re-emits it back toward Earth, causing a warming effect.

emissions

refers to the amount of greenhouse gases an entity, such as a country or company, produces.

multilateral

undertaken among three or more entities, usually countries. The term frequently describes organizations such as the United Nations (UN).

Kyoto Protocol

a 1997 agreement reached in Kyoto, Japan, that amended the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Paris Agreement

a nearly universal international agreement reached in 2015 that requires signatories to offer concrete emissions reductions pledges, establishes rules to monitor their performance against those pledges, and sets up a process to review and increase the ambition of the pledges over time. The Paris Agreement's goal is to limit global warming by 2 degrees Celsius (about 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial temperatures.

nationally determined contributions

plans submitted by countries party to the Paris Agreement that outline their proposed emissions reductions and adaptation strategies. NDCs can vary widely in their length, specific proposals, and format.

fossil fuel

a hydrocarbon energy source such as oil, coal, or natural gas.