

Welcome

Welcome to the Climate Innovation Challenge (CIC)! CIC is a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education program developed by nonprofit Climate Advocates Voces Unidas (CAVU). CAVU inspires local solutions to the climate crisis via visual storytelling and youth education programs.

CIC was born out of the understanding that the climate crisis is the defining challenge for today's youth, impacting their environment, health, culture, and future job prospects. The CIC program includes a free six-lesson science and storytelling curriculum that cultivates student leaders who can think innovatively and communicate effectively about adapting to our changing climate.

We challenge students to create locally-led, culturally-responsive solutions that build resilience in their own communities. Students are asked to follow a scientific process to complete their projects, and they are challenged to use their creative minds to communicate these designs in exciting and engaging ways. After students go through this process, they create a short (4-minute max) video to showcase their proposed solutions. Students can submit their short films to our annual competition, where cash prizes are awarded for outstanding student work.

At its core, the CIC is an undertaking in storytelling. We better understand the impacts on people and how to protect their environment if we listen to their stories. Stories are compelling, and they connect us together in a world that has become too divisive.

Once finished, participating students will have created a video presenting their concept that they can easily share with peers, public and private sector businesses, community leaders, environmental stewards, and more.

We encourage students to “think globally and adapt locally,” fostering solutions-driven thinking for their own communities.

Curriculum Roadmap

Lesson 1: Find Your Entry Point

Students explore climate science and personal storytelling, connecting global issues to their own lives and communities.

- ◆ [Climate Change Overview](#) video and discussion with [Video Note Catcher](#)
- ◆ Introduction to Storytelling and CIC competition with video examples
- ◆ Finding Your Entry Point with [Mind Mapping](#)
- ◆ Supplemental Resource: [Freewrite for “I am From” Poem](#) based on [“I Am From: Kid’s Voices” poems](#)

Outcome: Students discover their unique entry point to climate action.

Standards: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3](#)

Lesson 2: Mitigation & Adaptation Strategies

Students break down real-world solutions and local challenges to uncover the strategies that make a difference.

- Climate Change Solutions Brainstorming
- Introduction to [Adaptation & Mitigation Strategies](#) with Venn Diagram Activity
- Analyze Solutions in Winning CIC Videos
- Group work connecting to [Climate Change in My Community](#)
- Supplemental resources: [Adaptation & Mitigation Strategies Kahoot!](#), [Adaptation Strategies Jigsaw](#), [Seasonal Rounds and ecological calendars](#), Indigenous-Led Solutions

Outcome: Students identify key climate issues in their communities and explore targeted solutions.

Standards: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4](#)

Lesson 3: Brainstorming Climate Change Solutions

Students learn that climate change affects some people more than others and work together to come up with local solutions. They start planning a project that connects their ideas and interests to helping their community.

- Introduce Vocabulary: Proportionate vs Disproportionate
- Who is Impacted Most? Brainstorm
- Building Empathy for [Climate Change in My Community](#)
- Mind Mapping with a [Climate Change Solutions Flower](#)
- Identifying [My Entry Point](#)

Outcome: Students select a meaningful project idea.

Standards: [MS ESS-3-2: Earth and Human Activity](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L](#)

Lesson 4: Reputable Research

Students level up their media literacy, learning to spot reliable sources, cite research properly, and back up their ideas with evidence.

- Introduction to Research Skills
- Ask Strong Research Questions using the [CIC Project Research Guide](#)
- Identify credible sources using the [CRAAP Test](#)
- Conduct Research on the [CIC Project Research Guide](#)
- Citing Sources using MLA or APA Citations

Outcome: Students gather high-quality, credible research to support their projects.

Standards: [MS ESS-3-2: Earth and Human Activity](#), [MS-ESS3-3: Earth and Human Activity](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8](#)

Lesson 5: Climate Messaging & Project Design

With the research in place, students become creative directors by writing scripts, building storyboards, and designing shot lists to turn their ideas into impactful short films.

- Persuasive Storytelling Techniques [Using Ethos, Logos, and Pathos](#)
- Develop [Climate Action Plan](#)
- Pre-Production - [CIC Video Script](#) or [Storyboard](#)

Outcome: Students develop a compelling Climate Action Plan and start pre-producing their videos.

Standards: [MS ESS-3: Earth & Human Activity](#), [MS ETS1-1: Engineering Design](#), [MS ETS1-2: Engineering Design](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.7](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#)

Lesson 6: Video Production

The cameras roll as students bring their projects to life. Using tools like Canva, they create short films that showcase their climate solutions and their voices.

- Analyze Winning CIC Videos using [CIC Judging Criteria Analysis](#)
- Take a Test Drive with Canva Pro
- Production Tips for Final Student Videos
- Video Creation using Canva Pro
- Analyze Final Products using the [CIC Judging Criteria Analysis](#)
- [Submission Instructions](#) for Teachers
- [Next Steps](#) for More Opportunities for Climate Action

Outcome: Students are now ready to submit their final videos to the annual CIC video competition, with chances to win prizes and be featured in the CIC Student Showcase, if desired.

Standards: [MS-ESS3-3: Earth and Human Activity](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.1](#)

Orientation

Curriculum

In the Climate Innovation Challenge (CIC), students from around the world create solutions that build climate resilience in their own communities and present their ideas in short videos. We believe in starting where you are, in students' physical location, cultural location, world view location, and as individuals with the strengths and interests each student brings to the table.

The CIC curriculum is made up of six thematic lessons. Please note that some lessons may take longer depending on which videos you choose to view with your class. We've listed running times so that you can time your lessons appropriately. Lesson 6 is more extensive and may take up to four or five 60-minute class periods to complete. Each lesson consists of the following sections:

- ◆ Learning Outcomes
- ◆ Essential Question
- ◆ Notes to Teacher
- ◆ Classroom Discussion and Activities
- ◆ NGSS and ELA Standards Met
- ◆ Lesson Handouts and Additional Resources

The flexible curriculum allows teachers to spend one hour on a lesson or several days on topics. The curriculum is designed to meet Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core standards for middle school students. Built-in flexibility allows it to serve elementary through high school students. Lessons include:

- ◆ Lesson 1 - Find Your Entry Point
- ◆ Lesson 2 - Mitigation & Adaptation Strategies
- ◆ Lesson 3 - Brainstorming Climate Solutions
- ◆ Lesson 4 - Reputable Research
- ◆ Lesson 5 - Climate Messaging & Project Design
- ◆ Lesson 6 - Video Production

CAVU's Commitment to the Land and Original Peoples

Because we believe in starting out where you are, we seek to work in solidarity with the communities who have been most deeply impacted by the systems responsible for creating climate injustice. CAVU acknowledges that our organization's work is situated within a long history of climate resilience work, and we honor that legacy. The original peoples of lands across the world have understood and acted in ways that center care for the land, and we see it as a core responsibility to use our platform to amplify these long-standing relationships between Native peoples and their lands in North America, Africa, Asia, and across the world. As a result, you will see examples from and references to Indigenous communities throughout the curriculum.

That said, we encourage teachers and students to shape their approach to the curriculum based on their own sets of relationships with the land and their own world views. While we have a long way to go before our collective work has made the impacts we are hoping for, we remain strong in our belief that we must begin where we are, with what we can touch. Our commitment to our local and global communities is at the heart of our work, and we are grateful you have trusted us with the opportunity to work, learn, and relate with you and your students.

Resources for Navigating the Heaviness of Climate Change

For educators and students alike, focusing on climate change can come with a multitude of emotions. Climate change is a global issue, and much of the conversations we see are problem-focused and not solution-focused. It's completely normal to have moments of feeling overwhelmed, but there are resources that can help remind us that we are not alone in this experience and refocus us on climate solutions. Below we have a list of resources to help manage eco-anxiety:

- ◆ [Talking to Your Child About Climate Change](#)
- ◆ [7 Resources to Help Cope with Eco-Anxiety](#)

We have found that creating a brave, trustworthy space for students to engage in is a foundational element of this process. We hope these resources can be of use for creating that space. Please use as much or as little as you feel appropriate for your classroom, and always know that we are here to help if you have any questions.

Project Format

CAVU staff members are available to work with students and teachers to create engaging videos to showcase student ideas. Often, students will use presentation software as the foundation for creating a project. While we accept student work in a variety of file formats, we encourage the use of Canva Pro as a means for producing CIC projects. Educators can register as a verified Canva educator [here](#). You and your students should be given access to Canva Pro **for FREE** once verified. Click [here](#) for a video tutorial on how to incorporate Canva Pro for educators in your classroom. Be sure to register early on in the process so that you can gain access to the software and set up your online classroom before students start to use the program. Here are some suggestions if your students would like to use presentation software for their project.

- ◆ [Canva Pro - Tutorial](#) - **Recommended!**
- ◆ [Capcut - Tutorial](#)
- ◆ [Clipchamp - Tutorial](#)

Project Submission & Media Release

To submit to the Climate Innovation Challenge, minors (under 18 years of age) are required to have a media release form signed by a parent or guardian. This can electronically or via a printed PDF that would need to be scanned and returned to CAVU staff.

- ◆ [CAVU Electronic media release \(Spanish Version\)](#)
- ◆ [CAVU PDF media release \(Spanish Version\)](#)

When a project is completed, students are encouraged to upload their video to the Climate Innovation Challenge on FilmFreeway. Student work will be evaluated for the Showcase on their ability to present a sound solution and tell an engaging visual story about their solution. All projects must be pre-recorded and submitted as a standard video file. For more information about how to submit to this year's competition, visit us online at www.cavu.org.

Judging Process

Once projects are submitted, a preliminary panel of judges will evaluate submissions that meet the project criteria via the [CIC Judging Rubric](#). Judges will look for projects that meet the project criteria and excel in many of the categories included in the rubric. Top scoring projects will be moved onto Round 2 judging to determine which projects will receive our top awards.

Student Showcase & Prizes

Award winning entries will be honored in CAVU's annual Climate Innovation Challenge Student Showcase. This virtual event is held at the end of the school year to highlight students' achievements and present awards. Visit cavu.org to learn more about this year's showcase and prizes. Winning videos will be listed publicly on [CAVU's YouTube channel](#).

Challenge Project Criteria

For challenge participants, the following criteria serve as a baseline for what is expected to qualify for the CIC Student Showcase. Participants can work individually or in groups. The size of the group is unlimited.

For strong projects we recommend that they:

1. Be pre-recorded and submitted as a standard video file. (DV, MPEG-4, MP4, MPEG-2, MOV, and M4V are all acceptable formats). - **Mandatory**
2. Not exceed 4 minutes in length.- **Mandatory**
3. Display a climate change solution.
4. Be subtitled in English.
5. Not use copyrighted music, graphics or materials that may cause them to be flagged on streaming services.
6. Cite at least three sources in a format chosen by the educator.
7. Contain an opening title containing all participants' first names, grades, instructor names (if applicable), and school/institution name.
8. NOT include their last names on their submissions for privacy reasons. CAVU accepts no responsibility or liability for participants' failure to adhere to this guideline.

Please note that this is a video competition. Essays, research papers, and slide presentations will not be accepted.