

STUDENT VOICES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

"This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you. You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. Yet I am one of the lucky ones. People are suffering."

– *Greta Thunberg, 16, Youth Climate Activist*

"The protection of nature, forests, and ecosystems is the responsibility of everyone. What happens will ultimately affect us all. We want the Amazon to be valued for what it is, not just an economic resource. We are standing up for our lives, yours, the entire world and for the lives of future generations!" – *Patricia Gualinga, Kichwa young leader from the Ecuadorian Amazon*

"We want to keep fighting and crying out to the world that these environments ... need to be protected, and it is a responsibility not just of Indigenous Peoples but of the entire world. I fight for this from my place in the world, and you need to help us fight from your place in the world."

– *Patricia Gualinga, Kichwa young leader from the Ecuadorian Amazon*

"My father taught me to see the magic in everything. Growing up, magic was in the sunrise and the rainfall. In every expression of life, no matter how small. ... that was ... valuable wisdom that shaped who I was as a young boy. It gave me the perspective to see what was behind the dysfunction of our society, of our broken world, our dying ecosystems and corrupt leaders" – *Xiuhtezcatl, 19, climate activist*

"We have reached a point in history when we have the technical capacities to solve poverty, malnutrition, inequality and of course global warming. The deciding factors for whether we take advantage of our potential will be our activism and our international unity" – *Eyal, 18, Argentinian youth activist and member of Jóvenes Por El Clima Argentina*

"We had no power in creating the systems that are destroying our world and futures – and yet we are and will be paying the biggest price for the older generations' recklessness." – *Jamie Margolin, 17, youth activist and organizer*

"You have to listen to the science and the facts because climate change isn't an opinion." – *Alexandria, 14, youth activist, founder of Earth Uprising and organizer of FridaysForFuture*

"I fight not so much for myself but for my family back home in Colombia who are experiencing the effects of fracking, and for the activists back in Colombia who are putting everything on the line to protect the Amazon" – *Jamie Margolin, 17, first-generation daughter of a Colombian immigrant and the co-founder of the climate action organization Zero Hour*

"When you uplift Latinx voices in the climate movement ... you must also fight for Indigenous rights, including the biodiversity that those communities protect." – *Jamie Margolin, 17, first-generation daughter of a Colombian immigrant and the co-founder of the climate action organization Zero Hour*

"I am here today because I believe that age doesn't matter and sure we can't vote, but we still have a voice The earth is really messed up. We should have fixed it a while ago I get really worried about our future because I keep seeing bunch of ... posts ... that say ... by 2030 that ... we can't do anything anymore. And I keep thinking why don't people listen, when things are right in front of their face." – *Isabella, NYC Student and Climate Strike participant*

"Flint is not unique. ... There are dozens of Flints across the country. Cases of environmental racism are on the rise and disproportionately affect communities of people of color and indigenous communities. ... [the climate movement] need[s] to address issues of environmental racism because it is a huge part in the climate movement yet it is treated by most as a nonissue." – *Mari Copenly, 12, youth advocate for clean water in her hometown of Flint Michigan*

"We don't call water a resource; we call it a sacred element," ... "The relationship we have with everything that Earth offers, it's about reciprocity. That's the only way we are going to learn how to shift our culture from an extraction culture to a balanced and harmonious culture with the land." – *Xiye Bastida, 17, Otomi-Toltec from Mexico, now based in New York*

"The community right now in India is being affected by the climate crisis That's why a lot of Indians are migrating to other places. Our family is known for farming, but in India you can't farm with droughts and all this extreme weather happening. So my family came here for better opportunities." – *Kevin J. Patel, 18, climate activist and founder of the soon-to-launch One Up Action, a climate action organization to help youth become leaders*

"I recall spending most of my middle school years in and out of the hospital, with my parents always scared for my life I now have to live with an irregular heartbeat for the rest of my life because of the things that I was eating and the chemicals and smog that I was taking in. I see a lot of students in the LA area also being affected with asthma and heart problems." – *Kevin J. Patel, 18, climate activist and founder of the soon-to-launch One Up Action, a climate action organization to help youth become leaders*

"The first ones to get affected are Indigenous communities who are displaced because of infrastructure and disrespect of the land. Whose spaces are they choosing to contaminate and build infrastructure in the first place?" – *Xiye Bastida, 17, Otomi-Toltec from Mexico, based in New York*

"We want people to know, just because [climate change] is not going to affect you in the future doesn't mean it's not going to affect ours ... and people just need to prioritize people and our planet over money."
– *Jackson, 16, Climate Strike participant*

"Creating more space for those with marginalized identities in the climate space is necessary for inclusive solutions" – *Isra Hirsi, 16, co-executive director of the US Youth Climate Strike*

"Those are parts of my identity that intersect with a lot of different existing oppressions. A lot of the countries and groups of people that are putting in a lot of climate work will disproportionately feel the effects of climate change And they're not even the people that created this mess in the first place." – *Elsa Mengistu, 18, human rights advocate and climate organizer with This Is Zero Hour*

[Art is] "an easy way to get a message across, because people don't like to listen to what others are saying. But if you look at a visual piece, hear music, or experience a piece of artwork, they contain symbols and messages that are universal to most people." – *Nadia Nazar, 17, Indian American artist and youth climate activist*

"Adults take note of this message: Young people like myself should not have to take on this burden, this is supposed to be your job but now we have to go on hunger strikes, meet with government officials, and start a global movement for you to even notice." – *Jerome Foster II, 16, climate activist, author, National Geographic Explorer, Smithsonian Ambassador, and Founder and Editor in Chief of The Climate Reporter*

"Our great-great-great grandchildren, or something like that, might not be a thing because of global warming and fossil fuels." – *Duilin, 11, Climate Strike participant*

"At this point, you can't undo what's been done. And I think, we see these things on the news and we do small things because they're easier. Like when the whole plastic straw thing became really popular. Like, metal straw [in a] plastic cup. That's so symbolic of our national attitude toward climate change, like I'm doing this because it's easy and convenient, or nothing at all. But when it comes to real change, that's too hard" – *Eva, 16, Climate Strike participant*

"Democracy, the whole idea, to quote Patti Smith, 'people have the power.' That's my motivation for today." – *Eva, 16, Climate Strike participant*

"I think it's very important that we save the Earth, that we cut down on a lot of waste, because at the end of the day we all live here. If we don't take care of it, then we're not going to be here for that much longer." – *Chris, 17, Climate Strike participant*

"We came because we have a class called 'Climate Change' and we started to realize how big of an impact climate change has on our planet. We wanted to speak out about it and show that we care about the planet." – *Tachmia, 17, Climate Strike participant*

"This is the first step to take, raising your voice together and making it known that people feel this way about climate change So that the people in the positions to solve the problem will know that it's serious. That it's so serious that all of these people will band together in one area and just walk as one." – *Adrian, 17, Climate Strike participant*

"I think that if we raise enough awareness, people with really big power will be able to recognize that this is such a big issue and they'll be able to change it. With everyone banding together, we can be like, hey, we need to fix this ... This won't impact only us. This will impact future generations, so really now is the time to fight for change." – *Jack, 15, Climate Strike participant*

"We're starting younger than [our parents] ever knew they could, so they aren't used to people standing up like this. We want to show them that kids in our generation can do this now." – *Molly, 13, Climate Strike participant*

"We're here because we're a generation with a loud voice who isn't just going to stand and take what they've given us, which is not sustainable. We're here to make a difference, and make people hear us. We're not the same, we're a new generation who will vote them out." – *Isabel, 15, Climate Strike participant*

"We need policy change and support from our politicians to ... get a Green New Deal or something going. For older generations, it's not like we're trying to sound crazy. We just need policies that are helping our environment, not harming it, and holding businesses responsible for what they're doing." – *Shealya, 21, Climate Strike participant*

"People are like, 'Why are you going to fight now? It's not going to do anything. You should be getting your education instead of skipping school.' But how the climate is now, if we all go extinct, we're not going to have any education. So we need to stick up now before things actually do go under." – *Lycianne, 14, Climate Strike participant*

"[We're out here] because we can. [Our parents] didn't get to do this kind of stuff, let alone they weren't really told any of this, so we have the privilege of knowing everything that goes on in our society and it's just real fun to speak up. Especially because we're really young." – *Talia, 13, Climate Strike participant*

"Acknowledge the fact that we have to take action now ... Rather than wait for people that we elect to take action, show people that don't believe that this is really happening, and that we actually can do something about it." – *Krystine, 17, Climate Strike participant*

"I'm out here today because we're learning about climate change in class and I think it's important that everybody's aware of what they're doing. Because if people don't start acting now, then in a couple years it'll be so bad that even if you act it will be a lot harder to fix it than it is now." – *Emmy, 11, Climate Strike participant*

"We have to fight for climate change, and we need to do it now before anything else happens, 'cause we're probably going to die. Just saying! I mean I'm being real honest right here, ... we need to do something about it, we need to fight. As young people, we have a voice and we need to use our voices. ... and we have to do it right now." – *Janine, 15, Climate Strike participant*

"If [our parents] don't make a change, we will. We'll make a future for our kids, and our kid's kids." – *Leslie, 13, Climate Strike participant*

"We're just trying to spread awareness about how climate change has a really big effect on our lives. The world is slowly dying, and this is the only world that we have, so we have to take care of it." – *Alem, 14, Climate Strike participant*

"We really didn't ask for this. We didn't cause it, we're trying to solve it. One of my motivating factors is, if I ever have children I want them to see nature and beauty. I don't want them to have to do what we're doing right now." – *Elena, 15, Climate Strike participant*

"My people are an Afro indigenous community from the island of St. Vincent in the Caribbean. Despite overwhelming adversity, we organized our community and emancipated ourselves from colonization. My ancestors did this to protect the children to come. I am one of those children. But the struggle continues for me and my people. Again we are being pushed from the lands, which we settled, the land which my family has inhabited for generations. That land will be under water in a few decades if we continue on the path we're on." – *Vic Barrett, Garifuna Afro-Indigenous Climate Activist from St. Vincent in the Caribbean*

"I was born into a world in which my future is being stolen from me, born into a world in which my past already was, born into a world where everything that I am is slipping into the sea, born into a world where my people face extinction. Indigenous lands all over our planet are being flooded, poisoned and destroyed. " – *Vic Barrett, Garifuna Afro-Indigenous Climate Activist from St. Vincent in the Caribbean*

"We're here to write a new story. ... A story in which our constitutional right to a safe climate is recognized by the highest courts, a story in which the most vulnerable people are given the greatest protections, a story in which indigenous peoples are empowered to protect their homelands. In 2030 the history books will show that faced with eminent destruction, ... young people around the world rose up to demand immediate action." – *Vic Barrett, Garifuna Afro-Indigenous Climate Activist from St. Vincent in the Caribbean*

"[We're striking so that] we can stop fossil fuels and automobiles, like planes and cars. So that we can stop climate change." – *Elia, 10, Climate Strike participant*

"Many people don't think water is alive or has a spirit. My people believe this to be true. ... We believe our water is sacred because we are born of water." – *Autumn Peltier, 15, First Nations Canadian youth activist for water conservation and indigenous rights*

"We haven't lived our lives yet, we haven't gotten our jobs yet, we haven't financially thrived yet, we haven't changed the world yet. So we need a world to actually change." – *Johann, 14, Climate Strike participant*

"And for twice as long as I have been alive on this planet we have known about the crisis. For just as long the wealthy and the powerful have profited of ... pollution have lied to millions of people about the science, have choked our democracy with their big oil dollars and stolen our futures." – *Varshini Prakash, the Sunrise Movement*

"Today this generation is taking over. Our days of waiting for justice, our days of waiting for action, our days of waiting to be heard are over. ... Today we are putting our feet into the streets and we are not stopping until we get it done." – *Varshini Prakash, the Sunrise Movement*

"I'm tired of climate inaction. I'm tired of our world leaders ignoring what's really happening to our earth and profiting of the extinction of our planet Prioritizing profits over lives, instead of lives over profit." – *Daphne Frias, 21 year old student from West Harlem, New York*

"I'll be traveling and striking in a different city, or maybe even a different country, every Friday We must grow this movement. We must get real action." – *Alexandria Villaseñor, 14, climate activist who founded Earth Uprising and an organizer with the school climate strike group Fridays for Future*

"Young people of color, like myself, are affected by climate change most I should be one of the people who gets to come up with solutions." – *Nyiesha Mallett, 18, Afro Caribbean climate activist from New York*

"November is known as fire season And with all the fires that's been happening around here, I can't ignore something that's happening right in front of me." – *Mariana Rodriguez, 17, San Francisco youth climate marcher/striker*

"We as a generation have gotten really activated because I think we realize that if we don't step up and do something, no one is going to," – *Katie Eder, 19, Executive Director of Future Coalition and creator of the US Youth Climate Strike Coalition*

"The Artic National Wildlife Refuge is known as “the place where life begins [to the Gwich’in Nation]. It’s sacred. It’s our well-being, our way of life, and part of our identity” – *Quannah Chasinghorse, 17, Lakota climate activist*

"A lot of our communities and villages on the coast, because of erosion, are literally falling apart Communities are being evacuated from their own homes and ancestral lands because of climate change." – *Quannah Chasinghorse, 17, Lakota climate activist*

"Being out there on the land is what connects us to each other. It is healing for us is when we all go out together on the land. It’s what grounds us and connects us, knowing that generations of our ancestors have walked across those lands. " – *Quannah Chasinghorse, 17, Lakota climate activist*

"I live in north Minneapolis which is predominantly an African American community; we have a lot of factories situated next to us so we get a lot of pollution from fossil fuels Climate change has affected my parents’ home in Somalia because of droughts and food shortages there; this work I’m doing relates to them as well. Something that gives me a lot of hope is seeing so many different people fighting for this common issue and realizing that I am not alone." – *Juwaria Jama, 15, Minneapolis based climate activist*