



The Arboretum for Educators

Resources for Teachers, Students, and Families

May 2025

Climate Change



At the moment Boston is experiencing a magnificent spring: plenty of rain (on weekends), and lots of hot sunshine during the week. Sure, there have been quite a few wind gusts on occasion, but the flowers are blooming, and trees are leafing out nicely. Is this normal? Is this warmer or colder than average? Are we experiencing climate or weather? What can we compare this to? [Weather Spark](#) is a place to start looking at data and begin to see some trends.

The topic of climate change is complex and not obvious to observe from day to day. We need context and history to see trends and make informed conclusions. This is even more of a challenge when trying to teach students, simply because they do not have the years of experience that adults have, and there needs to be sensitivity to the emotional responses this topic can bring. First, students need solid grounding in the science of weather and climate. That is best done in the earlier grades. Then students can tackle the trends that prove ours is a changing climate. Below are some resources that can help educators in this work.

Grades PreK-2:

Young students can be introduced to climate change through simple, hands-on and relatable concepts like weather, seasons, animal habitats and the impact of human actions on the environment. Helping students to make a difference through simple actions around the school and home helps them build agency and resiliency. Climate Generation has a [Healthy Habitats: Climate Change Action for K-2 curriculum](#) that is free, in addition to a comprehensive Resource Library of materials.

Grades 3-5:

Little Green Thumbs produces [Plants, People and Climate Change](#), a journey of climate change education through the world of plants. Their videos are engaging, and curriculum is easy to use alongside traditional science topics. [Climate Kids from NASA](#) frames their content using Big Questions, with related videos, games and activities.

Middle School:

Stanford University's School of Sustainability has a [middle school](#) (and high school) curriculum available that is comprehensive and includes lessons on mitigation strategies. The introduction lessons are followed by earth and energy lessons, while also delving into the science consensus and climate debate issues.

High School:

Closer to Boston, [MIT's Climate Action Through Education \(CATE\) curriculum](#) materials are open source, solutions-focused and designed to allow high school teachers, no matter their discipline, to address climate change as teacher teams.

Attend the 2025 Summer Institute



The People Behind the Trees

August 11-14, 9am-3pm

The Arnold Arboretum

FREE

Daily outdoor science-based lessons and experiences will connect student work to the real-world work that happens when maintaining a significant world-class plant collection. Hear from experts in their fields today and become familiar with historical expert naturalists and scientists through children's biographies.

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