



# Environmental Activism and Awareness-Raising Kit

Young people have more power to create change than we know.

I used to think I was too young to change the world. But a series of events unfolded while I was still in high school that led me to start an international movement called Zero Hour. Now, it organizes large student mobilizations for climate action all over the world.

I learned by doing it myself. I am a kid who does not come from any fame, wealth, or power, but I discovered that I could make a big impact anyway—which means so can YOU.

Welcome to the youth activist family!

**Jamie Margolin**



For the curious

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# What you can do

There are steps all of us can take to help reduce the buildup of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. These range from small acts like turning off lights, to bigger lifestyle changes, or working to raise awareness. These changes might not feel like much, but together, the actions of millions of people can have an effect.

**Growing green** – You can “live green” by making conscious choices that help cut down the amount of GHGs that enter the atmosphere.

- If you can, plant trees in your garden or as part of a scheme in your neighborhood. If you can't, support projects planting trees around the world.
- Buy locally grown produce wherever possible—imported foods will have a larger carbon footprint.
- Buy paper products that are grown or gathered from sustainably managed forests.
- If you can, grow your own fruits and vegetables.
- Try to only eat produce that is in season—this cuts down on the transportation of out-of-season produce from around the world.
- Eat more vegetables and plant-based foods and less meat.
- Get a compost bin—this cuts down on methane emissions from rotting food waste.

**Reduce, reuse, recycle** – GHGs are emitted when sourcing raw materials for products, as well as manufacturing, transporting, and disposing of them.

- Choose things that last, so you buy fewer of them.
- Instead of buying new clothes, shop in vintage and secondhand stores.
- Carry reusable cups and water bottles with you.
- Choose products and packaging that can be recycled wherever possible.
- If an item is broken, don't throw it away—try to fix it.



# What you can do

**Getting involved** – To make a meaningful impact on climate change governments and big industries must take action, too. There are many ways you can get involved to demand change at this higher level.

- Write to local and national politicians to let them know that climate change policies are a priority for you. Look on the next page in this kit for letter-writing tips!
- Find your local climate change group, or start one in your area.
- Join or set up a climate change action group in your school.

**Saving energy** – There are lots of ways to save energy around the home, and when out and about. Many also save you money, too!

- Use energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances, unplug anything that drains electricity when not in use, and turn out the lights when you leave a room.
- Add layers in the winter instead of turning up the heat, and try to use fans instead of air conditioning in the summer.
- Consider how much water you use and try to use it efficiently.
- Walk or ride a bike to get around your local area if you can.
- For longer journeys, use public transport instead of getting in the car and driving.

**Staying informed** – It's important to understand the science and issues around climate change, be informed about ideas and initiatives, and find out your own impact on the planet.

- Work out your carbon footprint, and that of your family, with an online carbon calculator. You can find one here: [footprint.wwf.org.uk](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk).
- If there are emissions you cannot reduce, consider offsetting (compensating for) them. One way this can be done is by paying carbon-offset organizations that support renewable energy or tree-planting projects.
- Study science in school to help you understand the ideas behind climate change. This will help you explain the issues to others and make the right decisions for yourself.
- Follow current affairs—news reports will keep you informed about how climate change is affecting life across the world, and the latest action that is being taken to combat the effects.





# Tips for Writing an Effective Letter to Your Elected Official

**Consider whether you will handwrite or type up your letter.** There are pros and cons to both: Handwriting a letter will make your message seem more personal, while using a collaboration tool like Google Docs allows others to comment on your letter draft and apply their own changes directly.

**Decide what you will write about in your letter.** Start by considering what you are passionate about. Then, research some recent issues or legislation related to that topic. Your research could point to a local problem in your community, or something that affects the entire country.

**Remember that your letter can be supportive.** If asking someone to not do something seems a bit intimidating, start your letter-writing campaign with a note of support to an elected official, thanking them for helping to pass favorable legislation and encouraging them to do so again in the future.

**Find the best recipient for your letter.** Depending on the subject of your message, this might range from one of the U.S. Senators for your state, to the U.S. House representative for your district, to a member of the U.S. Cabinet or the Supreme Court. Use the next page to keep track of their contact information.

**Look up sample letters.** If you're not sure where to begin, try finding an example online. The American Library Association has one here: <https://bit.ly/3iYTg4y>

**Encourage friends and classmates to join your letter-writing campaign.** The more messages an elected official receives, the more likely they are to take action on an issue, so if you're able, recruit others and ask them to write their own letters.

**Sign your letter and send it off.** Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address so the recipient can get in touch with you.

**Be proud of yourself.** Remember, officials are elected to help strengthen and improve your community. They have a duty to hear your concerns, and to let you know how they will address them. You've just done a great thing by helping bring an issue to their attention!





# Elected Official Address Book

## U.S. President

Phone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: 1-202-456-1111

Switchboard: 1-202-456-1414

Mailing Address:

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20500

## U.S. Supreme Court

Phone number: 1-202-479-3000

Mailing Address:

Supreme Court of the United States

One First Street, NE

Washington, DC 20543

## U.S. Congress

Senator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Senator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Governor

Governor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## State Legislators

State Assembly: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State Senator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Board of Elections

Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mayor

Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Council Member

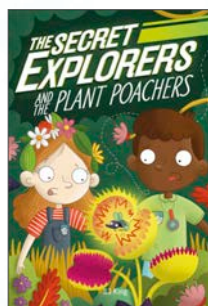
Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



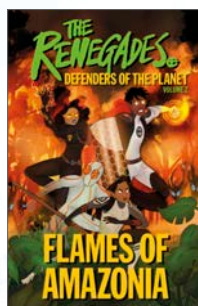
# Recommended Reading List



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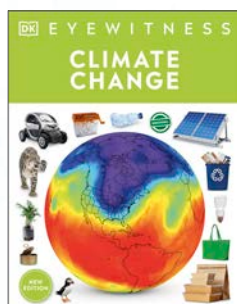
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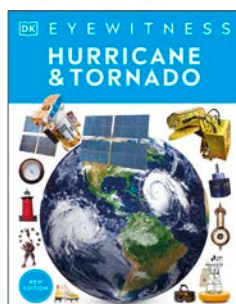
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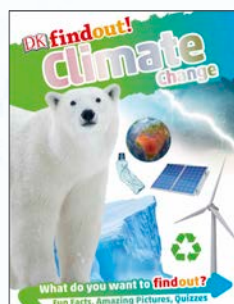
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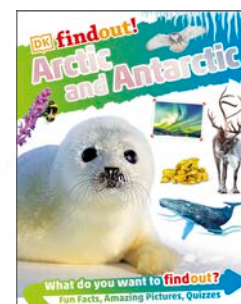
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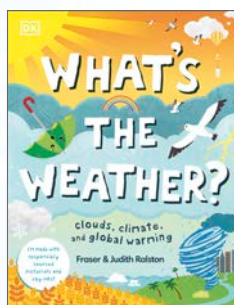
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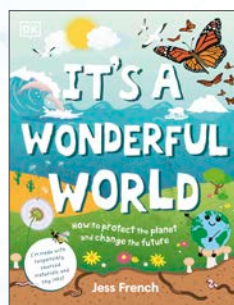
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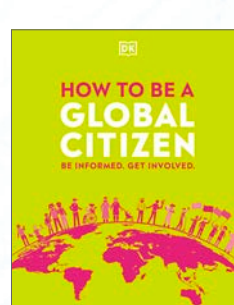
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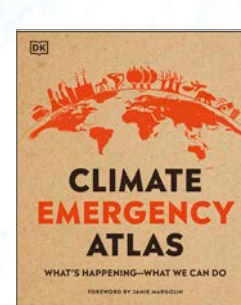
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As you start on your journey to making the world a better place, don't be afraid to fail. The important thing is to keep striving to make a difference. You are part of a generation with the power to change things. Your voice counts and the future is yours to shape.



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