

Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment	✓	Part of a regional Careers Hub initiative for Careers Leaders
Curriculum Provision	✓	Year 9 English: Transactional Writing about 'Activism'
Employer Partnerships	✓	Local initiative for developing sustainable communities
Reflective Young People	✓	Engaging young people in a real and relevant issue
Informed Career Choices	✓	Encouraging individual responsibilities and future actions

Climate Change expert gives real purpose to a Year 9 transactional writing task

Year 9 English students at St Gregory's in Bath are normally presented with a transactional writing task about 'Activism'. The Head of English explained: *'As this is language-based, it is a very dry subject and students struggle to engage or see relevance. They also find writing and delivering a speech scary – but they need to repeat this for their GCSE. If they could prepare a great speech now, they could (in some cases) keep it for this and just work on delivery.'* Her ideal outcome for the project was *'for students to feel more confident in writing a speech, using the required elements.'*

Prompted by the visit of Greta Thunberg to Bristol, the school did consider an approach to the protest group 'Extinction Rebellion', but it was felt to be too contentious. So, students were presented with a recent report from the OECD showing that teenagers have a strong awareness of climate issues but feel unable to make a difference: *'What can be done to help young people mobilise their knowledge to take action?'*

An approach to a local organisation campaigning for action on climate and environment issues – 'Transition Bath' – resulted in a response from the chair: *'We are more than happy to respond positively to any efforts by young people to further the cause of arresting climate change. Feel free to call me or send me pieces to comment on.'*

Students prepared short speeches, in writing, knowing that half a dozen pieces of their work would be sent to the chair at Transition Bath. He responded with an informal video message giving specific feedback for individual students and general comments about getting involved in campaigning.

Benefits for the Students

'The response to my speech was really good - it helps that a person with such knowledge can have a look at my work. I am really pleased he took the time to give me feedback.'

'I think what Peter says is very true and that he really highlights the struggles against climate change. I hope technology helps us in the future, but we need to do something. Thank you for taking time to read my little speech.'

'It was very useful to hear another opinion. Now I can take that feedback as well to improve my writing.'

Benefits for the School

The project presented a real current issue, in contrast to existing classroom resources, which asked them to imagine campaigning about a school issue or to choose from a list of topics.

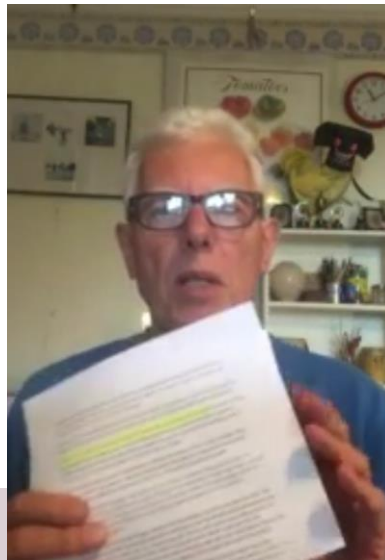
'One student was moved to tears, as Peter had taken the time to look at her speech. It meant so much to her, as it was someone who was an expert in the field (and not me as her teacher!).'

Benefits for the Employer

Transition Bath is an organisation that is concerned about climate change and aims to build a sustainable future by harnessing the power of the local community in the face of declining natural resources and increasing carbon emissions.

At the end of his video feedback, the chair shared information about the Avon Schools Eco network – a student-led initiative – and left them with a word of encouragement: *'Well done for taking this step. You need to take more steps, but you've started, and that's brilliant.'*

Instead of an imaginary task about 'Activism', Year 9 students wrote speeches on the topic of Climate Change to develop their transactional writing skills, as part of English studies. The Chair from a local initiative about developing sustainable communities provided expert feedback.



Term 4 Cold Task

- You're going to begin your activist career by starting small and thinking about something in school you can change!
- You will write the text of an imaginary speech that you will deliver to staff and students in assembly to change their mind about a school issue.

Imagine this: a world with catastrophic disasters. A world where humans are at war with Mother Nature. A world where the cycle of life can no longer exist because of oil. Right now that is our future set before us, there is so much evidence that we need to change our ways, stop the mass production of fossil fuels, and find renewable, environmentally safe energy. Do you want the future generations after us to suffer the irreversible damage we have caused?

Others would argue that climate change doesn't exist. They believe this is just another peak of heat which has happened before, but they are wrong – our world is heating up, our world is not thriving. Our world will no longer exist in harmony with nature. Everyone, not just children, need to be educated. Species are dying right before our eyes. This change is not something to be ignored. The world which I have described will become the new normal if we do not make a dramatic difference to our planet.

It is not just nature who will suffer. It is us next, our lives and livelihoods are being damaged. In hot countries families are already struggling to find clean water. If they are suffering now, we will too. By 2050 our climate will have risen by 3.5 degrees, animals will be forced to adapt to a new way of life – if that is even possible. Our voices need to be heard, our world needs to be kept safe, our world needs to be better.

We are the future – we will win!

We need to do better, as we have been left with a broken world. As a generation we need to overcome and defeat this world-wide problem that has been going on for years. We are the cause. In 2020 a study showed that 62% of the UK would recycle or stop polluting if they had the right facilities. Now, what can we do? We can push our school into adding stricter rules to do with pollution, adding more eco-friendly options or more recycling bins. As adults of Gen Z we can make a petition to push the government into fining people who pollute or litter, or asking the government to add more facilities and bins. We can also protest to minimise the use of non-bio-degradable plastics, oils and fuels.

Would you want to help sick or injured animals that are slowly dying? Exactly! So do this and play your part by personally recycling or throwing away your litter. 25% of the UK are starting to experience breathing problems because of mass pollution – another reason why we must do something now about this!

Some people may disagree and say we should just live our life and if we ruin the world that's OK. But they don't care about the things we have discovered in this world. We can't let our discoveries go to waste. In conclusion, we need to keep fighting and not give up, not give in – and make it happen!