

Tips for Running World Climate for Youth

By Andrew Jones, Climate Interactive

Over the past ten years, I have run World Climate many times for young people aged 10 – 17, with groups from 20 – 120. Here are my tips:

1. **Just do it.** World Climate works so well with this age group – young people just turn on and engage. They understand inherently the tensions around fairness and quickly learn the dynamics.
2. **Set up for engaging gameplay.** Put least developed country delegates on the floor. Creating inequity brings powerful and necessary tension to the game. I usually make the older kids play the least developed, and the younger kids; most developed.
3. **Reward the powerful.** Add to the tension by giving the most developed delegates a simple snack or some recognition. One time, when I didn't have food, I found a trophy on a shelf in the room and gave it to the developed countries to thank them for supporting the UN.
4. **Bring the drama.** Start the session casual – no scarf, no tie, no jacket. Act warm and friendly. After the set-up return fully in character as a UN leader. You can do this with a simple costume and UN gravitas. One time, a young delegate asked me when I was Ban Ki Moon, "Are you a different guy?"
5. **Minimize the introduction.** Ten minutes maximum. Five is better. Really. No introduction to climate science. No introduction to the UN. They won't be listening until the game starts anyway.
6. **Teach when they are confused.** Lecture on climate science, the UN, global equity, and energy solutions as needed, during game play. For example, when emissions fall a lot but temperatures do not, use this paradox to talk about the "carbon bathtub."
7. **Adapt for big groups.** For greater than 40 students and a short amount of time, use the three-region version and abandon the quest for team consensus on pledges. Ask delegates to turn to one or two others and talk about, for example, what year emissions should peak. After a few minutes, ask for 3-4 people to call out a year. Restate them and choose a rough average as the group's pledge. Note: This works for adults, too.
8. **Adapt for limited time.** If you have less than an hour, follow the tips above for big groups. And don't use paper role descriptions. Tell them who they are in the introduction.
9. **Modify negotiations.** With a big group or limited time, ask the teams to send 5-10 delegates to visit the other groups to tell them what they should be doing. Welcome the messiness that ensues for five minutes and then end the negotiation period.
10. **End with hope.** Ask participants to take off their roles and in your closing speech, as yourself, not the Secretary-General, talk about why we should be hopeful.

Other resources that might be helpful include a vocabulary list that a middle school teacher in NH, USA put together for middle school students to use to prepare: <https://www.climateinteractive.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Vocabulary-to-help-prepare-for-World-Climate.pdf> as well as their reflection on the simulation: <https://www.climateinteractive.org/blog/7th-graders-become-un-climate-negotiators-for-a-day/>