

# Lesson Plan: Analyzing News Stories on Climate Change



Grade Level

6-12

Subject

Social Studies / Science / English

Duration

One 60-minute class period plus optional homework

Content Standards

Middle School:

SS.7.CG.2.9, SC.8.N.4.1, ELA.6.R.2.1-4, ELA.7.R.2.1-4, ELA.8.R.2.1-4

High School:

SC.912.N.1.4, SC.912.N.4.1, SS.912.A.7.12, ELA.9.R.2.1-4, ELA.10.R.2.1,  
ELA.11.R.2.1, ELA.12.R.2.1-4

Objective

Students will critically analyze a news story mentioning climate change to identify bias and logical fallacies, check the credentials of the author, and verify original sources of data.

Materials Needed:

- Computers/tablets with internet access
- Printed or digital copies of a selected news article on climate change
- Analysis worksheet (provided below)

Lesson Outline:

## 1. Introduction

- Discussion: Begin with a brief discussion on the importance of critical thinking in consuming news. Explain how bias, logical fallacies, and the credibility of sources can affect interpretation, especially on important issues like climate change.
  - Discussion Prompts:
    - What is critical thinking, and why is it important when reading news articles?
    - Can you think of a time when you read something that turned out to be biased or incorrect? How did you find out?
    - How can identifying bias and logical fallacies help us better understand complex issues like climate change?

## 2. Distribute Articles

- Provide each student (or pair/group of students) with a selected news article on climate change. Ensure the article is from a reputable source but has a clear perspective for analysis.
  - Activity:
    - Briefly introduce the article and explain that students will analyze it for bias, logical fallacies, author credentials, and original data sources. A fictitious practice article is provided, but teachers may select relevant passages for the class or guide the students in choosing an appropriate article for analysis.

## 3. Analysis Activity

- Read and Annotate:
  - Instruct students to read the article carefully, highlighting key points, claims, data, and quotes.
  - Discussion Prompts:
    - What is the main argument of the article?
    - Which parts of the article seem most convincing, and why?
- Use Online Resources:
  - Encourage students to use online resources to check the credentials of the author and verify original data sources.
  - Steps:
    - Use search engines to find more information about the author's background and qualifications.
    - Locate original studies or reports mentioned in the article using academic databases or official websites.
  - Discussion Prompts:
    - What did you find about the author's background? Do they have the expertise to speak on this topic?
    - Were you able to find the original sources of data mentioned in the article? How do they compare to what the article says?
- Worksheet Completion:
  - Students will use the provided worksheet to document their analysis.

## 4. Class Discussion

- Share Findings:
  - Reconvene as a class and have some groups/students share their analysis and observations.
  - Discussion Prompts:
    - What biases did you identify in the article? Provide specific examples.
    - Which logical fallacies did you find, and how do they affect the article's argument?
    - How credible did you find the author and the original sources of data?
  - Discuss the different biases, logical fallacies, and the credibility of the information presented in the article.
    - Follow-up Prompts:
      - Do you think the article provided a balanced view of the issue? Why or why not?
      - How might the article's biases and logical fallacies impact a reader's understanding of climate change?

## 5. Reflection and Conclusion

- Summarize Learning:
  - Summarize the key points discussed during the class.
    - Discussion Prompts:
      - Why is it important to think critically about news articles, especially those about climate change?
      - How can you use the skills you learned today in everyday life?
  - Emphasize the importance of using critical thinking skills when consuming news, especially on complex topics like climate change.

## Homework Assignment:

Assign students to find another news article on climate change and conduct a similar analysis using the skills they learned in class. They should be prepared to share their findings in the next class.

- Homework Prompts:
  - Find an article with a different perspective on climate change.
  - Analyze the article for bias, logical fallacies, author credentials, and original data sources.
- Write a brief summary of your findings and be ready to discuss them.

## Accommodations:

### Instructional Accommodations:

- Simplified Instructions:
  - Provide clear, step-by-step written and verbal instructions.
  - Use visual aids and charts to outline the analysis process.
- Pre-teach Vocabulary:
  - Before starting the lesson, introduce and explain key terms such as bias, logical fallacies, and credibility.

### Materials Accommodations:

- Alternative Formats:
  - Offer articles in different formats, such as audio recordings or larger print.
  - Provide digital versions that can be read with screen readers.
- Simplified Texts:
  - Provide simplified versions of the article or additional resources that explain the content in an easier-to-understand way.

### Assessment Accommodations:

- Modified Worksheets:
  - Use the simplified worksheet provided with fewer questions and guided language.
  - Allow students to complete the worksheet with bullet points instead of full sentences.
- Oral Responses:
  - Allow students to provide oral rather than written responses, either one-on-one with the teacher or recorded.

### Collaborative Learning:

- Peer Support:
  - Pair students with IEPs with supportive peers who can assist them with reading and analysis.
- Small Groups:
  - Work in smaller groups to provide more direct support and guidance from the teacher or an aide.

### Technology Accommodations:

- Assistive Technology:
  - Use text-to-speech software for students who struggle with reading.
  - Provide access to online dictionaries and thesauruses to help with difficult words.
- Graphic Organizers:
  - Use digital graphic organizers to help students visually map out their analysis and thoughts.