

# New Jersey Student Learning Standards English Language Arts: Climate Change Companion Guide

Office of Standards, Division of Teaching and Learning Services  
 New Jersey Department of Education

## Introduction

This document contains select 2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards – English Language Arts (NJSLS-ELA) and a corresponding climate change example. The standards and examples are organized by grade for kindergarten through grades 11–12; please note that examples accompany the same standards throughout the grade bands K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–12 for ease of scaffolding. This tool is designed to help readers quickly locate climate change examples. Please note that these examples are featured in green text.

This document serves as a resource for school districts seeking to integrate climate change education into their curricula. While not exhaustive, it offers a foundation for understanding and action; districts are encouraged to explore additional measures and initiatives that align with local contexts, ensuring a dynamic and adaptable response to the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change.

## A Note on the Inclusion of Climate Change Opportunities icon of hand holding a plant

With the adoption of the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS), New Jersey became the first state in the nation to include climate change education across content areas. The goal of inclusion of climate change education implementation is to foster generations of New Jersey students that can analyze, question, interpret, think independently, and bring critical deduction to fulfill and to lead in jobs created by burgeoning industries of the future green economy.

Revisions to the NJSLS-English language arts reflect the means in which humans connect through the modes of communication (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), by leveraging new technologies, media, and platforms to engage with, and learn from others. Students are using more communication tools than ever before, creating increasing opportunities for students around the world to share and problem-solve together. The ability for students to critically understand the arguments and messages shared by others and learn to effectively communicate is paramount. Informed and reasoned discussion about climate change and other important issues that affect lives daily is an essential part of participating in the public exchange of ideas. New Jersey is developing generations of students that can create, communicate, and lead in the future green economy.

Accompanying the 2023 NJSLS in ELA and Mathematics will be resources that identify standards that may be leveraged in support of instruction. The symbol for climate change through the standards (highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.) notes opportunities to integrate specific examples of climate change education provided by additional age-appropriate resources. These additional materials are designed to support educators in creating interdisciplinary units focused on authentic learning experiences integrating a range of perspectives.

## **Kindergarten**

* RI.MF.K.6.With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.   
  Climate Change Example: In a science unit, students may look at images of the impact(s) humans have on land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment and describe the relationship between the illustrations and the text in which they appear.
* W.IW.K.2.Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts to convey ideas.highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may draw, dictate, and compose text that explains which plants and animals they see in their local areas, and where and when they see those plants and animals.
* SL.PE.K.1.Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may use information from texts that they have read and written to discuss their observations of how people impact the local environment.

1. Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
2. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.

## **First Grade**

* RI.MF.1.6. With prompting and support, use text features (e.g., diagrams, tables, animations) to describe key ideas. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.   
  Climate Change Example: In a science unit, students may look at data that indicates the impacts humans have on land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment and describe the key ideas that are presented in the data.
* W.IW.1.2. With prompts and support, write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may compose text that explains how some plants and animals are able to adapt to changes within their environments.

1. Introduce a topic.
2. Develop the topic with facts or other information and examples related to the topic.
3. Provide a conclusion.

* SL.PE.1.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may discuss possible solutions to local and global problems caused by severe weather with peers and adults.

1. Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
2. Build on others’ talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
3. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

**Second Grade**

* RI.MF.2.6. Explain how specific illustrations and images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may read an informational text on volcanoes and describe how illustrations help them understand what happens during a volcanic eruption.
* W.IW.2.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information and convey ideas and information. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may compose informative/explanatory texts about how local plants and animals adapt to the changing weather in different seasons.
* SL.PE.2.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion). highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may ask and answer questions of an expert speaker on the plants and animals in the local environment in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen their understanding of topics or issues.

1. Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their explicit comments to the remarks of others.
2. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.

**Third Grade**

* RI.CT.3.8. Compare and contrast the elements of informational texts regarding the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may compare and contrast key details from two informational text sources that describe climate change in different regions of the world.
* W.AW.3.1. Write opinion texts to present an idea with reasons and information. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may use information from texts they have read to state their opinions on the most important environmental issue that affects their community, the state, the nation, or the world.

1. Introduce an opinion clearly.
2. Support the opinion with facts, definitions, reasons text evidence, or other information and examples related to the topic.
3. Link ideas within sections of information using transition words and phrases (e.g., then, because, also, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
4. Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.

* SL.PI.3.4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.   
  Climate Change Example: Students may present information about climate change in a region of the world, using supporting evidence gathered from relevant texts.

**Fourth Grade**

* RI.CT.4.8. Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes, topics and patterns of events in informational texts from authors of different cultures. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.   
  Climate Change Example: Students may compare and contrast informational texts that chronicle weather events and patterns in regions of the world outside of the United States.
* W.AW.4.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may use information from texts they have read to support their opinions on the use of energy and fuels derived from natural resources.

1. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
2. Provide reasons that are supported by facts from texts and/or other sources.
3. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).
4. Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.

* SL.PI.4.4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may present multiple, evidence-based solutions to reduce the impact that climate change has on humans.

**Fifth Grade**

* RI.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors’ approaches across two or more informational texts within the same genre or about texts on the same or similar topics. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may compare and contrast texts about models that describe the effect that climate change has on ecosystems.
* W.AW.5.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example: Students may use information from texts they have read to state their opinions on the merits of solutions to problems caused when the climate changes and the types of plants and animals in that region change.

1. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
2. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details from text(s), quote directly from text when appropriate.
3. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically).
4. Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.

* SL.PI.5.4. Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may present their solution to a simple design problem related to climate change that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on material, time, or cost.

**Sixth Grade**

* RI.AA.6.7. Trace the development of and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may evaluate supporting evidence in competing design solutions which claim to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem services.
* W.SE.6.6. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may assess the credibility of evidence and sources while constructing an argument related to how changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.
* SL.II.6.2.Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may interpret and present data points for how the motions and complex interactions of air masses result in changes in weather conditions.

**Seventh Grade**

* RI.AA.7.7. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may evaluate claims and evidence of factors that have caused climate change over the past century.
* W.SE.7.6. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may determine the credibility of multiple digital and print data sources that can be used as supporting evidence in constructing a model for describing the cycling of water through Earth’s systems driven by energy from the sun and the force of gravity.
* SL.II.7.2. Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may present data on the impacts that climate change has on New Jersey to inform the development of related technologies.

**Eighth Grade**

* RI.AA.8.7. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may evaluate claims and evidence of factors that have caused climate change over the past century.
* W.SE.8.6. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may gather relevant, credible evidence to construct an argument related to increases in human population and per-capita consumption of scarce natural resources, caused by climate change, and their impact on Earth’s systems.
* SL.II.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.Climate Change Example:Students may analyze an argument on climate change (documentary, advertisement, speech, etc.), taking into account the source of the argument, its credibility, and the motives behind its presentation.

**Ninth and Tenth Grades**

* RI.CT.9–10.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) seminal and informational text of historical and scientific significance, including how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may analyze scientific and related informational texts for evidence-based explanations for how the availability of natural resources, occurrence of natural hazards, and changes in climate have influenced human activity.
* W.WR.9–10.5. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may use relevant scientific and related informational texts to research the local effects of climate change on the local economy.
* SL.UM.9–10.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.  
  Climate Change Example:Students may use multiple forms of digital media to explain why distribution and sustainability of natural resources might be a source of conflict in the United States and in other nations.

**Eleventh and Twelfth Grades**

* RI.CT.11–12.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and scientific significance for their purposes, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history and texts proposing scientific or technical advancements. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit. Climate Change Example:Students may analyze scientific and related informational texts for evidence-based explanations for how the availability of natural resources, occurrence of natural hazards, and changes in climate have influenced human activity.
* W.WR.11–12.5. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.   
  Climate Change Example:Students may research, analyze, and critique the role of the petroleum industry in world politics, the global economy, and global climate change.
* SL.UM.11–12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. highlighted as an opportunity for inclusion in an interdisciplinary climate change unit.   
  Climate Change Example:Students may utilize digital platforms to collaborate with students in other countries to develop possible solutions to environmental justice issues resulting from climate change.