



## The Children Will Lead the Way

Valentina Ossaa, Student Climate Action  
New York

### ☀ Call to Action

**Speak up for what you believe in.**

**Find a way to get involved--join a protest or a climate change organization; or start your own project.**

**Find a way to do something!**

**Follow Valentina on Twitter @valentinao11 & Bethany on Instagram: @bethanyarrowmusic**

**Valentina went to her first protest when she was only five years old, and she has been involved as an activist in a number of issues ever since.**

When she was in middle school, she organized a collective school walk-out on the day of the global school strike (March 15, 2019). But she didn't stop there: since then she has spoken at a number of climate protests, and even at a demonstration in front of the White House in Washington.

### ☀ Values

- Activism
- Dissent
- Commitment
- Dedication
- Environmentalism

### ☀ Lessons Learned

**Be brave and follow the example of those who came before you.**

**Be fearless and lead the way!**

**Youth can be an asset. When confronted with a problem no one knows how to solve, sometimes young eyes can see what others have been trained to ignore.**

### ☀ Language Arts

**After reading Valentina's story, go over it a second time and underline the main ideas.** Then, on a separate sheet of paper, choose one of those ideas and write a speech asking people to express their support in a concrete way (that is, take action!) on an issue related to that particular idea.

**Create a presentation about the pros and cons of the fracking industry.** What are the risks of fracking? What benefits do the fracking companies claim there are? Do the risks outweigh the benefits? Why or why not?

**Write a letter to the governor of your state, asking him or her to take action on one specific environmental issue that is affecting your community.** Read your letter in front of your class. After everyone has read their letters, have a class discussion to come up with the five most effective persuasive strategies people used in their letters, and explain why they were the most effective.

## STEM Activities

**What is hydraulic fracturing? Why is it so controversial?** In this lesson plan from The [New York Times Learning Network](#)<sup>1</sup>, students will define hydrofracking; identify how the demand for natural gas is changing; then research and map how natural gas development can impact a community.

**In [this lesson plan from PBS Learning Media](#)<sup>2</sup>, students learn about health concerns related to exposure to the chemicals used in natural gas drilling.** They will explore the challenges of investigating the link between these chemicals and illnesses -- since the gas industry is not required to disclose which chemicals they use in fracking fluids.

**Source your energy. With [this lesson plan](#)<sup>3</sup> funded by the American Petroleum Institute, students investigate what turns on their lights.** What are the sources of energy in your community? What percentage comes from natural gas power? What actions might help increase the use of renewable energy?

## Sustainability Innovations

**New York is one of the most developed cities in the U.S., in a state that ranks in the top 10 in CO2 emissions produced.** [Urban Future Lab](#)<sup>4</sup> is a sustainability company that helps to develop market-solutions to reduce climate change. As a part of UFL, the Carbon to Value Initiative is helping to drive an innovative ecosystem focused on the commercialization of carbon tech to reduce emissions. How could this help New York deal with its high level of CO2 emissions?

**In January 2020, Governor Cuomo banned fracking in the state of New York.** In [this article](#)<sup>5</sup>, fracking, its impact on New York, and findings demonstrating the health and environmental risks are addressed. How can this affect plans for the future of New York State, and finding alternatives to fracking?

**As innovations develop, many U.S. cities are evolving into “smart cities” and developing sustainability policies.** Review the [New York Smart Cities Innovation Partnership](#)<sup>6</sup>. What are some of the priorities within the supply chain, cyber security, and real-time utility monitoring?

## Sustainability Career Pathways

**Environmental Organizer.** Engaging one’s community in dealing with environmental and social challenges is an important career path. Explore programs that teach community organizing, from online courses ([such as this one](#)<sup>7</sup>), to one-year environmental organizing field schools like [Green Corps](#)<sup>8</sup>.

**Environmental Mental Health Counselor.** As environmental conditions worsen, more people are suffering [mental health challenges due to the effects of climate change and fears about the looming sustainability crisis](#)<sup>9</sup>. Maybe you would like to consider the field of psychology, mental health counseling, or even [ecotherapy](#)<sup>10</sup> (which draws on nature to heal psychological trauma). [Here](#)<sup>11</sup> is an introduction to the field.

**Renewable Energy Advocate.** Developing sources of renewable energy is key to replacing fracked gas and oil in order to achieve the world’s energy needs. As an employee of a renewable energy company--as a manager, [salesperson](#)<sup>12</sup>, or support staff—you can help with this transition. Or join a nonprofit organization to promote and lobby for the transition to renewable energy.

**Green Investor.** With billions of dollars being invested, where that money goes will shape the future of business. Do we want to invest in oil companies, or renewable energy companies? In downtown real estate or suburban malls? Working with a socially responsible investment firm, or with a university, city, or foundation as an asset manager can be a great way to help develop the sustainable business sector. [Here is a brief introduction](#)<sup>13</sup> to the many jobs in the field.

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- 1 <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/12/fuel-for-debate-examining-the-natural-gas-fracking-controversy/>
  - 2 <https://mass.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/envh10.sci.phys.energy.fracking/fracking/>
  - 3 <http://sciencenetlinks.com/lessons/energy-for-you/>
  - 4 <http://ufl.nyc/>
  - 5 <https://newyork.psr.org/issues/fracking/>
  - 6 <https://esd.ny.gov/new-york-smart-cities-innovation-partnership>
  - 7 <https://www.coursera.org/learn/community-organizing>
  - 8 <https://greencorps.org/>
  - 9 <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2020-12-27/for-young-californians-climate-change-is-a-mental-health-crisis-too>
  - 10 <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/econature-therapy>
  - 11 <https://onlinecounselingprograms.com/become-a-counselor/counseling-careers/mental-health-counselor/>
  - 12 <https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/cleantech-careers-solar-sales-at-a-residential-installer>
  - 13 [http://finanzasostenibile.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/13-04-2017\\_FBicciato\\_ProfessionistiSRI\\_SdR.pdf](http://finanzasostenibile.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/13-04-2017_FBicciato_ProfessionistiSRI_SdR.pdf)

