LESSON 1: HOW TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Find your team! Find your passion! Find your power!

One problem that caught our eye was the effects of plastic bags on the ocean.

I'm hopeful because when we sing, we get people to save the world.

“Find your team. Find your passion. Find your power!”

“I’m hopeful because when we sing, we get people to save the world.”

“If adults don’t do enough, we have to do it.”

“One problem that caught our eye was the effects of plastic bags on the ocean.”

WHAT’S INSIDE:

• Creating an ACTION Plan
• Role-playing
• Save Tomorrow: ACTION Plan in Action
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HOW TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN:
Find your team! Find your passion! Find your power!

“Seeing that we do have power and we really can make a change in the world, it’s really inspiring. It really changes you. So -
Find your team!
Find your passion!
Find your power!” ~ Mari in Save Tomorrow, A Young Voices for the Planet film

Introduction - For use with all Young Voices for the Planet films

Each of these PBS LearningMedia lessons begins with a Young Voices for the Planet film and an ACTION PLAN template (p. 24–28) that can be used with every lesson. So, FIRST show the Young Voices for the Planet film that you are going to be discussing.

After choosing and watching one of the Young Voices for the Planet films, using the ACTION PLAN, students will ANALYZE and ASSESS the ACTION projects initiated and carried out by the role models in the film they have just watched.

Then, ask students to IDENTIFY AND INITIATE their own ACTION projects. They can either replicate the one in the films or use them as inspiration to create their own.

An A - C - T - I - O - N plan provides a framework for students to:

A - ASSESS and ANALYZE what local issues most concern them. (Find your Passion!)

C - COLLABORATE with fellow students, friends, families, teachers, school administrators and community members and brainstorm with them about how to address the issue. (Find your Team!)

T - Create a TIMEtable to plan out steps toward their goal.

I - IDENTIFY who they can talk to and enlist as mentors.

O - ORGANIZE their thoughts. Organize meetings. Make a list of goals and action steps necessary to achieve their vision. (Find your Power!!)

N - Share the NEWS with school media, social media and local and national news outlets. Celebrate success by sharing and engaging others in their project.
Share the ACTION plan below with your students:

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**YOUR ACTION PLAN**

You have a vision of what you want to happen. You have the passion to work toward your goal. You have hope and optimism that you will succeed. You have self-efficacy — you believe in your ability to make change. Now, what steps must you take to turn your vision into reality? This ACTION PLAN will help guide the way with many examples from the *Young Voices for the Planet* films.

**A - ASSESS and ANALYZE:**
Assess and analyze who will be making the decisions and who can help you reach your goal. For example, if you want to initiate an energy audit at your school as the girls in *Dreaming in Green* did, you might need to do some research to find out who can help you make your vision reality: the principal? the custodian? the school board? the maintenance supervisor? the Board of Education? the teachers?

"Of course we didn’t just do this ourselves, we built an entire network of other students, faculty and other members of the Community."

- Maddi in *Dreaming in Green*

**C - COLLABORATE:**
Collaborate with fellow students, friends, family, teachers, school administrators and community members. Brainstorm about how you can address the issue. The youth in the YVFP films couldn’t have accomplished what they did all by themselves. Their success was due to collaborating with many other people.

Felix Finkbeiner could never have founded *Plant for the Planet* and planted millions of trees without the help of his friends and a million other kids building an international campaign via the internet.

Felix Finkbeiner and his *Plant for the Planet* friends
**T - create a TIMEtable:**
Plan out when you will take each step toward your goal by laying out your ACTION PLAN on a calendar. Sometimes it takes a short time to achieve a goal. But it could take weeks, months or even years. Think about what you would like to have accomplished in a month, in a year. When and how would you like to communicate various information to your fellow students, citizens or the public?

Watch *We Sing Out* to get a sense of how long it took Pete Seeger to clean up the Hudson River or how long it took the Rivertown Kids to create their album with Pete that won a grammy award. Watch *Team Marine* to see how long it took the Team Marine students to help pass a ban on plastic bags in their city.

**I - IDENTIFY and INITIATE:** Identify a potential mentor to help you. Identify decision-makers who can help. Start at the top. Find people with the power to help you realize your vision. Identify positive “yes people”. Team Marine had a teacher-mentor, Ben Kay (front center in the photo below). When they wanted to ban plastic bags, they went right to the decision-makers on the City Council.

Identify the message, the messenger, the method and the medium.

Also consider where you can go for INSPIRATION. Felix Finkbeiner in *Plant for the Planet* was inspired by African UN ambassador Wangari Maathai. He, in turn inspired the *Save Tomorrow* team. The *Save Tomorrow* girls have inspired thousands of others through their presentations at schools and conferences, at the televised *WGBH STEM Forum on Digital Media* (http://bit.ly/2ExAPkO) and they even spoke at Harvard University! They inspired the three 11-year-olds in the YVFP film *The Last Straw* (http://bit.ly/2EteG7g) to start a “Skip the Straw” campaign on Cape Cod.

Inspired by all these other young people, YOU can be the next to pass on the inspiration to many many others.
O - ORGANIZE: Start by ORGANIZING your thoughts by making lists of what you want to accomplish and what you want to say or do and when. ORGANIZE your friends to maximize your effect. Also organize your thoughts by writing up your comments for testimony. Then organize in your community. Organize your thoughts about the message, the messenger, the method and the medium.

"Lily and Mari and I all wrote some statements to try and get them to allow solar panels to go on public buildings."

~Alice in Save Tomorrow
a Young Voices for the Planet film

N - NEWS: Share what you are doing with your school news station and local media. Sometimes people will read or hear about your project and join your efforts. Publicize your successes. (In Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill, Olivia raised $200,000 to rescue oiled birds when her story went viral on social media. Could your project get good publicity, too? The media loves interviewing children and youth. The Save Tomorrow girls were interviewed on WBUR – National Public Radio. Here is their blog: “Inspired by Films, Kid Environmentalists Take Action to “Save Tomorrow” by Helping Today.”) (http://wbur.fm/2nSKwjk)

"First it went to the Mobile Press register. Then it spread to the Guardian UK, then Huffington Post. It was going crazy. My mother was getting 100 e-mails an hour! 1.44 million people had seen my story. 2 months... 14.4 million people."

~Olivia in Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill
a Young Voices for the Planet film
Tying the Young Voices for the Planet films to the Civics & Social Studies STANDARDS and the C3 Framework

Enduring Understanding for Civics Grades 6-8
"These disciplinary ideas [concepts & tools] are the lenses students use in their inquiries, and the consistent and coherent application of these lenses throughout the grades should lead to deep and enduring understanding."

The goal of the C3 standards is to "prepare students to know the past, read, write and think deeply, and act in ways that promote the common good".

- College, Career & Civic Life C3 FRAMEWORK
  for Social Studies State Standards (see C3 framework at end of this document)

Engaged young citizens have the power to influence local government decisions. They can apply personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues and democratic principles to address public problems by influencing rules and laws.

### Civics and Social Studies Standards Addressed

- **D2.Civ.1** Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.

- **D2.Civ.2** Explain specific roles played by citizens (such as voters, jurors, taxpayers, members of the armed forces, petitioners, protesters, and officeholders).

- **D2.Civ.10** Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

### Really Big Questions

Really big questions—also called ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS — are questions that frame the lesson. The two overarching questions for all these Young Voices for the Planet lessons are:

1. Can youth — YOU — make a difference in the world?

2. How can young people create change about important issues?

### Other Important Questions

* How can young people engage in school and local government decision-making?
* How can creating an ACTION plan for a project help you reach your objectives?
What Will We Learn? You can:
* recognize that even though you can’t vote, you have the power to make change.
* use the ACTION plan framework to assess how the youth in the Young Voices for the Planet films carried out their plans for civic action.
* create and implement your own ACTION plan.

Peer Learning
The films and this YVFP project-based curriculum facilitate students learning from each other — from their peers. These relevant, interactive models inspire and empower young citizens to become engaged in participatory democracy.

Teacher Prep
* Review the ACTION plan template, PRODUCER’S NOTES and GLOSSARY.
* Preview the Young Voices for the Planet (YVFP) films by downloading them from the Internet: Young Voices for the Planet website (https://www.youngvoicesfortheplanet.com) or the PBS LearningMedia website — or watch on DVD. (https://www.youngvoicesfortheplanet.com/store-dvd)

Students: Answer these questions:
- How can you and other youth create change about important issues?
- What issue would you like to develop an ACTION plan around?

Discuss this with a classmate: Does the prospect of working on a particular issue seem important to you? Does trying to make a difference excite you? After a few minutes of sharing with a partner, ask a few students to share with the class.

Chose a few YOUNG VOICES FOR THE PLANET films and IDENTIFY:
- THE PROBLEM
- THE SOLUTION
- THE CALL-TO-ACTION
- THE BENEFIT

TELLING A STORY ‘IN A NUTSHELL’
After watching a Young Voices for the Planet film, RE-TELL THE STORY IN 30 SECONDS.

Re-capping the main points of the story will focus you and help you to REMEMBER and RECALL the details of the story more easily. People remember stories better than facts, and people love hearing stories.

Hope is the ability to hold onto a vision for the future, put one step in front of the other and make an effort to get there.

Getting involved in helping others less fortunate than yourself is a great way to cultivate hope towards the future.
Role-playing is a good way to put yourself in another person’s shoes and develop empathy. (For in-depth role-playing lesson go to p. 63-68)

Divide into groups of 5 or 6 of your classmates. Write the roles listed below on cards and then each select a card. Imagine that you are this person in one of the Young Voices for the Planet films and put yourself in their shoes.

Citizen  Voter  Taxpayer  Political Party interest Group  Media
Petitioner  Protester  Selectman  Town-Meeting attendee  County-Councilman
Young person giving testimony  School Principal  Airport Manager  Teacher
Parent  Politician  Scientist  Office-holder  City Councillor
Secretary of the Interior  Congressperson  Health Official  Gulf Coast Fisherman
Cafeteria manager  Non-Profit  Restaurant Owner  Co-op Manager
State Representative

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ANALYZING AND ASSESSING CENTRAL CONCEPTS & CONTENT Using Save Tomorrow as an Example

Begin by watching the short film *Save Tomorrow* (https://mpt.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/yvcc-sci-savetomorrow/save-tomorrow)

*Save Tomorrow* tells the story of Alice, Lily and Mari testifying at their Town Meeting to change a bylaw. Empowered and emboldened by that success, they move on to try to save the woods behind Alice’s house.

Assess and analyze their personal interests and perspectives. A “personal interest” is a concern—something that you care about personally such as caring about saving the world from climate change or saving a forest you love. A “perspective” is your point of view or opinion such as, “Our town should adopt clean renewable energy.”

Take some time to compare the personal interests and perspectives of the *Save Tomorrow* girls with your own. Write them down. Turn and talk with a table partner about what you noticed is similar and different between your interests and personal perspectives and Alice’s, Lily’s and Mari’s. Share with the class afterward.

Earlier, the class brainstormed some civic roles that adults and children can play. What roles did Mari, Alice and Lily take upon themselves? Share your thoughts.

Do Kids Have Power?
Can the kids in the films vote in elections? If they are too young to vote, how might they change things in other ways?

They reached out to other kids in their school and neighborhood to save the forest. They became active citizens, speakers, witnesses and petitioners to show what they wanted from the office-holders, who in this case were the Board of Selectmen.
Watch the film again. (You may want to watch it in short pieces and discuss each segment.) After watching the entire film, fill out a blank ACTION PLAN for Civic Engagement (p. 89) with your class, projecting your answers with an overhead projector or writing them large enough for everyone to see.

[Reminder for the Young Voices for the Planet A-C-T-I-O-N plan: A - Assess; C - Collaborate; T - Timetable; I - Identify & Initiate; O - Organize; N - News]

A - ASSESS what local issues most concerned the students in the Save Tomorrow film. Assess what they were trying to accomplish:
* stop climate change
* reduce CO2 emissions
* reduce energy consumption
* get the town to commit to renewable energy
* overturn a law prohibiting solar panels on town buildings

So...to recap: Save Tomorrow’s ultimate goal was to stop climate change. To do this they wanted their town to produce less CO2, a greenhouse gas, by reducing the energy their town used. So, they wanted to help abate climate change by changing a town of Lexington bylaw that prevented the installation of solar panels on town buildings.

Assess the ACTION steps the Save Tomorrow team used. Can you use some of them for your ACTION Plan? You, too, may:
* Approach a non-profit organization that is working to educate on issues that matter to you.
* Research your town’s form of government (such as Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen) and learn how it functions, when it meets, and rules for testifying.
* Research laws and bylaws in your town to identify what might need to change.
* Find out who you need to talk to in order to propose a resolution or bylaw change.
* Ask a mentor to collaborate and help you build an argument about your issue such as the benefits of solar panels and renewable energy.
* Testify at Town Meeting or County Council, as a witness, about the importance of taking action on climate change.

Here are some questions to start the conversation:
“How do a Town Meeting and Board of Selectmen work?”
“Different towns have different ways for citizens to be represented. What’s yours?”
“Why might the citizens of your town want solar panels on public buildings?” or “Why might your elected officials want solar panels on public buildings?”

Leading questions can get your brains “storming” as can a read-aloud of the “Notes from the Producer” that accompany this film (and some of the others) on PBS LearningMedia. The Producer’s Notes may give you ideas for your ACTION plan.

Another very important part of the strategy of the Save Tomorrow team was to appeal to the adults on an emotional level by pulling on their heart-strings, begging the questions, “Do you love us?” “Do you care about your children?” “Do you care about our future?” Children can help adults transcend politics by allowing them to see the bigger picture and the long-term consequences of their actions on future generations. The innocence and vulnerability of young children make them powerful messengers.
C - COLLABORATE with fellow students, friends, families, teachers, school administrators and community members; brainstorm with them about how you can address the issue. Writing their testimony was a great collaborative effort.

Who do you think would have made good collaborators for the Save Tomorrow team to work with and help and advise them on their testimony?
* Adult community members of the Sustainable Lexington Committee who wanted solar panels on public buildings?
* Citizens who were concerned about climate change and wanted to see the town make a commitment to renewable energy?
* Parents? peers? friends?

When thinking about who might make good collaborators also think about who might be your detractors (people standing in your way). Although these concerns are not relevant in the case of Save Tomorrow, be prepared for these common arguments used by people opposing solar panels:
* solar panels are unsightly and incongruous with historic buildings
* the up-front costs are prohibitive
* a solar panel contract might require a too-long contract (see Producer’s Notes)
* an obscure or outdated law might make solar panel installation illegal.

T - A TIMETABLE helps you plan what steps must be taken during the days, weeks, months or years of your project. Make a list of your goals and the timing necessary to achieve your vision.

Consider when your action could have the greatest impact. In the case of the Save Tomorrow girls, there was a small window of opportunity to testify when the vote on the bylaw was going to happen but, often, there is more leeway as to when you can carry out an action.

I - IDENTIFY who the girls enlisted as mentors. When you are carrying out your ACTION plan, you can do the same and find adults to help. Start at the top—the mayor’s office, your state legislator, your school principal. Find people with the power to help you realize your vision.

IDENTIFY the decision-makers (Lexington Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen) (https://www.lexingtonma.gov/board-selectmen)

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES THE GIRLS FACED?

1. Fear and self-doubt. The girl’s own fear and self-doubt was a challenge to overcome. They felt intimidated by the adult world.

“At first we were a little bit scared; these are grown-ups. They run the world.”

“Working as a team gives you much more courage than if you’re just working as an individual. If you’re alone, it’s always scary.”

~ Mari in Save Tomorrow
a Young Voices for the Planet film
2. Despair. The girls had wanted to believe that the adults would address and solve the climate crisis but, when they saw the adults not taking action, they felt despair. Despair itself can be debilitating. Initially, the girls had no idea what kids could do.

3. Town Bylaw. The town had a bylaw that prevented solar panels from being installed on public buildings.

“All the sudden this idea just popped into my head... Save Tomorrow. That would be the group name.”

~ Alice in Save Tomorrow, a Young Voices for the Planet film

The Save Tomorrow girls were lucky because their efforts were successful the first time. It’s important for students to realize that, often, that won’t be the case. It’s a good idea to try and be realistic about whether something is possible because early successes are very important in young people developing self-efficacy. However, an IMPORTANT RULE OF THUMB is .... PERSIST!

PERSISTENCE! Sometimes it can take years to reach your goal. If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again. Study some of society’s huge changes—such as civil rights, women’s rights and children’s rights—and research how long it took for these changes to come about. (Research when education became a right for U.S. children.)

What personal qualities allowed them to persist and prevail?

O - ORGANIZE your thoughts: What is your MESSAGE? What were the most poignant and important points the Save Tomorrow kids made to the Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen? They researched and prepared their testimony and practiced ahead of testifying before the town meeting. In the film, we see their testimony with many edits, words scratched out. Who is your MESSENGER? What is your METHOD? What is the MEDIUM? Organize a meeting.

As you Listen to this National Public Radio interview (http://wbur.fm/2nSKwjk), write down the most memorable points that the Save Tomorrow girls make:

* Protect our future: allow & put solar panels on public buildings.
* Intergenerational Justice: it’s unjust that children have inherited a degraded environment from the adults.
* Help stop climate change.
* Personal responsibility “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing’s going to get better—it’s not.” from The Lorax by Dr Seuss. A reminder that these are kids testifying.

N - NEWSworthyness: Remember to share what you are doing with your school news station and local media. Often people reading about your project will contact you and offer help. Publicize your successes in the news media.

Publicity is one measure of success. Spreading the word about your project, whether it initially succeeds or fails, is important.

Did the Save Tomorrow girls accomplish their objectives?
* did they prepare comments and present them at the Town Meeting? Yes! Success!
Their success was so exhilarating that Lily commented, “we literally just skipped out of the town hall!”

Becoming a change-maker and making societal change is very important but, equally important is what taking control of one’s life and future does to a young person’s image of themselves and expectations of themselves. Such experiences build a commitment to civic engagement—to become part of the Democratic process of governance.

**Watch the movie again** paying attention to how what the girls say reflects how the experience changed them.

**Discuss the girls’ quotes in the boxes below:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“We had helped to get solar panels on all the town buildings. We weren’t just helpless little little girls.”</td>
<td>Mari in <em>Save Tomorrow</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We had more power than we ever imagined in our wildest dreams.”</td>
<td>Alice in <em>Save Tomorrow</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“After that we were, like, we did that, what can we do now?”</td>
<td>Lily in <em>Save Tomorrow</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Seeing that we do have power and that we can make a change in the world – it’s really inspiring. It really changes you.”</td>
<td>Mari in <em>Save Tomorrow</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* They realized they had the power to make a difference globally affecting the huge problem of climate change.

* They realized that adults would listen to their concerns—that young voices could be heard.

* They enjoyed working as a team. [Mari: “When you’re alone it’s scary.”]

* They were empowered for a lifetime of civic engagement by their success. [Mari: “It changes you.”]

* The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is urgent.

* Young people will bear the brunt of climate disruption.

* People are becoming more and more interested in renewable energy as they realize the harm caused by fossil fuels.
Saving the Woods Behind Alice’s House

In small groups of 3 or 4, students fill out the chart and ACTION PLAN GRID (below) for SAVE TOMORROW’s project of saving the woods.

Review
To students: “We are going to share what we learned about making an ACTION plan and learning to become an engaged citizen. Find a partner. I’ll ask a question. Take a moment of thinking time, then turn to face your partner and take turns sharing your answers. Be sure to be active listeners. You can use these sentence stems to start a conversation: “I heard you say __________.” “I would like to add __________.” “I agree, because __________.” “I had a different idea __________.” “Did you ever think of __________?”

Affirmation: if you think another person has a good idea, tell them! “That’s a great idea!” People love to be affirmed.

ASSESS the strategies:
What strategies did the girls use to save the woods? Which were the most effective?

* they identified the decision-makers
* they researched the laws and how the Conservation Commission functioned
* they built an argument about saving the woods
* they organized and went door to door to gather petition signatures
* they delivered the signed petition to the Conservation Commission
* they told a personal heartfelt story describing what the woods meant to them personally

Because the girls had a personal connection with the woods, there was that “heart” connection that makes children a powerful force when appealing to adults. They had grown up exploring this woods and they deeply loved it and the animals that lived there. It was part of them.
How did saving the woods address the A - C - T - I - O - N criteria?

As Alice says, “We saved the woods.” Research shows that kids need outdoor places to play and explore. [Read Richard Louv’s “Last Child in the Woods”.] Trees are a carbon sink, sequestering CO2.

Initial successes often empower young people to take on another issue. As Lily said, “We did that. What can we do now?”

Social Studies Standard (D2.Civ.10) Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

Explain how ‘Civic Virtues’ of mutual respect and cooperation applied in these actions.

Civic virtue: Virtues are exemplary moral qualities such as honesty, integrity, respect, cooperation, caring, empathy and appreciating various points of view. Civic Virtue is the exercising of virtues when interacting with other citizens and decision-makers on public issues and governance.

Empathy: the ability to imagine yourself in someone else’s shoes or in their life. It is at the root of mutual respect and cooperation—important civic virtues. Role-playing helps develop empathy.

How can EMPATHY be manifested as a civic virtue? Ask your students to imagine what it would feel like for them to come home and find that their house was no longer there. How might it feel to an animal to lose its home—its habitat? Can they imagine how the Save Tomorrow girls would feel if their woods was cut down? Ask your students if they have a woods near their house that they care about. Is it protected? [Perhaps they can explore whether it is possible to have it protected.]

Mutual respect: The Save Tomorrow girls respectfully testified before the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission respectfully listened to—and really heard—the girls’ argument to save the woods.

Cooperation: The girls worked together as a team; to support installation of the solar panels, they worked with Sustainable Lexington to change the bylaws and they cooperated as a team to present to the Conservation Commission.

Assess and Consider:

* Analyze the personal perspectives and civic actions of the students in Save Tomorrow using the ACTION Plan Template.
* Create and carry out your own ACTION plan according to personal interests.
* Share your biggest brainstorm and some of the most surprising things that you learned.
Now it's time to CREATE YOUR OWN ACTION PLAN

This lesson prepares students to take action and connect to social studies standards. If students are interested in or ready for a class project or extracurricular activity such as a club or independent study project, you can help them create and implement their own ACTION plans, develop self-efficacy, learn lifetime skills and provide a lens of hope and success stories through which they can see culture, history and civic engagement.

Teachers will find additional tools to guide student exploration and analysis of how the youth in the YVFP films conceived and planned their civic projects in other Young Voices for the Planet PBS LearningMedia Lessons.

Name: _____________________  Date: ___________

FIND YOUR TEAM! FIND YOUR PASSION! FIND YOUR POWER!

Step 1: Understand the Problem

Learning Objectives - meeting the C3 social studies standards
(see link to C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards at end of this lesson)

* I can identify the limits and the powers of young citizens under the voting age.

* I can analyze the personal perspectives and civic actions of the students in Save Tomorrow using the ACTION framework.

* I can create and carry out an ACTION plan according to personal interests.

While viewing the first time, record your ideas in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Personal Interests &amp; Perspectives</th>
<th>Evidence in the film (What did she say or do to prove it?)</th>
<th>How does this compare to your own personal interests and perspectives?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mari</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ACTION PLAN template for Civic Engagement from Save Tomorrow to use as a Guide

**Background:** In the YVFP film Save Tomorrow, the girls want to stop climate change. To do this, they need to do something to reduce CO2 emissions, so they chose the concrete goal of changing a local bylaw that prevents the installation of solar panels on public buildings. Their goal is to overturn this bylaw hence reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Actions such as these can have a greater reach for when one town makes a law or regulation, many others see that it is a good idea and copy it!

Changing a law requires a decision by local, state or federal government.

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**A - C - T - I - O - N PLAN**

**What are my Action Steps?**
Action steps are what you use to carry out your plan. For example, political action steps might be to meet with your City Council or Board of Selectmen, or to bring around a petition to be signed, door-to-door or in the school cafeteria.

Educational outreach steps could entail writing a letter to the editor, creating a brochure, or doing newspaper or radio blogs or interviews.

**A - ASSESS and ANALYZE:**

**What do I want to change?**
Three 9-year-old girls can address climate change by working toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in their town. They ask themselves:
- What do we want to achieve?
- Who will be making the decision about our project or goal?
- Who can help us reach our goal?
- What arguments and information might be the most persuasive?

**What do I want to achieve?**
The Save Tomorrow team wanted to stop climate change. To achieve that, they wanted their town to reduce its carbon emissions. To achieve that, they wanted their town to use less fossil fuel and make a commitment to renewable energy. To do that, they wanted the town to put solar panels on town buildings. To achieve that, they needed to overturn a bylaw that, essentially, prevented putting solar panels on town buildings. So, they focused on getting the bylaw overturned.

**Who will be making the decision?**
The Save Tomorrow team discovered that the town selectmen would be making the decision and that they would be doing so at the next town meeting.

**Who can help us reach our objectives?**
The Save Tomorrow team needed to assess who could help them. They learned that there was a group in town called Sustainable Lexington whose mission was to promote renewable energy. Save Tomorrow also needed citizens to attend the town meeting. Who could they ask to come? Other students? The PTO? Parents?
C - COLLABORATE

Who can I find to help me?
As Mari says at the beginning of Save Tomorrow, "Working as a team gives you much more courage than if you’re just working as an individual. If you’re alone it’s always scary."

How will we change things by working together?
The Save Tomorrow team brainstormed with fellow students, parents, other community members and Sustainable Lexington to discuss what they could do. Meet with others who share your concerns and want to help.

T - TIMETABLE

What is our schedule? Plan out and schedule your Action steps on a calendar. This is your timetable. Sometimes you can succeed in a short time but many efforts take weeks, months or years. On your calendar write what you are going to do each day. Save Tomorrow needed to prepare fast in order to attend the town meeting that was scheduled.

The Save Tomorrow team’s timetable would have listed these ACTION items:
* Learn about and understand the bylaw that we are trying to change
* write convincing arguments for changing the bylaw
* find out when the Selectmen meet
* enlist an adult mentor to schedule our testimony at Town Meeting
* decide who is going to say what and practice our talk
* contact the news media—let them know we plan to testify.
* calmly make our arguments at the town meeting.
* Remember to keep our heads up, speak loudly, enunciate and project.

I - IDENTIFY AND INITIATE.

Who can be our mentor/s? Identify someone who you can talk to and enlist as a mentor. A teacher? Parent? School Principal?

Identify people with the power to help you realize your vision. Someone from an environmental group or a sustainability group? Identify other possibilities. Save tomorrow found the director of Sustainable Lexington, Mark Sandeen, to be their mentor.

Before a political debate, candidates always practice responding to questions attacking their point of view. Identify what, if any, arguments there might be against your project and practice your responses to them.

O - ORGANIZE. Organize your thoughts. Write down your steps to achieve your vision.

Who can we invite to join our team?
Who can we quote who will give our personal perspective credibility?
Quote an authority or someone well-known. At their testimony, the Save Tomorrow girls read from Dr. Seuss’s “The Lorax”.

State the most compelling and important arguments and evidence first to get people’s attention and inspire them to join you.

A good rule of thumb is to tell people what you are going to tell them, then tell them, and then tell them what you told them.

N - NEWS.

What media outlets will we share your story with?
Remember to share what you are doing with your school news station and local media. Prepare a short 30 second “sound-bite”: a pithy description or slogan, like a bumper-sticker that will stick in people’s minds. Often people reading about your project will get in touch and offer to help—especially if you’re kids! Be sure to state the most important, compelling, heart-felt and attention-grabbing facts first. Tell a personal story. People remember stories more than facts.

The Save Tomorrow girls were interviewed by their local paper and, later, by the Boston National Public Radio station WBUR and the Boston Globe.

Who will do the follow-up and how will we/they do it?
Follow-up: make sure to stay in touch with your collaborators and decision-makers and make sure that they do what they say they are going to do; and, if a law, bylaw or regulation is passed, make sure it is implemented.

Assess your success:
The ACTION Plan Template can help you Assess whether you accomplished your objectives — or some of them.

Did the Save Tomorrow girls stop global warming? Did they change a town bylaw? Did they reduce their town’s greenhouse gas emissions?

Did Felix start Plant for the Plane and plant a million trees? Did Olivia raise funds to save oiled birds? Did Team Marine ban plastic bags? Did Clarissa in Girl Scouts give out energy-efficient light bulbs? Did Alec install Sea Level Awareness posts? Did Milo and the Skip the Straw girls convince restaurants to stop using plastic drinking straws? Did they reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
YOUR TURN: ACTION PLAN for Civic Engagement
YOUR OWN A-C-T-I-O-N PLAN

A - ASSESS and ANALYZE:
- What is the problem—your passion—that you want to address?
- Who will be making the decision about your project’s goal or objective?
- Who can help you reach your objective?
- What arguments and information might be the most persuasive?

C - COLLABORATE:
- Who will you collaborate with?
- Who can you invite to be on your team?

T - Create a TIMETABLE: What will you do when?

I - IDENTIFY: Who should you talk to? Who are the decision-makers?
Who do you needed to convince? Who can help you? Who can you
INITIATE a dialogue with?

O - ORGANIZE: your thoughts, your team, your arguments and key points.

N - NEWS: Share what you do with the NEWS media.
ACTION PLAN for Civic Engagement

Describe your passion below and then brainstorm. Using the ACTION plan as a template, describe ideas about how you can address your concerns.

Your passion:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Your brainstorms:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Other comments:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
From the C3 Social Studies Framework:

“In the C3 Framework, the call for students to become more prepared for the challenges of college and career is united with a third element: preparation for civic life. Advocates of citizenship education cross the political spectrum, but they are bound by a common belief that our democratic republic will not sustain unless students are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good. There will always be differing perspectives on these objectives. The goal of knowledgeable, thinking, and acting citizens, however, is universal.”