

# Pushing Past Our Complacency



The aim of this activity is to explore effective ways of delivering key messages about climate change. You will create a 30 second television advertisement with a script, voice over, images and sound to connect with a chosen audience and convey your opinions and beliefs, backed with data, on the threats climate change poses to reefs, our environment and ourselves.

## Time

Four hours (one hour field, three hours classroom)

## Tools

- Script writing worksheet
- Computer
- Sound recorder, digital camera or video camera
- Garage band, powerpoint or similar media software (if available)



## Background

In western societies we seem to have lost touch with what is natural. The sum total of many of our experiences with the environment is often limited to the popular wildlife documentaries we watch on television. We shelter from the elements, with nature, even in its diminished form, seen as an inconvenience, something that needs to be placed at the margins of where we live and replaced with gardens and lawns that require a minimum amount of maintenance. To move past complacency in the face of climate change we need a wake-up call that reconnects us with the environment and the immediate realities of our changing world.

Our desensitisation towards the natural world leads us to the misconception that climate change is solely based on changes in our local weather patterns, when in fact, the greatest impact is on the ecosystems which support and sustain us. This disconnection is reinforced by the fact that greenhouse gases cannot be seen, touched or tasted. Many look at the issue of climate change and see the problem as just too big, happening on timescales that span beyond our own lifetimes. The projections which look at the years 2030, 2050 and 2100 are hard to comprehend for a global society that lives within the land of the instant. For the majority of people, it is easier to accept, or at least expect their governments to solve the problem rather than believing that an individual can make a difference. Governments, on the other hand, have delayed action simply due to lack of empirical data and the unpalatability that some of the solutions will have on their respective economies.

When this is coupled with the embedded belief that engineers and scientists will find the solutions to prevent the harsher elements of climate change from occurring, we sit, we wait and we watch the news on the latest findings of its effects.





## Classroom activity 1

During this activity you will create a 'wake-up call', in the form of an advertisement, focused on what you feel is important for others to know about our environment and climate change.

1. Choose one key message you would like to share as your wake-up call.
  - a. think of what has shaped your views and make a locally relevant example (if you are undecided, perhaps it is an advertisement on how to get informed)
2. Select an audience you would like to speak to (be creative, it could be your younger brother or sister, a bike club, students in another country, unemployed people, celebrities, the super wealthy).
3. Write a script with suggested images to accompany the words. Think of images you will be able to create or photos you could take in your local area.
4. Practice speaking it out loud with another person.
5. Trim what you've written so it can be read out loud in a specific number of seconds. You will only have time to speak between 90-100 words, so make them all count.
6. Look on the Activity CD to see if there are any models or photos that you can use.

What is your key message (one sentence):

What is a slogan for your message (a few words):

Who is your target audience:

Script: Write five sentences using language relevant to your audience. Begin with your most meaningful statement. Make sure it is something you truly believe and it is something the audience will care about. Include specific facts and end with a memorable concluding remark.

Tips: Saying more in fewer words is the key to holding people's attention.  
Add photographs or illustrations to reinforce your words.

## Field activity

1. During this activity you will capture extra images (and sounds if possible) from your local environment that will best convey your key message in your advertisement.





## Classroom activity 2

1. Use garage band, powerpoint or similar software to create an electronic advertisement, or act one out in real life.

### Script writing worksheet

Transfer your script to the words columns to time your advertisement and write notes on when you will use the other materials in your production.

Quotes, Sound, Video, Stills, Graphics	Words		Time
			1 sec
			2
			3
			4
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## Questions

1. List some events that have shaped your thinking on climate change. They could include natural events, visits to places, conversations, shows, books, movies, etc.
2. During what kind of show or event would you run your advertisement? Justify your answer.
3. How could the time of the day or year affect the impact of your advertisement?
4. What is it about your advertisement that makes it stand out?
5. What is the main outcome you wish from your advertisement?
6. What are some other outlets for your message?
7. Explain in your own words the role of advertising and mass media in the climate change debate.
8. Identify some companies or groups who you believe would likely use your advertisement campaign or a similar one.

## Research projects

1. Using examples from websites, reports and fact sheets, describe the key message your government is sending out about climate change.
2. Define 'greenwashing' and explain how it reduces our ability to address climate change and other issues.
3. Write a case study on an advertising campaign that has had a significant change on society.

## References

Reid et al. (2009) Coral Reefs and Climate Change: The guide for education and awareness. CoralWatch, The University of Queensland. (See You are the market page 194 and Community input page 198)

BBC news; [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)

Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF); [www.acfonline.org.au](http://www.acfonline.org.au)

We Can Solve It; [www.wecansolveit.org](http://www.wecansolveit.org)

World Wildlife Fund; [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)

The Nature Conservancy; [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

