



FILM IN THE FIELD

I Am Greta Discussion Guide



Synopsis:

The story of teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg is told through compelling, never-before-seen footage in this intimate documentary from Swedish director Nathan Grossman. Starting with her one-person school strike for climate action outside the Swedish Parliament, Grossman follows Greta - a shy schoolgirl with Asperger's - in her rise to prominence, and her galvanizing global impact as she sparks school strikes around the world. The film culminates with her astonishing wind powered voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to speak at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York City.

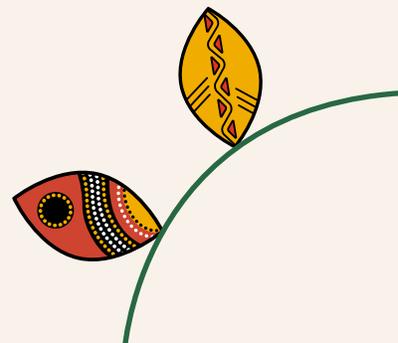
Why is this film relevant now?

Now more than ever, we are running out of time to make crucial changes in improving our relationship with the planet. If we do not act to curb climate change, communities all over the world will suffer greatly. Given that so many scientific warnings have been ignored by generations, the global youth plays a crucial role in demanding climate justice. As seen in the film, Greta stands on the shoulders of millions of young climate activists worldwide who are using their voices to fight the climate crisis. This film is important because it demonstrates the power that young people hold in fighting systems and institutions, and reminds the audience of how crucial cross-generation involvement and cooperation across is in reaching climate solutions.



Quick Facts

- ▶ Following Greta's school strikes in 2018, 1.6 million students and young people in 125 countries have followed in her footsteps and hit the streets during a protest in mid-March. ([Nature](#))
- ▶ About one-quarter of the adults in a 2018 survey thought that the most important reason to act on climate change was "to provide a better life for our children and grandchildren, which suggests that youth activists remind adults why they care about the environment in the first place. (Connie Roser-Renouf, George Mason University; [Nature](#))
- ▶ Eleven percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans are due to deforestation — comparable to the emissions from all of the passenger vehicles on the planet. ([Conservation International](#))
- ▶ Natural climate solutions such as restoring degraded forests could create as many as 39 jobs per million dollars spent — that's a job-creation rate more than six times higher than the oil and gas industry. ([Conservation International](#))
- ▶ The U.N. climate report and subsequent reports have warned us that global carbon pollution must be cut in half in the next 10 years for us to avoid catastrophic, irreversible damage to our planet. ([EarthDay.org](#))
- ▶ Scientists estimate dozens of species of plants and animals currently go extinct each day — nearly 1,000 times the natural rate. By mid-century, as many as 30 to 50 percent of the total species found on Earth will have disappeared. ([EarthDay.org](#))
- ▶ A warming world also increases the intensity of natural disasters. ([EarthDay.org](#))
- ▶ Youth organizing has the power to change our society for the better. For example, through youth organizing for March For Our Lives, the students involved successfully moved the needle for safer gun laws. "Before Parkland, Florida had some of the weakest gun laws in the country. In 2018, lawmakers approved a legislative package that created an extreme risk protection law, established a higher minimum age for buying firearms, and strengthened waiting periods" ([Giffords](#)). Additionally due to their organizing work, gun safety was moved to the forefront of campaign platforms, events, and advertisements in the 2018 midterm elections.





Discussion Questions

REFLECT – Take a moment to process

1. Greta rejects the notion that her Asperger's diagnosis is "a problem," as it's really presented as her superpower. She explains that there's an advantage to being neurodiverse, because it makes you think differently, especially in regards to the climate crisis. What superpower do you have and how do you think it contributes to your ability to organize and make a positive difference?
2. Throughout the film, we witness the incredible support of Greta's dad in her determination to make an impact and change the course of the climate crisis. Serious or politically-associated conversations can be hard with parents, grandparents, etc. How can we effectively have constructive intergenerational climate conversations with our family members? ([Here](#) are some tips!)
3. The film depicts how important local organizing is with hundreds of cities coming together through Fridays for Future. How can you mobilize your community for climate action? What organizing infrastructure is available or needs to be created to do so?
4. In the film, Greta is asked to speak at numerous international forums, including the climate conference COP24 in Katowice, Poland. What is the purpose of these global gatherings and do you think they can be effective?
5. Unfortunately, a lot of the climate change conversation has been negatively influenced by the media and political parties. As a result, it can prevent tangible climate action from being taken on a local and federal level due to their refusal to acknowledge the urgency of climate change. How can we change the narrative of this conversation and where do you think is the most crucial place to start? (Schools, churches, homes, town halls, etc).
6. Greta mentions that she first learned about the climate crisis in school after watching a film about starving polar bears and floods. Has anyone watched a film in another class (or otherwise) about climate change? What did you learn and how did it impact your view of climate change? And if *I Am Greta* is the first film you've seen, what have you learned?
7. After being so defeated by the overwhelming issues of climate change, Greta said she felt depressed. Once she started to feel better, she asked herself why should she give up when there are so many things she can do to make a difference. What are some actions (big or small) that you can take to make a difference?



Discussion Questions

8. There is a lot of misunderstanding, mislabeling and insensitivity toward Greta's Aspergers diagnosis; in the film one reporter calls her a "mentally ill Swedish child." Do you know what Aspergers is and how it affects someone?

CONNECT – Connect the Dots.

1. On a personal level, how may climate change affect your community and your wellbeing? If you feel it's already affected your community, please explain.
2. How do climate change policies move through your local government? What institutions and/or departments are in charge of making decisions affecting environmental policy, climate justice, waste management and/or clean air and water, etc?
3. What are some socio-political issues (e.g. racial justice, gender justice) that you care about? What connections can you see between these issues and the fight for climate justice?

ACT - Commit to Action

1. As you saw in the film, youth organizing was a huge part of local climate action. Check out the *Can You Hear Us?* [Take Action Guide](#) to find resources you can use to organize and host effective intergenerational conversations within your communities, schools or organizations. If you'd like guidance on where to start, try our [Take Action Quiz](#) to find out what action items better align with your skill set and resources available.
2. In *I Am Greta*, Thunberg continuously uplifts the work of other organizations in an attempt to highlight the collaborative efforts within the climate movement. [Here](#) you can explore US local climate organizations in your area.
3. Greta not only advocates for climate action but also practices it in her lifestyle, for example, she travels by a boat instead of an airplane. [Here](#) are some tips to make your lifestyle and household more sustainable.





Latest Climate Developments

- ▶ To prevent warming beyond 1.5°C, **we need to reduce emissions by 7.6% every year** from this year to 2030. (EGR, 2019; [UN](#))
- ▶ **The most abundant greenhouse gas**, accounting for about two-thirds of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO₂), **is largely the product of burning fossil fuels.** (IPCC; [UN](#))
- ▶ **Six in 10 Americans are now either “alarmed” or “concerned” about climate change**, a number that has more than doubled in the past five years. ([WWF](#))
- ▶ **Sixty-seven percent of Americans want the federal government to do more** to reduce the effects of global climate change. ([WWF](#))
- ▶ **The annual average CO₂ concentrations will still increase through 2020**, even though emissions are reducing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the whole year, we estimate CO₂ levels will rise by 2.48 parts per million (ppm). This increase is 0.32ppm smaller than if there had been no lockdown – equivalent to 11% of the expected rise. ([Carbon Brief](#))

