



Classroom Toolkit

Educate your students about the multi-disciplinary issues brought up in Juliana v. U.S.

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Background

Juliana v. US: a multi-disciplinary case study

Juliana v. U.S. is a lawsuit. It is not a criminal case, nor is it a case about money. *Juliana*, filed in 2015 by 21 youth from around the United States, is a case about fundamental rights and science-based climate recovery. It is a prime example of youth—most of whom are not old enough to vote—educating themselves to their rights, and taking action to protect them.

The youth plaintiffs allege that the U.S. Executive Branch agency heads (initially the Obama administration, now the Trump administration)—by exercising their sovereign authority over the U.S. atmosphere and fossil fuel resources—encouraged, and otherwise enabled the continued exploitation, production, and combustion of fossil fuels. These actions were taken with full knowledge that doing so would cause atmospheric CO₂ concentrations to escalate to levels unprecedented in human history, resulting in a dangerous destabilizing climate system for our country and these youth plaintiffs. Thus, the plaintiffs claim that the U.S. government is violating the youngest generation’s constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, and its duty under the Public Trust Doctrine to protect the atmosphere. Rather than suing for money, the plaintiffs demand the creation and implementation of a national climate recovery plan that will return CO₂ emissions to safe levels.

Juliana is a fantastic case study in civics, science-based solutions, and youth empowerment. Educators everywhere are encouraged to explore the resources and proposed activities laid out

below. These resources can be used to create lesson plans in the lead up to and during what some pundits are calling “the trial of the century.”

Activities

There are many ways to teach this case, and many activities that can be used to bring the issues presented in *Juliana* to life. Below are just a few ideas. More will be added, so check back regularly.

Curriculum

- Prep ahead of time; use the links below to create a lesson plan suitable for your students
- Have students draft essays on why they do or do not support the youth plaintiffs and this lawsuit
- Have students write [letters to the editor](#), Op Eds and/or letters to their elected officials
- Practice drafting opening arguments for the case
- Explore other examples of youth leading social justice movements

Curriculum Resources

While *Juliana v. US* lesson plans are still in the works, there currently exist a few easy-to-use resources to begin a dialogue with your students about this lawsuit, the youth behind it, and the national science-based climate recovery plan they seek.

THE CASE

- [Basic outline](#) of *Juliana*.
- Meet the *Juliana* [youth plaintiffs](#) (note: each plaintiff page links to articles and videos)

POWERPOINT

- Download our “[Pathway to Climate Recovery](#)” PowerPoint. This slide show was created for educators to engage their students new to climate science and the *Juliana* lawsuit.

VIDEO

- View [short films](#) (~15 min.) – these shorts feature stories of youth leaders from OR, MA, PA, CO, IA, AK, AZ, MT, CA
- [Vice video](#) (~13 min) following youth plaintiff Xiuhtezcatl from his CO home to a *Juliana* court hearing in OR
- Video of youth Plaintiff [Kelsey Juliana Ted^xSalem talk](#) (~11 min)
- Video of youth Plaintiff [Aji Piper TED^xSeattle talk](#) (~15 min)

THE SCIENCE

- Learn about why we advocate for a maximum [atmospheric CO₂ concentration of 350 ppm](#).

RELATED LESSON PLANS AND CLIMATE RESOURCES:

Need more resources? Check out our other toolkits [here](#).

- Ultimate Civics [middle school civics Lesson Plans](#) highlighting atmospheric trust litigation campaign
- Ultimate Civics [high school civics Lesson Plans](#) highlighting atmospheric trust litigation campaign
- Click [here](#) to sign a petition calling for School Board Climate Action Resolutions to Protect Students



- <https://acespace.org/>
<https://ourclimateourfuture.org/>
<https://acespace.org/teachers/resources/more>
<https://acespace.org/action>
<https://acespace.org/teachers/faq>
<https://acespace.org/students>



- <https://cleanet.org/index.html>
https://cleanet.org/clean/educational_resources/collection/index.html (check out Refine Results on page right)
<https://cleanet.org/resources/56067.html> (see connection to educational standards)

Art

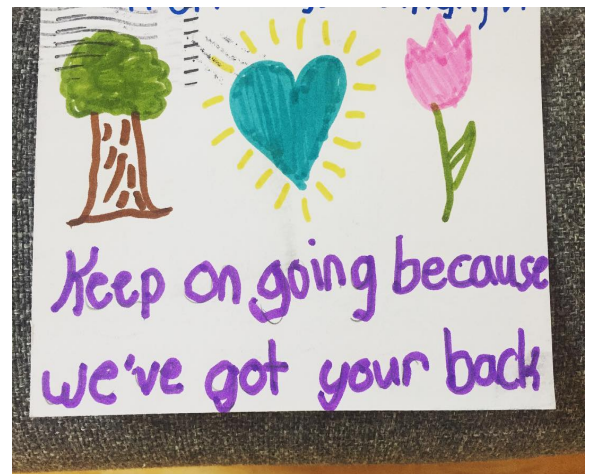
- Get inspired by art supporting *Juliana* celebrated [here](#)
- Review our Trial Art toolkit [here](#)
- Students can design cards or postcards for the plaintiffs
- They can make posters of the plaintiffs (see an example here) [waiting for link]

Actions

- Have a teach in
- Visit the #youthvgov [website](#) and find a local rally when trial begins

Social Media

- Post student photos and videos on Facebook [here](#)
- Check out OCT photos and memes [here](#)
- Use these hashtags:
 - #youthvgov
 - #TrialoftheCentury
 - #SeeYouInCourt
 - #StudentsforJuliana



Note From an Educator

The following letter contains outdated information; although the 21 youth plaintiffs did not go to trial on October 29, 2018, educators continue to request turnout for the *Juliana v. U.S.* trial when it begins.

A TEACHER'S INVITATION TO STAND UP IN SUPPORT OF THE YOUNG JULIANA V US PLAINTIFFS ON THEIR FIRST DAY OF TRIAL, MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2018

I'm a seventh and eighth grade science, math, and social studies teacher at the Friends School of Portland. A few weeks ago this September, the National Science Teachers Association issued a [formal position paper](#) asking K – 12 science teachers throughout the United States, within their science classes, to proactively reject the idea that there is any *scientific* (as distinct from political or sociological) controversy about human-caused global warming. Instead, the NSTA asks us--as a matter of professional responsibility--to convey to our students, from the youngest to the oldest grades, that human-caused greenhouse gas emissions are changing the Earth's climate.

A few weeks from now, on October 29, twenty-one plaintiffs, all students, will attend the first day of trial in [Juliana v. United States](#). A groundbreaking lawsuit, *Juliana* will be heard in the Federal District Court of Oregon. It was filed by young people for young people—in recognition of the fact that young people (and all those yet unborn) have a fundamental right to a stable climate under the United States Constitution and the public trust doctrine. Their case asserts that the federal government is depriving them of life, liberty, property, and the equal protection of the laws by its actions and inactions in relation to the fossil fuel industry. The remedy they seek is not money damages for themselves, but rather a court-ordered national remedial plan for everybody—a plan that phases out fossil fuel emissions and draws down atmospheric levels of CO2 below 350 ppm (from the 411 ppm currently) by the year 2100.

By bringing the third, co-equal branch of government, the judicial, now into play after the legislative and the executive branches have so greatly and for so long fallen short, *Juliana v U.S.* excites the social studies teacher in me. (I think back, for example, on the impact of *Brown v Board of Education* on segregation and civil rights, following decades of legislative and executive inaction.) And by reinforcing my desire to be straight with my students, telling the science like it is, the recent position paper of the National Science Teacher Association excites the science teacher in me.

A unique opportunity for bringing both of these developments into play for your students can be found in the rallies around the *Juliana v US* case, to be held on Monday, October 29, the first day of its trial. I anticipate that others, in state after state, will also be coming out in support of the young plaintiffs on that day. It is an historical moment.

Please join teachers and students from across the country who want to see science and these youth plaintiffs get their day in court. Please support your students in joining us. And please, since we want youth to lead on this issue—know that your own or your students' participation in rally planning is welcomed.

Thank you,

Lee Chisholm
Friends School of Portland/350 Maine

Need more resources? Check out our other toolkits [here](#).