

# Environmental Activism The Voices of Youth Activism

| Xiye Bastida



Xiye Bastida is a youth climate activist based in New York City. Born and raised in Mexico, she is a part of the Otomi-Toltec Indigenous peoples. She first saw the effects of the climate crisis when her hometown was hit with heavy flooding after facing drought. This event showed Bastida that the climate crisis is already being felt around the world.

Bastida began her activism by joining an environmental club that lobbied for legislative change. She gave a speech on Indigenous Cosmology at a United Nations World Urban Forum, and was awarded the 'Spirit of the UN' award in 2018. She led her high school in the first major climate strike in New York City, and was the subject of *We Rise*, a short documentary released by Teen Vogue. Bastida has contributed to *All We Can Save*, an anthology of women writing about climate change, and collaborated in the creation of the short video *Imagine the Future*. She currently attends the University of Pennsylvania, where she studies Environmental Studies with a concentration in Policy, and is the co-founder of Re-Earth Initiative.

1. Which part of Bastida's story do you find most relatable?

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2. Reading Bastida's story, what actions of your own are you inspired to take?

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Climate change can impact every part of our lives. So naturally, we can look at climate activism from a number of different perspectives. The activities below demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature of this topic, asking you to write persuasively, research historical events and think about potential future solutions for the climate crisis.

1. Choose one of the essay questions from the box below. Then, plan out your essay using the template provided.

1. 'We don't inherit the world from our parents, we borrow it from our children.' In light of this statement, explain the importance of environmental activism.
2. Everybody has a part to play in saving the environment. Outline three things that you can do personally to help promote climate justice.

Introduction: identify and introduce your argument.

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Body paragraphs (x3): write a topic sentence stating the main idea; a dot point summary of the paragraph contents; and a final sentence summarising the paragraph and linking to the next part of the essay.

Topic sentence	Topic sentence	Topic sentence
•  •  •	•  •  •	•  •  •
Final sentence	Final sentence	Final sentence

Conclusion: restate your argument, summarise the evidence and conclude the essay.

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2. a) Fill in the timeline of important dates in the history of environmental activism with the events in the box below. Some of these events were mentioned in the video, while others you will need to research. The first one has been done for you as an example.

- World Wide Fund established
- Greenpeace established
- First Earth Day
- Sinking of the Rainbow Warrior
- First School Strike for Climate
- Rio Earth Summit
- Paris Agreement
- Kyoto Protocol
- Complaint to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Launch of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

1961	World Wide Fund established

b) Based on the frequency of events, what conclusions can you draw about the pace of successful activism resulting in change? Is it getting faster or slower? Why do you think this is the case?

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3. Farming animals for food has contributed to the climate crisis. This has led many climate justice activists to switch to a more plant-based diet. But some researchers have offered an alternative: eating insects. Insects are both sustainable and high in protein, and there many people around the world who already eat insects. Examples of edible insects include witchetty grubs, crickets, grasshoppers and locusts.

a) Select one type of edible insect to research and fill in the table below with some key details.

Name <i>What is the insect called?</i>	
Habitat <i>Where does it live?</i>	
Appearance <i>What does it look like?</i>	
Life cycle <i>How does it reproduce?</i>	
Preparation <i>How is it cooked/eaten?</i>	
Taste <i>What food does it resemble?</i>	
Commonly eaten by <i>What cultures eat it already?</i>	
Farmed or wild <i>How is it sourced as a food?</i>	

b) Would you eat this insect if someone offered it to you? Why or why not?

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**Suggested Responses**

1. Student responses will vary. The introduction should demonstrate their understanding of the statement and express their view on the topic. Body paragraphs may include:

Question 1	Question 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about climate change</li> <li>• An acknowledgment that we are experiencing a climate emergency, and some information to back this up</li> <li>• A discussion about sustainability: what it means and why it matters</li> <li>• A discussion about global equity: how some countries are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than others, including an example</li> <li>• A reflection that young people are most impacted by climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining an environmental organisation</li> <li>• Taking part in school strikes</li> <li>• Creating or signing petitions</li> <li>• Writing to government representatives</li> <li>• Raising awareness on social media</li> <li>• Studying alternative energy sources</li> <li>• Taking practical steps themselves e.g. planting trees, eating less meat, recycling</li> </ul>

2. a)

1961	World Wide Fund established
1970	First Earth Day
1971	Greenpeace established
1985	Sinking of the Rainbow Warrior
1988	Launch of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
1992	Rio Earth Summit
1997	Kyoto Protocol
2015	Paris Agreement
2018	First School Strike for Climate
2019	Complaint to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

b) Student responses should identify that the pace of change is accelerating: more events are happening closer together. This can be explained by the increasing awareness of the urgency of climate change and the adoption of the movement by young people.

3. a) Student responses will vary. The following is a sample response.

Name <i>What is the insect called?</i>	Witchetty grub
Habitat <i>Where does it live?</i>	Trees, among the roots of the witchetty bush
Appearance <i>What does it look like?</i>	A large, creamy-white coloured grub
Life cycle <i>How does it reproduce?</i>	Grub is the larval stage in a four-stage cycle: egg, larva, cocoon, moth
Preparation <i>How is it cooked/eaten?</i>	Can be eaten raw or cooked in hot ashes
Taste <i>What food does it resemble?</i>	Raw grubs taste nutty; cooked grubs taste like chicken
Commonly eaten by <i>What cultures eat it already?</i>	Australian Indigenous peoples
Farmed or wild <i>How is it sourced as a food?</i>	Harvested from the wild

b) Student responses will vary.