

# Introduction to Students for Sustainable Water (S<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>O): Inspiring Students through the Power of Story

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<https://s2h2o.org/>

## Session title:

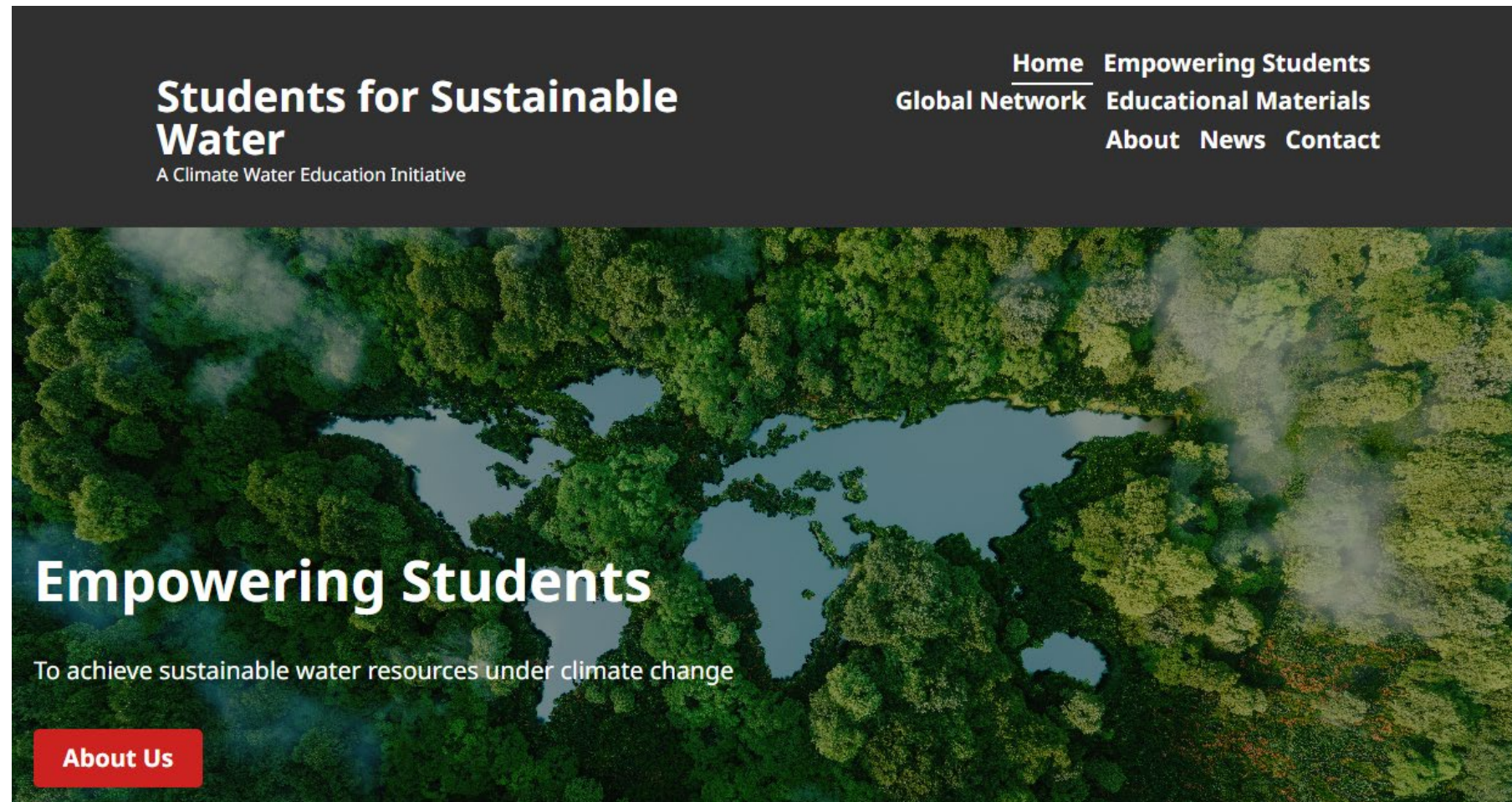
Students for sustainable water  
in US and Japan

## Conference:

Academic Conference by  
Japanese Association of  
Hydrological Sciences

Yamanashi University,  
Yamanashi, Japan

October 12, 2024



Students for Sustainable Water



# Three Goals of S<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>O

## Empowering Students



We help empower students dedicated to making a positive difference in their local communities. [Learn more.](#)

## Join a Global Network



Join us! Create and share a story about your local water resources and adaptation strategies to climate change. [Learn more.](#)

## Educational Materials



We provide science-based educational materials about water resources and climate change for educators and students. [Learn more.](#)



# Empowering Students

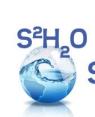
- Climate change will impact water supply for humans and the environment.
- S<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>O provides resources to help students develop and share stories.
- **Local stories about water and climate change can educate, engage, and connect people about solutions!**

<https://s2h2o.org/global-network/>

## Resources about Storytelling and Climate Change

There are a growing number of educational resources about the power of storytelling to combat climate change. Here are a few of our favorites:

- **Another tool in the fight against climate change: storytelling.** MIT Technology Review, by Devi Lockwood, December 23, 2021. "...one of the most powerful forms of climate action is to listen deeply to people already affected by the crisis. To ensure that solutions actually help communities most at risk, we must first hear their stories."
- **Climate Storytelling: A Quick Guide**, by the American Public Health Association
- **Hearts and Minds: Storytelling and Climate Change**, from The New York Times Climate Hub.
- **Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story**, by Randy Olson, The University of Chicago Press.





# Power of Storytelling

“...a story shows how climate change affects real people and what can be done about it. Through emotion and connection to common values, like health, **stories create empathy and understanding.**”

## Climate Storytelling: A Quick Guide

From APHA's Center for Climate, Health and Equity workshop, "Making Climate Change Personal for Effective Communication."

### There is power in your personal story!

Have you or those you care about felt the physical and mental health effects of climate-related events? What actions have you taken, and which solutions have worked? Personal experience makes you your own expert, and your story has more power to drive climate action than facts alone.

Stories make climate change relatable by drawing on common experience and core human values, like health. Compelling stories generate empathy and understanding. They take listeners on an emotional journey and offer a sense of hope that inspires positive change.

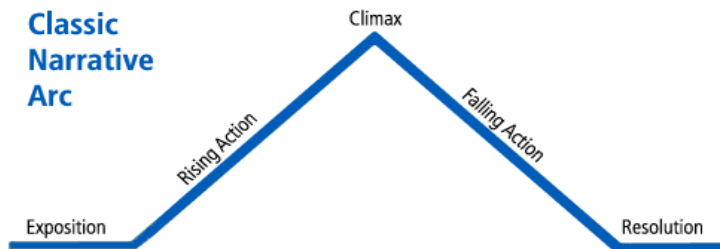
### Not sure where to start?

Use these guiding principles in your story:<sup>1</sup>

- **People:** Put people first! **Understand your audience's** experiences, knowledge and social contexts.
- **Values:** Connect with the values of your audience, **spark empathy** and **be relevant** to what is already going on in their lives.
- **Ambivalence:** Show people that their **action is needed, doable and worth it**. Too much fear, confusion or apathy surrounding the climate crisis creates emotional numbing and feelings of hopelessness.
- **Action:** Emphasize solutions and benefits. **Inspire and empower** your audience with clear ways everyone can contribute to solutions.

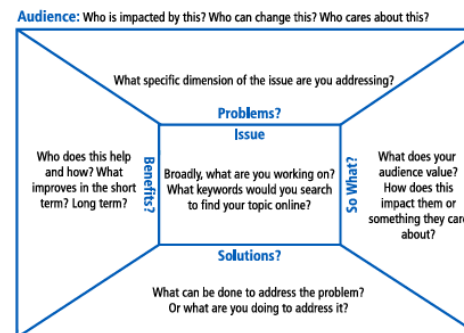
### Build your story using ABT:<sup>2</sup>

- Exposition/Beginning: "And" sets the scene
- Climax/Middle: "But" shows the problem or challenge
- Resolution/End: "Therefore" describes action to solve the problem



Adapted from Cheryl Brumley's "Stepping out of the academic box" Geographical Society Annual Conference, 2014

### Frame your story with a message box.



Adapted from COMPASS Science Communication, Inc., Message Box Workbook, 2017, available at <https://www.compasscomm.org/message-box-online>

### Use these universal story elements:<sup>3</sup>

- ☐ A relatable protagonist, who changes over time
- ☐ A narrative arc that builds tension and anticipation
- ☐ Action that puts people in conflict with obstacles
- ☐ A plot resolution to end tension and provide payoff
- ☐ A larger meaning that informs and inspires

### General Tips:

**Match audience to message.** Are you speaking to a colleague? Family member? Elected official? How you tell your story depends on who is listening and how you want them to respond.

**Show, don't tell.** Facts tell how climate change impacts health, but a story shows how climate change affects real people and what can be done about it. Through emotion and connection to common values, like health, stories create empathy and understanding.

### References

1. Markowitz, E., Hodge, C., & Harp, G. (2014). Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication. Retrieved from <http://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ecoAmerica-CRED-2014-Connecting-on-Climate.pdf>
2. Olson, R. (2015). Houston, we have a narrative: why science needs story. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
3. ecoAmerica: 2016. 15 Steps To Create Effective Climate Communications. ecoAmerica. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from [https://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/5\\_ea\\_15\\_steps.pdf](https://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/5_ea_15_steps.pdf)



# Educational Materials

- Provide a list of some favorite online educational resources for students and teachers.

<https://s2h2o.org/educational-materials/>

## Educational Resources about Water Resources and Climate Change

This is a list of some of our favorite websites and online resources for teachers and students to learn more about water resources, the hydrologic cycle, and climate change. Please check back as we update the list as we find new favorites.

### Environmental Fellowships for Students

**ECO Circle International:** <https://www.ecocircleinternational.org/> A youth-led non-profit bridging environmental education and sustainable action, through international student fellowships and educational platforms. ("ECO Circle International is a fantastic program! I learned a lot about environmental and international issues, and this experience was a big inspiration to develop Students for Sustainable Water." -[Talía, founder of S<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>O](#))

### Educational Resources for Teachers and Students

**Environmental Protection Agency – Climate Change Resources for Educators and Students:** <https://www.epa.gov/climate-change/climate-change-resources-educators-and-students> EPA's homepage for educational resources for teachers and students to learn about climate change and become more resilient to its impacts.

**NASA Climate Kids:** <https://climatekids.nasa.gov/> NASA's interactive website with educational activities, articles, videos about the science behind climate and how it is affecting the earth.







# Global Network

- Encourage joining our global network by sharing your story!
- Topics include:
  - Water related hazards (flooding, drought, wildfire)
  - Potential impacts of climate change
  - Climate resilience and adaptation
  - Encourage best scientific understanding, management actions, and personal experiences.
- Guidance for students on how to create and share their story

<https://s2h2o.org/global-network/>

## Global Network

Through education and engagement, today's students will champion sustainable solutions to the global water crisis. To find sustainable solutions, the world needs to hear the voice of the current generation of student through inspirational stories.

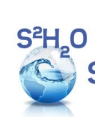
Join our global network by creating a story about your local water resources, water related hazards (e.g., flooding, drought, pollution, and wildfire), potential impacts of climate change, and climate resilience and adaptation. We encourage students and educators to work together to create stories based on best scientific research and understanding, policy decisions, environmental justice, management actions, and personal experience.

### Stories by our Student Network:

To view stories created by our student network and other example stories about water and climate change, please see the [growing list of stories here](#).

### How to Create and Share your Own Story?

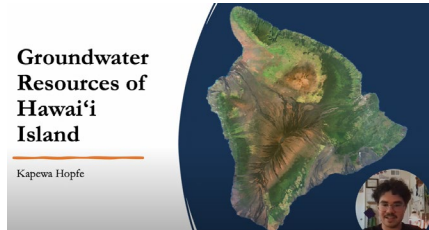
To learn how to create and share your story on our Students for Sustainable Water platform, please see our [Story Guidance Document](#).





# Thank You!

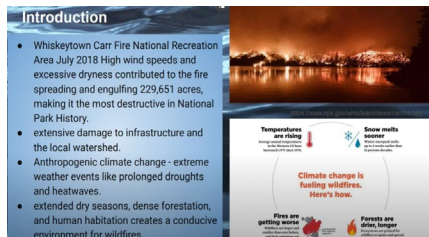
<https://s2h2o.org/student-stories/>



- Groundwater resources on Hawai'i Island



- Social networking and well use during disaster in Wakayama City, Japan



- Impacts of wildfire on water quality in California



- Stream water quality monitoring, Monterey Bay



- Intersection of climate change and nuclear disarmament



- Fog as a water supply, Santa Cruz, California