Climate Change Books

**Cli-Fi (Climate Change Fiction)**

**Same Sun Here**

Summary: In this extraordinary novel in letters, an Indian immigrant girl in New York City and a Kentucky coal miner's son find strength and perspective by sharing their true selves across the miles. With honesty and humor, Meena and River bridge the miles between them, creating a friendship that inspires bravery and defeats cultural misconceptions. Narrated in two voices, each voice distinctly articulated by a separate gifted author, this chronicle of two lives powerfully conveys the great value of being and having a friend and the joys of opening our lives to others who live beneath the same sun.

Questions:

- What is mountaintop removal (MTR)? Why do coal companies use this mining process? Why do some of River’s neighbors support MTR? Why do Mamaw and River oppose it?
- Take a closing look at the title, Same Sun Here. What makes it so fitting for this book? At what point in the novel does Meena use that phrase?

Links to Articles/Videos:

- Communities at Risk from Mountaintop Removal—Inman, Virginia [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcBU0EvmVCK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcBU0EvmVCK)

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**Exodus**

Summary: It is 2099 - and the world is gradually drowning, as mighty Arctic ice floes melt, the seas rise, and land disappears forever beneath storm-tossed waves. For 15-year-old Mara, her family and community, huddled on the fast-disappearing island of Wing, the new century brings flight. Packed into tiny boats, a terrifying journey begins to a bizarre city that rises into the sky, built on the drowned remains of the ancient city of Glasgow. But even here there is no safety and, shut out of the city, Mara realizes they are asylum-seekers in a world torn between high-tech wizardry and the most primitive injustice. To save her people, Mara must not only find a way into the city but also search for a new land and a new home.
Questions:

- Why are the people of Wing afraid to face their future? What do they risk and lose by ignoring Tain’s warnings? Why do you think they eventually listen to Mara when she publicly agrees with Tain?
- In many ways Exodus is a cautionary tale. Mara comes to a disturbing conclusion when discussing the past with Gorbals. She says, “Our ancestors stole our future” (174). What is the author trying to tell us? What do we owe to our planet? What do we owe to future generations? If Mara could go back and speak with people in our time, what do you think she would say? Do you think anyone would listen?

Quotes:

- “You can betray someone with a word or an action. You can betray them with silence or inaction too. And in betraying that one person, you can betray a whole world.”
- “We lost our city because of that too. [She] says human beings burned up the power of the Earth, not just the trees but so much of the goodness of the planet that the world grew hot and the great ice mountains melted and flooded the lands…Our ancestors stole our future.”

Links to Articles/Tools:

- Resettling China’s ‘Ecological Migrants’
- Surging Seas http://sealevel.climatecentral.org/maps
- PHOTOS: This Alaskan Village Will Be Underwater In 10 Years
  http://kuow.org/post/photos-alaskan-village-will-be-underwater-10-years
- Impacts of Climate Change in the Pacific Region
  http://d3tt741pwxqwm0.cloudfront.net/WGBH/pcep14/pcep15-int-impacts/index.html

The Carbon Diaries 2015

Summary: It's the year 2015, a time when global warming has begun to ravage the environment. In response, the United Kingdom becomes the first country to mandate carbon rationing—a well-intentioned plan that goes tragically awry. When her carbon debit card arrives in the mail, sixteen-year-old Laura is just trying to pass her exams, manage her eco-punk band, and catch the attention of her gorgeous classmate Ravi. But as multiple natural disasters strike and Laura's parents head toward divorce, her world spirals out of control. A severe drought sparks fires and deadly riots; then the highest-category hurricane in recent
history strikes London. With the death toll in the thousands and climbing, Laura and her family face the unimaginable as her older sister clings to life.

Questions:
- Do you think carbon rationing is possible in the near future? What would it look like?
- Laura experiences many typical teenage emotions, but also feels she has been robbed of her teenage years. How is this conflict revealed? At what point does Laura begin to discover her inner power?
- Why does Laura say the energy crisis is about greed? How does panic buying create a greater crisis? Explain the connection between the energy crisis and the need for stricter anti-terrorism laws.
- Kim and Laura have very different personalities and very different responses to rationing. Discuss.

Links to Resources:

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**Shipbreaker**

Summary: In America's Gulf Coast region, where grounded oil tankers are being broken down for parts, Nailer, a teenage boy, works the light crew, scavenging for copper wiring just to make quota--and hopefully live to see another day. But when, by luck or chance, he discovers an exquisite clipper ship beached during a recent hurricane, Nailer faces the most important decision of his life: Strip the ship for all it's worth or rescue its lone survivor, a beautiful and wealthy girl who could lead him to a better life.

Questions:
- The story takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where climate change has completely altered the processes of civilization. Discuss the importance of the setting to the events of the story.
- Were you satisfied with the ending of the book? Is there a tone of hope or despair?
- The science of climate change was not outwardly discussed in this book. Have students come up with their own ways to incorporate the science into the book.

Links to Articles:
- The Ship-Breakers (article) In Bangladesh men desperate for work perform one of the world’s most dangerous jobs
  https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2014/05/The-Ship-Breakers/
  (lots of connections to science, social studies, and ELA)

Flight Behavior

Summary: Flight Behavior takes on one of the most contentious subjects of our time: climate change. With a deft and versatile empathy Kingsolver dissects the motives that drive denial and belief in a precarious world. Flight Behavior is a brilliant and suspenseful novel set in present day Appalachia; a breathtaking parable of catastrophe and denial that explores how the complexities we inevitably encounter in life lead us to believe in our particular chosen truths. Kingolver's riveting story concerns a young wife and mother on a failing farm in rural Tennessee who experiences something she cannot explain, and how her discovery energizes various competing factions—religious leaders, climate scientists, environmentalists, politicians—trapping her in the center of the conflict and ultimately opening up her world. Flight Behavior is arguably Kingsolver's most thrilling and accessible novel to date, and like so many other of her acclaimed works, represents contemporary American fiction at its finest.

Questions:
- What is the significance of the novel’s title? Talk about the imagery of flight. How is it represented throughout the story?
- How does Della react when she first sees the Monarchs? What greater meaning do the butterflies hold for her? How is she like the butterflies? How does finding them transform her life? Were the butterflies a miracle?
- Though she may not have a formal education beside her high school diploma, would you call Dellarobia wise? Where does her knowledge come from?
- It is exceedingly difficult for humans to see and grasp and feel connected to events that are outside the scope of our everyday lives. How often have you hear this same sentiment expressed with respect to environmental changes in your life?

Links to Articles:
- Climate Change May Disrupt Monarch Butterfly Migration
- Monarch butterfly migration was off this year and researchers are worried
  https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/monarch-butterfly-migration-wa
Non-Fiction
The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

Summary: William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger, and a place where hope and opportunity were hard to find. But William had read about windmills in a book called Using Energy, and he dreamed of building one that would bring electricity and water to his village and change his life and the lives of those around him. His neighbors may have mocked him and called him misala—crazy—but William was determined to show them what a little grit and ingenuity could do. Here is the remarkable story about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity. The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind will inspire anyone who doubts the power of one individual's ability to change his community and better the lives of those around him.

Questions:

- Could you imagine living without electricity? What would your life be like? Describe William's life and compare it to American teenagers and even your own.
- What did electricity and the creation of the windmill mean for William, his family, and his village? What might his accomplishment mean for the world?
- William was desperate to stay in school but could not because of money. Think about American students. Why do you think with all the opportunities for schooling, students are disinterested in learning? In your opinion, what accounts for the differences between William and his American counterparts?
- William writes of the corruption, greed, nonexistent services, and lack of empathy that turned the drought into a disaster for average people like him and his family. Can you see any similarities with our own culture, both past and present? Think about the American Depression. How did that compare to Malawi’s drought?

Links to Articles/Videos/Resources:

- What we know — and don’t — about climate change in Africa: [https://ensia.com/notable/climate-impacts-africa/](https://ensia.com/notable/climate-impacts-africa/)
- How I Harnessed the Wind: [https://www.ted.com/talks/william_kamkwamba_how_i_harnessed_the_wind](https://www.ted.com/talks/william_kamkwamba_how_i_harnessed_the_wind)
How I Built a Windmill
https://www.ted.com/talks/william_kamkwamba_on_building_a_windmill

Drawdown

Summary: *Drawdown* maps, measures, models, and describes the 100 most substantive solutions to global warming. For each solution, we describe its history, the carbon impact it provides, the relative cost and savings, the path to adoption, and how it works. The goal of the research that informs *Drawdown* is to determine if we can reverse the buildup of atmospheric carbon within thirty years. All solutions modeled are already in place, well understood, analyzed based on peer-reviewed science, and are expanding around the world.

Questions:

- What solution surprised you the most? Why?
- How could you use this book with your students?
- How could you use this book to make changes in your school?

Links to Articles:

- Paul Hawken on One Hundred Solutions to the Climate Crisis https://e360.yale.edu/features/paul-hawken-on-one-hundred-solutions-to-the-climate-crisis