

Subject	Science: Grades 6-8
Topic	Navigating Confirmation Bias in the Climate Change Debate
Materials	
Standards	
Objective	<p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define Confirmation Bias and identify examples in the context of climate change ● Understand strategies to overcome the Confirmation Bias
Hook and Warm Up (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start with a climate change-related headline or statement (e.g., “Climate change is a hoax,” or “Climate change is the biggest crisis facing humanity.”) ● Ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you feel when you hear these statements? ○ Do you agree or disagree? Why? ● Introduce the concept of Confirmation Bias as the tendency to interpret information in a way that confirms your preexisting beliefs or hypotheses. ● Provide examples of Confirmation Bias in everyday life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some people only seek out news sources that align with their political views, like FOX or MSNBC. ○ You might consume an energy drink every morning on your way to school, and so you ignore evidence of their harmful effects on your health.
Short Lecture (10 minutes)	<p>Review the issues surrounding climate change, focusing on how different groups of people have chosen to respond to the crisis (Republicans v. Democrats; Oil Companies v. Activists; First World v. Third World, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how Confirmation Bias can influence interpretations of climate change, leading individuals to selectively interpret information based on their beliefs or biases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, someone who believes climate change is a hoax might point to a particularly cold winter as evidence against climate change while ignoring the broader, long-term global warming trend. By focusing on isolated weather events they confirm their belief that the climate is not warming. ○ On the other side, an environmental activist might focus exclusively on the most extreme predictions about climate change, and disregard studies that show less severe outcomes or incremental improvements due to mitigation

	<p>efforts, reinforcing their belief that climate catastrophe is imminent and unavoidable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students if they have ever experienced or witnessed Confirmation Bias in their daily lives, on social media, or in climate change discussions. ● Emphasize the importance of approaching all issues with an open mind and critically evaluating different types of evidence.
Group Activity (15 minutes)	<p>Identifying Confirmation Bias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Divide students into small groups. Give each group a set of short statements or excerpts from real-world articles on climate change. About half of the statements should contain examples of Confirmation Bias. ● Ask students to work together to identify which statements exhibit Confirmation Bias. ● Discuss how these biases could impact the way people perceive and respond to the issue of climate change. ● Ask each group to share one example they discussed, and as a class, analyze how the bias could affect decision-making or public opinion about climate change.
Short Discussion	<p>Strategies for Overcoming Confirmation Bias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Think of your beliefs and opinions as software you are trying to debug rather than things that need to be defended. ● You can overcome Confirmation Bias if you question your assumptions. Asking basic questions about your beliefs and “What if” questions can help you recognize Confirmation Bias. ● Seeking out a diversity of thought and engaging with a wide range of people will expose you to a variety of ideas and opinions.
Assessment (10 minutes)	<p>Reflection and Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss how Confirmation Bias can prevent productive conversations about climate change and lead to a lack of action. ● Discuss how questioning one’s assumptions about climate change could help them avoid the Confirmation Bias. ● Discuss how working with different types of people could help you avoid Confirmation Bias regarding climate change.
Closure (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wrap up the discussion by summarizing key takeaways about Confirmation Bias and its impact, as well as strategies to mitigate its effects.