Let's Talk About Climate	Grade 7-8 STEM Skills and Connections

Handout - Extension

Group Members: _____

Rhetorical Devices
The use of rhetoric isn't good or bad; rhetoric is just what we call it when we analyze how people are talking about a topic.

Here are some examples of things we can use to do that analysis:

Logos is an appeal to logic. Earlier, we learned about logical reasoning and fallacies.

Ethos is an appeal to authority or expertise. Often, this looks like quoting or discussing the actions of a respected individual. An article for an anti-climate change audience might use ethos by quoting a famous climate denial TikTok account or podcast, because that person is seen as an authority within that community. Meanwhile, an article for an audience wanting to act might quote a scientist or a politician, because even if that isn't a household name, to someone who thinks scientists have answers, a scientist has ethos.

Pathos is an appeal to emotion. People's word choices can be important; look out for charged words and ask what emotions they are trying to evoke. Pay special attention to adjectives and metaphors. For example, 'Catastrophic levels of ice melt this year' evokes a different emotion than 'Ice melt increases by 4%', or even, 'Ice melt increases by only 4%'.

Condensation symbols are images used to concisely represent an idea. For example, this popular image is often used when discussing the arctic and climate change.

Data visualization is a technique for representing numbers in a visual way. Always check to see if numbers are being manipulated to look dramatic using scale, imagery, and more.

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1. Find something online about climate change. It can be a video, a podcast, a news story, a blog post, a magazine article – it just must have been made for the public.
2. Look for rhetorical devices.
3. Are there any appeals to emotion? Describe them:

4. Are there any appeals to authority? Describe them:

5. Are there visual or audio effects which are meant to evoke a specific effect, or steer the opinion of the audience? For example, ominous or cheerful music, dramatic images, or unique data visualizations. Describe them.