

# Breaking Down OneNYC

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## Description:

This lesson presents students with real-world strategies for addressing climate change here in New York City. With this lesson, students will play the role of city policy-makers by modeling the creation of OneNYC for their local school community. They will take a systems-thinking approach to small-scale problem solving and consider stakeholder engagement along the way.

## Objectives:

- Introduce students to OneNYC
- Engage students in conversations with peers on solutions for their school community
- Manipulate data from surveys to identify stakeholder interests

## Vocabulary:

Policy, resiliency, stakeholder, sustainability

## Materials:

- Computers, laptops, or tablets with internet access

## Background Information:

In order to address concerns regarding sustainability and resiliency, New York City created OneNYC. First published in April 2015 under Mayor Bill de Blasio, OneNYC aims to create a “strong and just city” through inclusive growth and climate action. OneNYC focuses on addressing eight themes, including: A Vibrant Democracy, An Inclusive Economy, Thriving Neighborhoods, Healthy Lives, Equity and

Excellence in Education, A Livable Climate, Efficient Mobility, and Modern Infrastructure. The Livable Climate topic is the most connected to concepts explored in this module, but because climate change is an intersectional issue, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with the main goals and strategies within each theme.

OneNYC 2050 is a bold strategic plan and New York City’s Green New Deal to confront the climate crisis, achieve equity, strengthen our democracy, and build a strong and fair city that works for all New Yorkers.

This lesson explores the most recent iteration of the strategic plan, OneNYC 2050, released in April 2019.

## Method:

- Familiarize your students with the purpose and goals of OneNYC. Students should read parts of the document (either the executive summary or climate specific sections like [A Livable Climate](#)). You may choose to do so by synthesizing it for your students in a handout or PowerPoint presentation.
- Discuss the following questions: Why is it important for New York City to have this plan? What does OneNYC set out to accomplish? Who are the stakeholders involved in developing OneNYC? Who is impacted by OneNYC? Be sure to write the responses to these questions on the board.
- Tell the class that they are going to develop their own version of OneNYC for their school community. To do so, they will model the process that the OneNYC team underwent. This process is outlined in the “How New Yorkers Shaped OneNYC 2050” section of

the [full report on pages 38-41](#). Read through these pages with the class to familiarize yourselves with this process.

- Using this model introduces students to real-world community engagement strategies. As you will read in the report, prior to determining the content of OneNYC, the team developed a short survey and distributed it to the public. This helped to ensure that the goals and strategies in OneNYC accurately represent the interests of New Yorkers. The survey included the question: “What do you think are the most important issues facing New York City’s future?” and offered the chance to share one or more ideas for how New York City could address those issues.
- Instruct students to design a survey to be distributed to various stakeholders within their school community. Ask students to brainstorm and identify the different stakeholders in their school or the greater school community. These stakeholders can include students, teachers, parents, school administrators, custodial staff, school bus drivers, school security, nearby business owners, etc. Be sure to keep the survey short and broad so each stakeholder can share their thoughts appropriately. Consider including a question like the one used in the OneNYC survey.
- As a class, choose how you would like to disseminate the survey. Consider creating an online survey through Survey Monkey or Google Forms. If that is not feasible, consider printing the survey and design an accompanying digital spreadsheet where students can manually insert responses.
- Try to distribute the survey as widely as possible. Provide a time frame for when the survey can be completed and returned.

- Once survey responses have been collected, organize the answers and identify which responses were the most common. If answers vary widely, consider the overarching themes that are most common (i.e. water quality, waste and recycling, and inclusivity and school spirit). Decide how to organize the data as a class. You might choose to make graphs to help visualize responses (share examples used in OneNYC).
- Based on the responses, identify the top priorities of your school community.
- Ask students to brainstorm some goals and potential projects that address these goals, similar to how OneNYC identifies goals and projects at the city level. Be sure to guide the brainstorming process to ensure the project ideas are feasible. You might choose to divide the class into smaller groups that are focused on the categories highlighted in the survey responses.
- Once students decide on their goals and potential projects, ask students to prepare something that outlines their ideas, like a mind-map or a 1-2 page write-up. Write-ups should include their ideas for implementing the project, some ways to measure the progress of said project, and their reasons for deciding on these projects (with data from the survey to support their answers).
- Use the write-ups to create your school’s OneNYC plan. Consider presenting this plan to your school community, or your school administration. A mock press conference could be a great forum for presenting this project.

### **Discussion:**

- As New Yorkers, how can we engage with the city’s climate strategies?

- How should we communicate about local climate policy with friends and family?
- How does OneNYC fit into the larger picture of international climate policy? Explore [the Paris Agreement](#), and the [United States Climate Alliance](#).

### **Extension:**

- Compare and contrast OneNYC to other cities' climate strategies. Boston's [Climate Action Plan](#) is a great place to begin this research.

- Research the city's historic climate change policies starting from 2007. Create a policy timeline for NYC, paying special attention to Hurricane Sandy.
  - How have climate change policies in NYC evolved?
  - How can new policies continue to address our concerns?

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