

## Process Paper

When researching topics, we were interested in expanding our knowledge beyond events taught in our high school classes. We came across the Kyoto Protocol and were immediately drawn to it. At the time, the annual United Nations climate summit in Glasgow was approaching and researching climate policy seemed as pertinent as ever. Both of us are passionate about environmental activism and are part of Minnesota Youth Climate Justice and the environmental club at our school. We have seen and been a part of a dire push from our generation to address the climate crisis through social protest. Applying this passion to a History Day project interested us, and it felt important to learn about the history of climate policy. The Kyoto Protocol, an international diplomatic treaty limiting carbon emissions, encompassed the debate around where economic needs and global policy meet, exemplifying this year's theme—debate and diplomacy.

We began our research by gaining background knowledge through articles and websites. We found the UN site helpful as it included links to primary documents and overviews of each diplomatic summit the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has hosted. After gaining general knowledge, we dove deeper into our research. At the East Side Freedom Library, we discovered books, both primary and secondary, that furthered our understanding. Author Naomi Klein, an environmental activist and professor, who has multiple edifying books including *On Fire* and *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, shifted our perspective on how politicians are addressing the climate crisis. We also interviewed professors of Environmental Studies at Macalester College and the University of Minnesota.

We chose to present our project as a documentary because it allows us to creatively convey our research. With a time limit rather than word limit, we had more freedom with what we were able to include in our argument. After writing and revising our script, we recorded in GarageBand. With this recording, we used FinalCut Pro to compile our documentary. Using video, images, and historical footage along with graphics we created, we visually represented our research in a way that engages the audience.

On December 11, 1997, international diplomats came together to sign the Kyoto Protocol, the first agreement to require nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Kyoto Protocol addressed the international debate over how to prevent what would become the 21st century's most consequential problem—climate change. Ultimately, the failure of the Kyoto Protocol allowed the continued rise of greenhouse gas emissions but its successes established the precedent for future diplomatic climate summits.

The Kyoto Protocol continues to shape history as the model for climate politics. Despite its failures, the Kyoto Protocol created change by becoming the first binding international agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions. The debates around the Kyoto Protocol led to a course of action that incorporates sustainable development in governmental policy and prioritizes environmental protection as a part of economic growth. The recognition of the environment as a primary international concern allowed for a future of climate policy.