

GRETA THUNBERG, MUSIC, AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Est. Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: Civics, General Music

Age Range: Middle & High School


See the full lesson [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



How have musicians helped spread climate activist Greta Thunberg's message?

In this lesson you will:


- Differentiate between the practice of sampling, remixing, and covering a song or audio source
 - Discover the work of climate activist Greta Thunberg
 - Watch Greta Thunberg's 2019 U.N. speech
 - Examine the way music can help spread social messages to a larger audience
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Read **this handout** introducing environmental activist Greta Thunberg and providing a transcript of a speech she gave before the United Nations in 2019.





Referring back to the handout, consider or ask a friend:

- Where did this speech take place? What is the U.N.? (You can learn more about the U.N. [here](#).)
 - How would you describe the mood of this speech? Why might Thunberg be portraying this mood?
 - Why might have Thunberg chosen to begin the speech with the notion that she shouldn't be at the U.N.? Why might she feel that way?
 - In Paragraph 3, how does Thunberg describe her concerns? What does she accuse the U.N. leadership to be overly concerned with?
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- In Paragraph 3, why might Thunberg describe “eternal economic growth” as a “fairy tale?”
 - In Paragraph 3, Thunberg describes herself as “one of the lucky ones.” What might she mean by this?
 - Throughout the speech, Thunberg often uses the term “us.” Who might she be referring to when she says that?
 - What is she accusing the U.N. leadership of in paragraph 11? How might she be using irony in this accusation?
 - How does she end her speech? How would you summarize Thunberg’s message to the U.N.?
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GRETA'S SPEECH

Thunberg's speech grew quickly in popularity, thanks in part to musicians who used the musical practices of covering, sampling, and remixing to spread her message.

John Meredith, the drummer from the band Suaka, provided background music and sang the words to Thunberg's speech in a style characteristic of the Death Metal genre. He then posted the video to YouTube, titled "How Dare You," which soon went viral.





Watch a clip of Meredith's version of Thunberg's speech [here](#), or the full version [here](#).

“When I saw her speech, I was very impressed by her passion and outrage, and the words she chose just evoked the darkness of the metal music I love: Entombed, Gojira, At the Gates, Sepultura. My personal stance is that individuals need to do their part to strive to conserve and preserve our environment.”

-John Meredith



Musician David Scott, who performs as “The Kiffness,” created a mashup of Thunberg’s speech with the Fatboy Slim song “Right Here, Right Now.” Fatboy Slim would then go on to play Scott’s mashup during his performances.

See a clip of the “Right Here, Right Now” mashup [here](#), or the full version [here](#).





CRYSTAL CLEAR

Singer Megan Washington worked with composer Robert Davidson to create their own musical version of Thunberg's speech, titled "Crystal Clear."



Watch a clip of “Crystal Clear” [here](#), or the full version [here](#).


“Greta’s speech is the definition of punk, and more important than any song that has been written in my lifetime, so I couldn’t ‘look to the future’ without including it. I really hope this video moves people, because it’s time for people to start moving.”

-Megan Washington





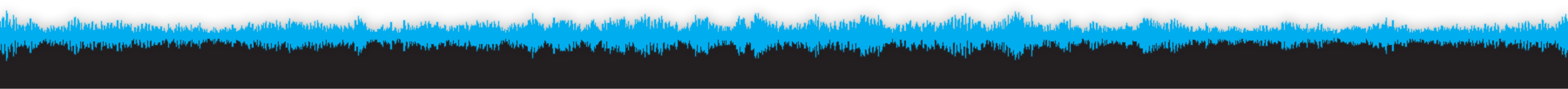
Consider or ask a friend:

- In what ways did each musician use Greta Thunberg's speech for their music? Consider, for example, whether the musicians used a recording of the speech, or recited Thunberg's words themselves.
 - What might these musician's actions say about the way music can spread a social message?
 - Can you think of any other instance where music helped spread a social message?
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Examine the definitions of the musical terms remixing, sampling, and covering [here](#).

Then consider or ask a friend:

- Which of the pieces of music you listened to would best be described as a remix? Why?
 - Which of the pieces of music you listened to would best be described as a cover? Why?
 - Which of the pieces of music you listened to would best be described as sampling? Why?
 - Were any of the pieces of music you heard a combination of different techniques? Which techniques specifically?
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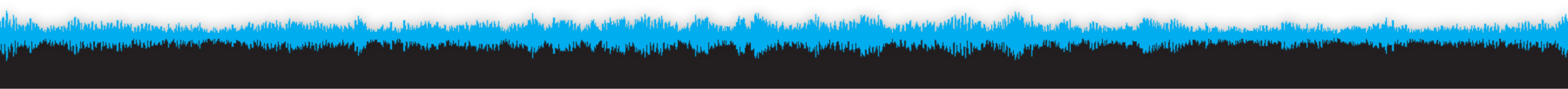
SUMMARY

- Greta Thunberg is an internationally known young climate activist
- In 2019, she gave a speech before the United Nations which has since become famous
- Musicians helped disseminate Thunberg's speech by implementing it into their music through the practices of remixing, covering, and sampling



BE CREATIVE

- Watch **this video** of Greta Thunberg's actions at U.N.'s COP25 Conference in Chile in 2019.
- At the same conference, Indigenous Youth Leader Rose Whipple spoke. Hear what she said in **this video**.

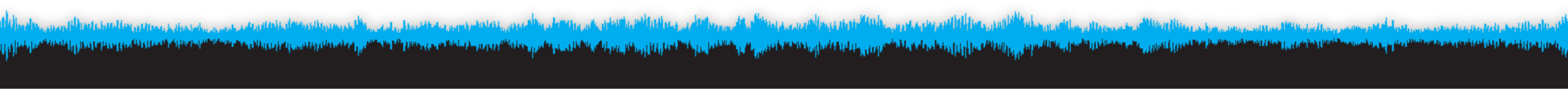


BE CREATIVE

Create your own remix, sample, or cover of Rose Whipple's statement.

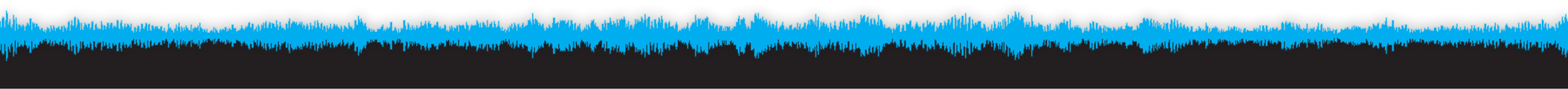
First, outline your musical project, considering:

- Whether you will sampling, remixing, covering, or using a mix of techniques to spread Whipple's message.
- The title of the song.
- What sections of Whipple's statement you will use.
- What genre/style your piece of music will be, and how that genre/style fits with Whipple's statement.



BE CREATIVE

Then, create your piece of music! You can create your song using a program like Garageband or **Audacity**. You can even simply sing it into your phone using a voice memo app.



CONNECT

Share your work with us! Either you or an adult in your life can share your spontaneous prose or cut-up writing piece with TeachRock on **Instagram** or **Facebook**, email to **info@teachrock.org**, or Tweet it to **@TeachRock**



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