

Conversations With Kate

Lesson Guide Based On Voice Of America News

“Swedish Teen Accuses United Kingdom Of Irresponsible Behavior Over Climate Change”



Web link <https://www.voanews.com/a/swedish-teen-accuses-uk-of-irresponsible-behavior-over-climate/4888292.html>

Vocabulary and expressions

- **tumult** - confusion, disorder, chaos
- **leapt (past tense of to leap)** - to move quickly; to move like a rabbit or deer
- **traffic arteries** - streets and highways that enable vehicles to move around a city
- **rose to global prominence** - became well-known around the world
- **to stage** - to organize something
- **to become extinct** - to die out, like the dinosaurs
- **to target** - to focus on an area or group in order to get something done; to focus with a purpose
- **the debate** - a formal discussion or argument
- **to debate** - to put forth an opinion and try to convince or win over the other side
- **the voice of our conscience** - an inner feeling about what is right or wrong
- **admiration** - respect, approval
- **I am of your parent's generation** - I am the same age as your parents
- **broad consensus** - many people are in agreement
- **urgent (urgently is the adverb)** - something requiring immediate attention or action
- **tackle** - to solve, as in tackle or solve a problem
- **policies** - plans, strategies, systems for action

- **to exploit** - to use in an unfair or selfish way
- **shale gas fracking** - deep drilling into shale bedrock to extract natural gas
- **beyond absurd** - more than ridiculous, illogical or inappropriate; crazy
- **ongoing** - still going on; still happening
- **irresponsible** - careless, foolish, unwise, not responsible or sensible

Conversation questions:

What are your thoughts about climate change? Do you admire or disapprove of what Greta Thunberg is doing or saying?

Transcript:

Caption underneath photo: Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg gives a speech at the House of Commons as a guest of Caroline Lucas, in London, Britain, April 23, 2019.

LONDON —

Britain's opposition leaders met Swedish climate change activist Greta Thunberg on Tuesday to discuss what the teenager calls an "existential crisis" for humanity.

After months of Brexit **tumult**, climate change has **leapt** back up Britain's political agenda due to protests that closed some of London's **traffic arteries**.

Thunberg, who **rose to global prominence** by **staging** a school strike to protest about the climate, has praised the "**Extinction Rebellion**" sits-ins in London.

The police have arrested 1,065 people and charged 71 in connection with the Extinction Rebellion protests that **targeted** Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge and other parts of London. Thunberg called on more people to take action.

"As long as it's non-violent I think that it could definitely make a difference, it could make people become more aware of the situation, that we actually show that this is an emergency," she told BBC television.

At the meeting with Thunberg, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, told her: "Well done with what you have done."

You have changed **the debate** in a lot of ways which was very good and that needs to happen."

After watching her deliver a separate speech to an audience of lawmakers, Britain's Environment Secretary Michael Gove told Thunberg: "Your voice — still calm and clear — is like **the voice of our conscience**, and as I listen to you, I felt both **admiration** but also a sense of responsibility and guilt, because I recognize that **I am of your parents' generation.**"

There is **broad** political **consensus** in Britain that action is **urgently** needed to **tackle** climate change, but 16-year-old Thunberg said in her speech the country's **industrial policies** failed to answer the **urgent** need to cut the greenhouse gas emissions blamed for global warming.

"The U.K.'s active, current support of new **exploitation** of fossil fuels — for example, the U.K. **shale gas fracking industry**, the expansion of its North Sea oil and gas fields, the expansion of airports as well as the planning permission for a brand new coal mine — is **beyond absurd,**" she said.

"This **ongoing irresponsible** behavior will no doubt be remembered in history as one of the greatest failures of humankind," she said.