

# Introducing Climate Change: Past, Present, and Future

## Activity 7: Futures timeline

*Please note:* This activity could also be undertaken later in a scheme of work on climate change as it provides a good entry point into considering what actions pupils' can take here and now and they will also benefit from having undertaken more study, which will further inform their perceptions of different possible futures.

**Ages: 8+**

### Aim

To explore perceptions of how climate change trends might affect personal and global futures under different scenarios, and to consider what action needs to be taken in order to realise pupils' preferred futures.

### What you need

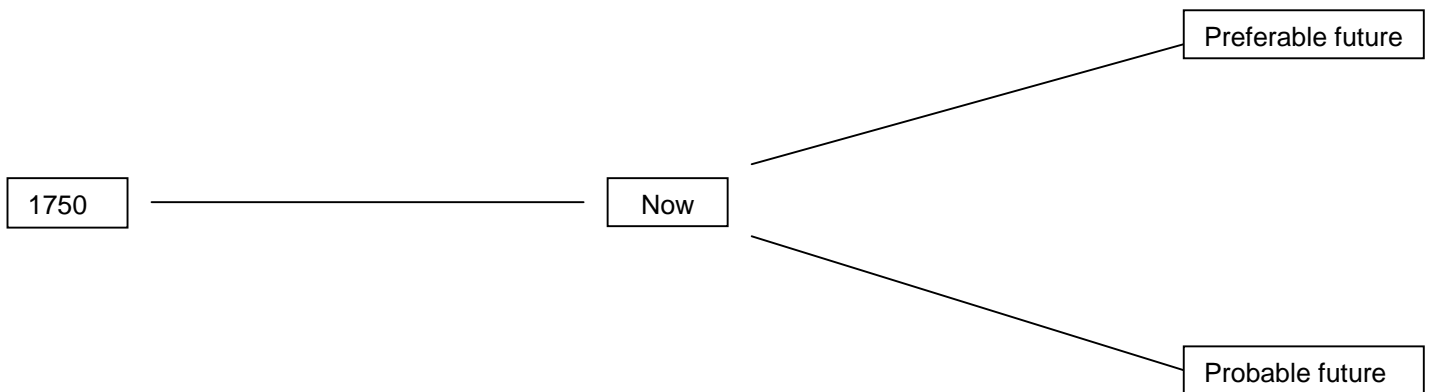
A copy of the Futures timeline diagram (below) for each pupil (most pupils will be able to produce their own).

### What to do

Before you undertake this activity with your pupils, you may find the following introduction to the activity (taken from commentary by its pioneer, David Hicks, on the Geography Teaching Today website) useful in helping you to think through what you can achieve through this activity and where you might go with it.

*'Drawing future timelines immediately raises a major question for students. They will want to know: is this the future we think is likely to happen, or is it the one we want to happen? This question highlights one of the most crucial distinctions in thinking about the future. On the one hand we have probable futures - that is, all those which seem most likely to come about because of current trends. Probable futures focus on what people most expect to happen in a given location or in relation to an issue. By contrast, preferable futures are all those that we would most like to come about. Preferable futures reflect our deepest values, wishes and priorities. Probable and preferable timelines can be drawn separately or together, as shown in Figure 4.3.'*

Figure 4.3 Hicks, D. W. (2006) *Lessons for the Future: the missing dimension in education*, Oxford: Trafford Publishing.



The left-hand side of the timeline shows past events and current trends that have been significant in changing the climate. You might like to do this part as a whole-class activity.

Then ask pupils to add to the 'Probable Futures' line, events and trends that they expect to occur within the next one hundred years as a result of climate change. This could be done for the local area, or at national or global level – or all three!

Ask pupils to add to the 'Preferable Futures' line, events and trends that they would really like to see happen within the next hundred years in relation to climate change.

Further discussion - consider as a class (or in small groups) what actions are needed to turn the probable future into the preferable future. Also consider by whom these actions would need to be taken and what pupils' roles might be in helping to make their preferred futures a reality.