



A hulu DOCUMENTARY

I Am Greta

Discussion Guide

Thank you for participating in a screening for the film, **I Am Greta**.

We encourage you to visit the websites of the organizations and resources included below to engage with the film's themes and take action against climate change.

"This film is more about Greta than climate change. As you see in the movie, she's developed a lot during this year and opened up more. What Greta tells the world about change, I think, is that sometimes it's good to see the world in black and white, because that's how you can really see what's uncomfortable.

I really hope that, after seeing this movie, people get some extra respect for people that are different and people that have that style of saying what they think and pointing at problems instead of just shoving them under the carpet. We should embrace these people, because we need them to show what's wrong. It's so fantastic that Greta, with her Asperger's diagnosis and blunt way of expressing herself, can become this icon.

Also, the film highlights the growing gap between worsening climate impacts and warnings from scientists on the one hand, and the words and actions of world leaders on the other.

Greta and other young people demand a safe future and that leaders listen to the science – instead they are met with empty words from politicians, and ridicule or even death threats from individuals. This is the source of so much of her frustration and I hope viewers will leave with a lot of that frustration as well."

— **Director, Nathan Grossman**

Climate change is a very present and growing issue that impacts everyone on earth. Humans are one of the main contributors to climate change, primarily through our use of fossil fuels, which create greenhouse gas emissions, also referred to as carbon dioxide. [\(EPA\)](#) As greenhouse gas emissions increase, so does the temperature of the earth, caused mainly by burning coal, oil, and gas. The increase in carbon dioxide levels causing rising temperatures is having devastating effects on our planet.

There are a growing number of side effects caused by climate change; the earth is getting hotter and wetter, and we are having more extreme weather patterns [\(UCSUSA\)](#). The threats associated with these side effects are multiplying. Right now, annual global average temperature is about 1° Celsius (1.9°F) hotter than pre-industrial levels. This doesn't seem like a lot but this increase in temperature is causing:

- Extreme heat
- Extreme storms and rainfall
- Rising sea level and melting ice
- Destruction of habitats and animal extinction

As a result, we are seeing catastrophic storms, wildfires and hurricanes, people being displaced from their homes, draughts and in some cases, people losing their lives. In 2020, over 4 million acres have burned because of wildfires in California alone [\(CENTER FOR DISASTER PHILANTHROPY\)](#). At the current rate of extraction and greenhouse gas emissions, our entire ecosystem hangs in the balance. It's expected that 70 to 90 percent of coral reefs will die this century, and half of the world's plants and animal

species will disappear. The planet just can't withstand an increase in temperature past 1.5°. In the past decade, we have seen some of the most extreme side effects of climate change, including:

- Arctic sea ice at its lowest point in 2012 [\(BBC NEWS\)](#)
- The hottest 5 years ever recorded from 2014-2018 [\(350\)](#)
- Largest wildfire season on record in 2015 [\(CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE\)](#)
- The second wettest year on record in 2019 [\(CLIMATE CENTRAL\)](#)
- An increase in mega-storms taking place once every 100 years to once every 16 years, with 2020 having the potential for most hurricanes recorded [\(CNN\)](#)

The impacts of climate change will only continue to worsen if we do not make a change. Learn more about the science behind the climate crisis from [350.org](#) and the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) and what we can do to slow climate change at [Fridays for Our Future](#).

Neurodiversity is a concept developed by Judy Singer, a sociologist on the autism spectrum. Singer rejected the idea that people with autism are disabled. Instead, this viewpoint explains that rather than having deficits, many brains function differently. Neurodiversity means some brains think and learn in different ways because of variations in how brains are wired, not because there is something wrong. (ROSEN)

There are many labels that fall under the concept of neurodiversity. The following are just a few examples:

- **Asperger's syndrome** differs from classic autism in that it has less severe symptoms and the absence of language delays. To the untrained observer, a child with Asperger's Disorder may just seem like a neurotypical child behaving differently. They may have limited eye contact, seem unengaged in a conversation and not understand the use of gestures or sarcasm. Their interests in a particular subject may border on the obsessive. They may be proficient in knowledge categories of information, such as baseball statistics or Latin names of flowers. They may have good rote memory skills but struggle with abstract concepts. (AUTISM SOCIETY)
- **Autism** is characterized primarily by differences in social interaction, sensory processing, and communication. As more is learned about autism, the way it is defined is changing too. Autism is a spectrum, and it looks different from person to person. In the past, you might have heard of autism referred to in several different ways, including Asperger's syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder, or autistic disorder. Now, it's official title is autism spectrum disorder, and it is characterized by Support Levels of 1, 2, or 3, based on levels of support needed (MORIN).
- **Dyslexia** is characterized by difficulties with reading fluency and affects between 5-17% of people. People with dyslexia have difficulties learning, but they are not less intelligent (THE UNDERSTOOD TEAM)
- **Dyscalculia** is similar to dyslexia instead affects an individual's ability to learn and do math. While it is not as understood as dyslexia, experts do not believe that it is less common and most likely affects 5-10% of people (THE UNDERSTOOD TEAM).
- **Tourette Syndrome** is characterized by repetitive, involuntary movements and sounds called tics. Tics may look like jerking, eye blinking, or shrugging and may sound like coughing, grunting, uttering words, or repeating phrases. Tics often occur more frequently

when an individual is anxious or excited (NINDS).

- **ADHD**, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is characterized by difficulties focusing, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. The biggest challenge for people with ADHD is executive functioning, which includes attention, planning, organization, managing emotions, and starting and continuing a task (THE UNDERSTOOD TEAM).

Society often focuses on the negative characteristics that fall under these labels, but the concept of

neurodiversity emphasizes the idea that neurological differences are simply differences that should be understood, valued, and supported, instead of considered a disorder. Neurodiverse individuals have many strengths, which include:

- Verbal skills
- Innovative thinking
- Creativity
- Sensory awareness
- Empathy

(GENIUS WITHIN)

The goal of this concept is to embrace neurodiverse individuals' differences rather than trying to change them. This can be accomplished by reducing the stigma associated by labels, removing barriers to learning, and acknowledging and supporting strengths and challenges. In order to achieve this, it is important that we educate ourselves and others about neurodiversity, advocate for neurodiverse individuals, and remove their barriers to success.

To learn more about neurodiversity, and teaching and advocating for neurodiverse individuals, check out the following resources:

[NEURODIVERSITY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW](#)
[TEACHING ABOUT NEURODIVERGENT COMMUNITIES](#)
[IDENTIFY-FIRST LANGUAGE](#)

General Questions

1. What is Greta's initial reaction when she learns about climate change? Can you think of a time you learned something similar about the climate crisis or other big and overwhelming global issues? How can you relate to Greta's reaction?
2. How does Greta respond to negative comments she reads about herself online and on news outlets? How would you respond if you were in her shoes?
3. How did Greta's response to being asked about "suffering" from Asperger's make you feel? Did it challenge or change your understanding of neurodiversity? How does the film portray the strengths and challenges faced by neurodiverse individuals?
4. How does Greta's story change your perspective on the impacts of climate change?
5. At the very end of the film, what does Greta mean when she says "It might be good if everyone had a bit of Asperger's?" Do you agree or disagree with her? Why?
6. What moment or event in the film stood out to you the most?
7. What moment or event in the film challenged you?
8. What questions do you have from the film? What do you wish you knew more about?
9. Is there something you are inspired to do after seeing the film?

Questions for Peer to Peer Conversations

1. What are some challenges associated with autism and Asperger's? How can young people help support peers on the neurodiverse spectrum?
2. In the beginning of the film, Greta mentions that people with Asperger's syndrome are able to "see through the static." How does Greta use her neurodiversity as a strength? What advantages does it give her in fighting for what she believes in? What lessons can we learn from this?
3. Greta's activism sparks different reactions from different groups - some are rather harsh. How do you feel about these reactions? How do you think Greta feels? What words of encouragement would you give Greta or to a friend in Greta's shoes?
4. Why is it important that the filmmaker shows Greta experiences highs and lows? What does this teach us as the audience?
5. What was your reaction to Greta's speech to the UN? How would you feel if you were giving such an important speech to a group of world leaders?

Questions for Teachers/Parents/Advocates

1. In the beginning of the film, Greta mentions that people with Aspergers's syndrome are able to "see through the static." How does Greta use her neurodiversity as a strength? What advantages does it give her in fighting for what she believes in? What lessons can teachers/parents/advocates learn from this?
2. What are some challenges associated with autism and Asperger's? How can you help support students/children? If you are the parent or teacher of someone on the neurodiverse spectrum, what do you wish others knew?
3. How do adults respond to Greta's initial protest? What is her response and how does that impact her dedication? What would your reaction be?
4. Greta's activism sparks different reactions from different groups - some are rather harsh. How do you feel about these reactions? How do you think Greta feels? What words of encouragement would you give to a student/your child if they were in Greta's shoes?
5. How does the film portray the strengths and challenges faced by Greta's parents? Do you relate?
6. What are some of your biggest takeaways from the film as a teacher/parent/advocate?
7. Why is it important that the filmmaker shows Greta experiences highs and lows? What does this teach you as a teacher/parent/advocate?

I Am Greta is an inspiring story that shows us many things how our world's youth can drive real change and opens our eyes to the strengths and challenges associated with neurodiversity.

Greta uses the strengths brought to her by her neurodiversity to fight for something she believes in.

What can you learn from her?

We challenge you to be creative and put your ideas in motion. No action is too small! Share your stories of greatness on social media by engaging with the #IAmGreta on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Brainstorm some ways that you can help support Greta's climate change efforts and visit Fridays for Future to learn how to organize a strike and more.

If you are interested in learning more about neurodiversity, you can visit [Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#), and [National Autism Association](#).