Warmer Than Wind

A climate assembly about how we talk, and what actually works • KS2 with a nod to KS3 • 25 minutes

Cast

- Narrator (Y6)
- Wind (Y5/6 - the bigger personality)
- Sun (Y5/6 - quieter, dryer, more certain)
- Traveller (Y5/6 - the heart of the story)
- Optional: Weather Chorus (3-4 pupils, Y4/5)

Props (all optional)

- A coat or jacket for the Traveller
- Blue/grey fabric strips for Wind to swirl
- A simple yellow circle card or headband for Sun
- A bag or walking stick for the Traveller
- Two chairs - one for Wind's side, one for Sun's

Teacher overview

Section	Time	Focus
Cast briefing	Before	Roles, props, staging
Scene 1: The Bet	5 mins	Wind and Sun set the challenge
Scene 2: The Wind Tries	7 mins	Force, facts, fear - and why they fail
Scene 3: The Sun Tries	7 mins	Warmth, invitation, choice
Closing	5 mins	The unanswered question; reflection

Key facilitation notes

- Wind is not wrong. Wind makes real points with real facts. The assembly is not saying the facts are false - it is asking whether this way of sharing them works.
- Sun should never seem smug or superior to Wind. They are friends who disagree. The dynamic should feel like a genuine debate between two people who both care.
- The Traveller's internal thoughts (shown in amber boxes) are the KS3 layer. Younger pupils follow the action; older pupils hear themselves in those thoughts.
- The ending does not resolve neatly. Wind asks a real question that Sun cannot fully answer.
- The Weather Chorus is entirely optional!

Curriculum links

Subject	Connection
English (KS2/3)	Fables and allegory; character motivation; persuasive language; debate and argument; speaking and listening
PSHE / RSE	Communicating effectively; empathy; responding to difficult information; emotional literacy
Geography / Science	Climate change; weather systems; environmental responsibility; causes and consequences
Media Literacy	How information is framed; emotional responses to facts; the difference between knowing and doing
SMSC	Moral: how we treat others when we disagree; Social: community conversation; Spiritual: living with uncertainty
DfE Enrichment	Benchmark 2 - structured enrichment with real-world relevance; oracy and debate

Cast List & Role Guidance

Four speaking roles, each with a distinct register. The Traveller is arguably the hardest role - they carry the emotional journey of the whole assembly. Cast accordingly.

Role	Suggested Year	Notes
Narrator	Y6	Sets the scene and holds the frame. Warm and direct. Speaks to the whole school without performing to them. The Narrator's closing lines carry the assembly's real weight - they need to be delivered quietly and with confidence.
Wind	Y5/6	Big energy, theatrical, loves an argument. Wind genuinely believes they are right - and they have the facts to back it up. Not a villain. Play Wind as passionate and a little exasperated, not cruel. The best Winds are funny but also make you think: they're not entirely wrong.
Sun	Y5/6	Quieter than Wind. Dry wit. Completely unruffled. Sun doesn't need to shout because Sun knows something Wind hasn't worked out yet. The contrast in physical presence between Wind and Sun is part of the staging - Wind moves a lot, Sun is mostly still.
Traveller	Y5/6	The most demanding role. The Traveller says relatively little out loud but has internal thoughts (the amber thought boxes) that the actor voices directly to the audience, turning to face them. Needs confidence, timing, and the ability to switch between 'in the scene' and 'speaking to the hall' without losing either.
Weather Chorus	Y4/5	Optional. Three or four pupils who move with Wind (swirling, blustering) and then become still and warm with Sun. No lines - entirely physical. Adds visual scale for a whole-school audience and gives more pupils a role.

A note on the thought boxes

The Traveller's internal thoughts appear in amber boxes in the script. These are spoken aloud, directly to the audience, while Wind or Sun continue their action in the background. Think of it like a voiceover - the Traveller steps slightly forward, speaks to the hall, then steps back into the scene. This is the device that bridges KS2 and KS3 in the same moment. Brief the Traveller carefully on the shift in register.

Staging note

Wind and the Weather Chorus occupy stage left. Sun is mostly stage right, still. The Traveller moves between them, centre stage. This physical geography does a lot of the storytelling work - the Traveller is literally caught between two forces.

The Script

Stage directions in [grey italics]. Narrator lines in bold. Audience prompts marked with ►. Traveller's internal thoughts shown in amber boxes - spoken directly to the audience.

Before the Assembly Begins

Staging: Wind stands stage left with Weather Chorus loosely behind. Sun sits or stands quietly stage right. Centre stage is clear - the Traveller will enter and move through this space. A coat or jacket is on the Traveller's chair, ready to put on.
Briefing: remind Wind that louder is not better - the comedy comes from certainty, not volume. Remind Sun that stillness is power. Remind the Traveller that the thought boxes are their own private moments with the audience - they can take their time.

SCENE 1: The Bet

Approx. 5 minutes • Narrator, Wind, Sun

[Wind paces stage left. Sun stands quietly stage right. Narrator steps forward.]

NARRATOR: This is a very old story. You might have heard it before. But we've given it something new. Because this version isn't really about the weather.

[Narrator gestures to Wind and Sun.]

NARRATOR: Wind and Sun had been arguing for a long time. About a lot of things. But mostly, about this:

WIND: (to Sun, emphatic) People need to know how serious this is. You have to tell them. Loudly. With facts. With data. If they understood what was actually happening, they would change.

SUN: (calmly) And yet. They haven't.

WIND: Because nobody's been loud enough! If I could just get everyone to really listen -

SUN: Wind. We've been trying that for thirty years.

[A pause. Wind looks thrown for a moment, then recovers.]

WIND: Then we try harder.

SUN: (quietly) Or we try differently.

WIND: (frustrated) You always say that. What does that even mean?

SUN: (nodding toward the Traveller's entrance) Here comes someone. Let's find out.

[The Traveller enters, wearing their coat, walking across the stage minding their own business.]

WIND: Right then. Same challenge as always. Whoever can get the Traveller to take their coat off wins the argument.

SUN: And whoever wins the argument gets to decide how we talk about climate change.

WIND: (cracking knuckles) Easy.

NARRATOR: Wind went first.

SCENE 2: The Wind Tries

Approx. 7 minutes • Wind, Traveller, Narrator, Weather Chorus

[Wind strides forward. Weather Chorus begins to move behind - swirling, building energy. The Traveller pauses mid-walk, sensing something coming.]

WIND: (to the Traveller, urgent and direct) Excuse me. Do you know what's happening to this planet?

TRAVELLER: (politely) I'm just -

WIND: Global temperatures have risen by 1.2 degrees since the industrial revolution. Sea levels are up 20 centimetres. We are losing species at one thousand times the natural rate. One. Thousand. Times.

Traveller thinks: *I know. I do know. I've heard this. I've heard this a lot.*

TRAVELLER: Yes, I -

WIND: By 2050 - that's in your lifetime, by the way - we could see 200 million climate refugees. Two hundred million. And we are not on track. The pledges that governments have made are not enough. The targets we have set ourselves are not -

TRAVELLER: (quietly) I know.

[Wind pauses, surprised.]

WIND: You know?

TRAVELLER: Yes.

WIND: Then why aren't you doing something about it?!

Traveller thinks: *And there it is. That's always the next bit. I know, therefore I'm guilty. I know, therefore I should be doing more. I know, therefore why aren't I -*

[The Traveller pulls their coat tighter. Wind blows harder. Weather Chorus swirls more intensely.]

WIND: (escalating) We have twelve years. Some scientists say less. The tipping points are closer than we thought. If we don't act now -

TRAVELLER: (pulling coat tighter, not angry - just tired) I hear you.

WIND: Do you though? Because -

TRAVELLER: I hear you. I just... I don't know what to do with all of it.

[Wind stops. Chorus stills. A moment of quiet.]

Traveller thinks: *It's not that I don't care. I do care. But every time someone tells me how bad it is, I feel smaller. Not bigger. And then I just... stop listening. Not because I want to. Because I have to.*

[Wind retreats, frustrated. The coat is still on.]

NARRATOR: The coat stayed on. Wind had tried everything - the facts, the figures, the urgency, the

guilt. And the Traveller had simply... pulled it tighter.

► **Audience prompt:** Narrator says: "Has anyone ever felt like that? When someone is telling you something really serious and you sort of... switch off? Not because you don't care. Just because it's a lot. Take a second to think about it. You don't have to share." Pause for five seconds. Let it sit.

SCENE 3: The Sun Tries

Approx. 7 minutes • Sun, Traveller, Narrator

[Sun moves to centre stage, unhurried. Weather Chorus becomes still. The Traveller is standing, uncertain.]

SUN: (to the Traveller, easy and warm) Hard morning?

TRAVELLER: (surprised by the change of tone) A bit.

SUN: What's the coat for?

TRAVELLER: I suppose I thought I needed it.

SUN: Do you? Right now?

[The Traveller considers. Sun says nothing. Just waits.]

Traveller thinks: *That's... an odd question. Do I need it right now? I put it on this morning because I thought it would be cold. But it's not that cold, actually.*

SUN: I was thinking - there's a garden near here. Someone's grown tomatoes. And beans. And they've got so many they're giving them away. You should stop by.

TRAVELLER: (curious) Grown them themselves?

SUN: All summer. Said it was the best thing they'd done in years. Gets them outside, saves money, tastes completely different to the stuff in the shops.

Traveller thinks: *That does sound... actually nice. Not scary. Just nice.*

TRAVELLER: And it's better for the planet too, presumably?

SUN: (lightly) Probably. Less packaging, shorter journey, no cold storage. But honestly the tomatoes are reason enough.

[The Traveller almost smiles. Sun says nothing more. Just stays warm.]

Traveller thinks: *Wind told me the world was ending. Sun told me about a garden. And somehow the garden made me want to do something. I'm not entirely sure why.*

[The Traveller, gradually and without announcement, begins to unbutton the coat. They don't make a big deal of it. They're just... more comfortable.]

SUN: (noticing, but not triumphant) You know, lots of people are doing things like that. Small things. Close to home. Not because they've been told to. Because they found something they actually liked.

TRAVELLER: Like what?

SUN: Walking instead of driving sometimes. Growing a few things. Buying less, but better. Fixing things rather than replacing them. Nothing dramatic. Just... paying attention.

TRAVELLER: (the coat now off, folded over their arm) That doesn't sound that hard.

SUN: It's really not.

[Wind steps forward, watching. The coat is off. Wind looks between the Traveller and Sun.]

WIND: (quietly, without anger) You didn't even mention climate change.

SUN: Not really, no.

WIND: You didn't tell them how serious it is.

SUN: They already knew.

[A pause.]

WIND: (genuinely uncertain, not defeated) But what if they didn't? What if there isn't time to be gentle? What if we need people to feel the urgency - properly feel it - or nothing changes fast enough?

[Sun pauses. This is a real question. Sun doesn't brush it off.]

SUN: (honestly) I don't know. I think you might be right that there isn't much time. But I know that what you were doing wasn't working. And the coat was staying on.

[Wind looks at the Traveller. The coat is folded over their arm. The Traveller has already started walking again - toward the garden.]

WIND: (quietly) Fair enough.

[All cast hold still. Narrator steps forward.]

Closing Address (Narrator, 4-5 minutes)

► **Step 1 - Name the fable:** "That was The Wind and the Sun. One of the oldest stories in the world. Aesop wrote it over two thousand years ago. We gave it a climate angle. But the question at the heart of it is exactly the same as it's always been: what actually changes people's minds?"

► **Step 2 - Sit with the question:** "Wind wasn't lying. Everything Wind said was true. The numbers are real. The timescales are real. But the Traveller already knew. And knowing wasn't enough. It never quite is, on its own."

► **Step 3 - The audience prompt:** "Think about something you changed your mind about - or something you started doing differently. Was it because someone frightened you? Or because you found something you actually wanted to do?" [Pause.] "Turn and tell someone near you. Thirty seconds."

► **Step 4 - Take 2-3 responses.** Welcome them all. Then:

► **Step 5 - The close:** "We're not saying the urgency isn't real. Wind had a point. But Sun had something Wind didn't: a garden. A walk. A tomato that tasted amazing. Something to move toward, not just run from." [Pause.] "That's what we're looking for. Not yet zero. But moving - and wanting to."

Teacher Guide: Learning Moments

The assembly overview and facilitation notes are on the front page. What follows maps the deeper currents running under each scene, and what to watch for in the room.

Scene 1 - Setting up a genuine argument

- Learning moment: Wind and Sun are not hero and villain. They are two people who both care about the same thing but disagree about method. This framing is important - it models respectful disagreement and makes the assembly intellectually honest rather than preachy.
- The line "We've been trying that for thirty years" is the key line in Scene 1. It lands differently for different ages. KS2 pupils take it at face value. KS3 pupils may clock the real-world reference. Both readings are fine.
- Facilitation note: do not set up Wind as the bad guy before the assembly. If cast members have been told 'Wind is wrong', the nuance collapses.

Scene 2 - Why facts alone don't work

- Learning moment: this scene dramatises a well-documented psychological phenomenon - when people feel blamed or overwhelmed, they disengage rather than act. This is not weakness or denial; it is a normal human response to threat overload. The assembly names it without naming it.
- The Traveller's thought boxes are doing the KS3 work here. The line 'I know, therefore I'm guilty' is something many secondary pupils will recognise immediately from their own experience of climate messaging.
- Watch for: the moment the Traveller pulls the coat tighter. If the Traveller plays this as defiance, it loses its truth. It should be exhaustion, not resistance.
- The audience prompt (have you ever switched off from something serious?) is one of the most important moments in the assembly. Do not skip it. The five-second silence after is deliberate - let pupils actually think rather than immediately taking hands.

Scene 3 - What warmth actually does

- Learning moment: Sun does not avoid the facts - they are present by implication throughout. But Sun leads with something desirable rather than something frightening. The garden, the tomatoes, the walk. The coat comes off not because the Traveller has been convinced by argument but because they have been invited into something.
- The line 'That does sound... actually nice. Not scary. Just nice.' is the pivot of the whole assembly. It is the moment KS2 and KS3 meet.
- Watch for: Sun being played as smug or superior. If Sun seems pleased with themselves, the assembly tips into propaganda. Sun should seem genuinely uncertain in the final exchange with Wind - because Sun is.
- Wind's final question - 'what if there isn't time to be gentle?' - must not be dismissed. It is a real and important question. Sun's answer ('I don't know') is honest and correct. Sit with it.

The closing address

- The assembly ends without a complete answer. This is intentional. The most honest thing to say about climate communication is that nobody has fully cracked it. Pupils - especially older ones - respect that honesty.
- The final line - 'Not yet zero. But moving - and wanting to.' - ties the assembly back to the NYZ brand without being promotional. It is simply a true description of where most of us are.
- For whole-school audiences: KS1 pupils will take the coat-off moment as the resolution and be satisfied. KS2 pupils will sit with the question. KS3 pupils will leave thinking. All three responses are exactly right.

Extension: One Lesson to Follow

How Do We Talk About Climate? A Persuasion and Media Literacy Lesson

1 lesson (50-60 minutes) • Y5/6 primary, strong fit for Y7/8 KS3 • English / PSHE / Media Literacy

What Pupils Will Do

Pupils analyse two real examples of climate communication - one fear-based, one invitation-based - and decide which is more effective, for whom, and why. They then write their own short piece of climate communication aimed at a specific audience, choosing their approach deliberately.

Starter (5 mins): Wind or Sun?

- Read out two short statements (teacher-written or sourced):
- Statement A: 'Scientists warn that if we do not cut emissions by 45% before 2030, we will cross tipping points from which recovery is impossible.'
- Statement B: 'More people in the UK are growing their own food than at any time since the Second World War. Here's how to start with nothing but a windowsill.'
- Ask: which one is Wind, which is Sun? Which made you want to do something? Which made you want to stop listening? Why?

Main Activity 1 - Analyse the Message (15 mins)

- Give pupils 2-3 examples of real climate communication (headlines, campaign slogans, social media posts - teacher curated). Suggested mix: one fear-based, one solutions-focused, one humorous.
- Pupils annotate: What is this trying to make you feel? Who is the audience? What is it asking you to do? Does it work on you? Why or why not?
- Y6/KS3 extension: what assumptions does each piece make about its audience? What might put someone off who wasn't already convinced?

Main Activity 2 - Write Your Own (20 mins)

- Each pupil chooses one of the following audiences: a grandparent, a younger sibling, a school governor, a friend who thinks climate change is exaggerated.
- They write a short piece of climate communication for that person - 100-150 words. It can be a message, a short script, a poster headline with supporting text, or a social media post.
- They must choose: Wind approach, Sun approach, or a blend. And they must be able to say why they chose it.

Plenary (10 mins): Share and Debate

- Volunteers share their piece. Class identifies: Wind or Sun? Did it work? Would they change anything?
- Key question for close: is there ever a right time for Wind's approach? Or is Sun always better?
- Teacher note: there is no settled answer to this. Pupils who argue for Wind are not wrong. The point is to have thought about it carefully.

Resources Needed

- 2-3 curated examples of real climate communication (teacher sourced - check for copyright before reproducing)
- Annotation sheet or plain exercise books
- Optional: access to devices for pupils to find their own examples

Teacher Notes

This lesson sits naturally in an English unit on persuasive writing, a PSHE unit on media literacy, or a Geography unit on climate change. The Wind vs Sun framing gives pupils a vocabulary for analysing communication that they can apply far beyond climate - to advertising, politics, public health messaging.

The audience-choice activity is the engine of the lesson. Pupils who pick ‘a friend who thinks climate change is exaggerated’ almost always produce the most thoughtful work, because they have to confront the hardest version of the challenge.