



Greta Thunberg



“I thought I couldn’t make a difference because I was so small.”

Date of birth:	3rd January 2003
Nationality:	Swedish
Known for:	Climate activism

Greta Thunberg was a school child in Sweden who looked out at the world and saw things that she knew needed to change. Worried by changes to the world’s climate, Greta at first believed that she was too young to do anything. However, she could not stand by and do nothing. Less than a year after her first protest, Greta had become one of the most famous climate activists in the world, speaking to world leaders and helping to convince them that laws needed to change.

Childhood

Greta was born on January 3rd, 2003, in Sweden. Her mother was Malena Ernman, one of Sweden’s most celebrated opera singers. Her father was Svante Thunberg, an actor and author.



One day at school, Greta's teacher showed the class films about how mankind's activities were changing the planet. She saw pictures of plastic polluting the oceans and learnt how polar bears were starving because climate change was drastically melting the ice where they lived. At the time, Greta's classmates were concerned by this but their attention turned to other things after the lesson. Greta, however could not stop thinking about what she had seen.

Greta soon became depressed about climate change. She started to worry that adults were not taking the issue seriously enough and wondered if she had a future.

Greta's parents noticed this change in her and became concerned. Greta started talking through her worries with her parents and found that this helped. Her arguments against climate change were so convincing that her parents began to change their lifestyles. Greta's father became a vegetarian. Because of the pollution caused by airplanes, her mother gave up flying, even though this would have a negative impact on her career.

Earlier, Greta had worried that there was nothing she could do to help save the planet because of her age. Having seen that she had changed her parents' lifestyles she realised that she could convince others to change their ways.

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Early Achievements

On the other side of the world, students in Florida, USA arranged a school protest. They were not happy about the gun laws in America and wanted them changed.

Meanwhile, in Sweden, a record heatwave in northern Europe, had caused forest fires which obliterated large areas of Swedish land up to the Arctic. Greta knew that she had to act and, having learnt of the school protest in America, was inspired to create one of her own.





On August 20, 2018, instead of going into school, Greta sat outside the Swedish parliament with a painted sign saying, “Skolstrejk för klimatet” which means, “school strike for climate.” She wanted her country’s government to change laws, so that there was less pollution. Greta took with her a list of facts about climate change that she would share with anybody who wanted to speak to her.

Greta returned to the parliament every school day before Sweden’s elections. It was not long before she was noticed and soon she was joined in her protest by others who were concerned about climate change.

The issues of pollution and climate change were now being talked about more, because of Greta’s protests.

Important dates	
March 14, 2018	School children in Florida protest gun laws.
August 20, 2018	Greta’s first protest outside the Swedish parliament.
September 8, 2018	Greta speaks at the People’s Climate March, Sweden.
March 2019	Greta is nominated for a Nobel peace prize.
April 2019	Time magazine named Greta Thunberg as one of the 100 most influential people of 2019.



Skolstrejk för klimatet - School Strike for Climate





Activism

"You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes."



Greta Thunberg at Parliament

After the elections, Greta agreed to speak at a People's Climate March in Sweden. Her parents were concerned about this, knowing how difficult she found it to talk in front of large groups. Greta was determined to deliver her message and spoke to thousands of people, flawlessly.

This led to Greta being asked to speak to more and more people. She has met many world leaders and been praised by the German chancellor, Angela Merkel. After listening to Greta, many politicians have agreed that not enough is being done to stop climate change and have vowed to do what they can.

When Greta speaks to crowds she does not want them to feel hopeful. She will say, "Our house is on fire. I am here to tell you that our house is on fire." or "I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel that fear everyday. And then I want you to act."

Did you know?

- Greta has visited more than 71 countries and spoken in more than 700 places.
- Greta has more than a million followers on Instagram where she documents her international travel and campaigns.
- Because of the air pollution caused by airplanes, Greta travels to other countries by train, or by sea.





The Future



Greta's bicycle, Old Town, Stockholm

Not everybody wants to listen to Greta's message. There are many people who would lose money if laws are changed to protect the environment and they will often argue against Greta and attack what she has said.

This does not stop Greta and she remains determined to do all that she can to stop climate change. As well as convincing others that pollution and climate change are things we need to consider, Greta has also shown that anybody can make a difference, no matter how young or small they are.

