Think about all the minuscule things we do every day: brushing our teeth, small talk with our friends, doing homework or heading into work. In contrast, we don’t normally think of the fact that we are currently in the midst of the sixth mass extinction, or if our global temperature rises only four degrees Celsius, the water level will rise 240 feet and billions of people will die from starvation. Why are we expected to remember to drink a liter of water every day, but not to think of the rising sea temperature that’s destroying habitats? If we don’t take action soon, all our frivolous daily activities won’t matter. Can’t go to work if the building is underwater, right?

Throughout high school, I’ve participated in the International Relations club, representing our school as we attend Model United Nations conferences. Discussing environmental activism at these conferences became a turning point in discovering my underlying passion for environmental science. Each delegate takes on the role of a country and works to collaborate with other countries to solve problems. Personally, I found the Environmental Program the most intriguing of those offered; learning about Protecting/Preserving Natural Environments of Historical, Biological, or Cultural Importance, Global Waste Disposal, and International Wildlife Trade has been an eye-opening experience. I’ve been lucky enough to experiment with and collaborate on solutions to these challenges as a delegate from a different region of the world each year.

This year I had the opportunity to participate in a Model UN at Brown University. Alongside other diligent and interdependent countries, the impact of first and third-world countries on the International Wildlife Trade was discussed, including the proper way to push education and government intervention into the matter. I found myself leading passionate discussions on the importance of educating first-world countries on the role of apathy and lack of border patrol towards illegal wildlife trade. Leading conversations regarding these innovative strategies developed me into a more confident and expressive speaker. Every conference that I’ve participated in has helped me acquire new international perspectives on these issues. These conferences have helped me better connect with a myriad of varying cultures and issues, ultimately furthering my understanding of international politics, fueling my dedication to use environmental activism to make a positive difference.

After reading statistics on the rate of global temperature rise or discussing the apathetic policies of the governments represented, it became clear to me that environmental activism is the future. I want to help initiate the conversation between countries to control climate change by learning more about the subject, educating others, and using my voice to empower others to take a stand against the way we deal with climate change.

The discussions demonstrate a way to connect my love of environmental science and politics. Looking back on these past years, choosing to write my current event assignments on environmental issues, discovering my desire to work alongside peers to develop solutions and exploring worldviews on environmental concepts, now only reinforced the fact that this is my passion.

Looking forward, I hope to expand my knowledge of environmental science and environmental activism as a potential career path. I’ve drawn upon my love of politics to research environmental laws and regulations, as well as to demonstrate my knowledge of international policy and political agendas for environmental causes. We all live on the Earth, so environmental science concerns all of us. Joining the International Relations team truly helped me recognize that environmental politics does not just concern my future, but it concerns all of our futures.