

SELECTING A PROBLEM FOR STUDY

Community Level – Possible topics¹



- Does the cafeteria offer healthy foods such as salads and fruit?
- Are there vending machines in school where you can buy snacks and drinks like baked chips, fig bars, and bottled water?
- Do you take gym class on a regular basis?
- Are there after-school sports or other physical activities available aside from gym class?
- Promoting physical activity - Half of American kids don't have a park, community center, or sidewalk in their neighborhood
- Is there infrastructure supporting bicycling and walking
- Improve access to public transportation
- Enhance personal safety in areas where persons are or could be physically active
- Parent involvement in schools - Research shows that consistent parent involvement at school leads to improved student achievement. Help support healthy initiatives for families while enjoying the school's programming, facilities, and social opportunities
- Food environments in your community - 116.3 million people live in "food deserts," low-income communities without ready access to healthy and affordable food
- Help your community be active - People who live in neighborhoods where it's easy to walk get about 70 more minutes of weekly physical activity than those who live in neighborhoods where it's hard to walk
- Participate in Screen-Free Week at the end of April into early May - Time with screens is linked to childhood obesity
- Support local sustainable farms - The US agricultural system provides more calories than the average person needs each day, but not enough fruits and vegetables for all Americans to meet recommendations
- Increase availability of healthier food and beverage choices in public service venues
- Improve geographic availability of supermarkets in underserved areas
- Provide incentives to food retailers to locate in and/or offer healthier food and beverage choices in underserved areas
- Improve availability of mechanisms for purchasing foods from farms
- Restrict availability of less healthy foods and beverages in public service venues
- Institute smaller portion size options in public service venues
- Limit advertisements of less healthy foods and beverages
- Discourage consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages
- Require physical education in schools
- Increase the amount of physical activity in physical education programs in schools
- Increase opportunities for extracurricular physical activity
- Support locating schools within easy walking distance of residential areas

1 "The Weight of the Nation". Home Box Office (HBO). 2012. Web. June 28, 2012. <<http://theweightofthenation.hbo.com/>>.

We the People – Project Citizenship

Project Citizen (<http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen>) introduces students to and educates them in the methods and procedures used in our political process. The goal of the program is to develop student's commitment to active citizenship and governance by

1. providing the knowledge and skills required for effective participation
2. providing practical experience designed to foster a sense of competence and efficacy
3. developing an understanding of the importance of citizen participation

Below are a description of each of the six steps involved in *Project Citizen* and links to PDF worksheets to assist students in various steps of the process.

Step I - Identifying Public Policy Problems in Your Community

Discuss the purpose of this step with students. The purposes of Step I are to make students aware of what they already know about problems in their community to discuss these problems with their parents, neighbors, or other members of the community to find out what they know and what they think about these problems to gather enough information to select a problem that the majority of the class agrees is important to study.

The Problem Identification and Analysis Form

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Step II – Selecting a Problem for Study

Step III - Gathering Information on the Problem Your Class Will Study

Once the class has selected a problem, students will need to gather additional information to use in the development of their portfolio.

Interview Form

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Printed Sources Form:

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Radio/Television/Internet Sources Form: This might be a website, television or radio news program, documentary, interview show, or some other program that addresses the problem

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Information from Print or Electronic Sources Form

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

[+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email](#)

Information from Letters or Interviews - Documentation Forms

[http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email](#)

(step 4 on next page)

Step IV - Developing a Class Portfolio

Now you have completed enough research to begin to develop your class portfolio. Your class will need to work together to discuss and answer questions on a series of worksheets that will be used to guide the development of your portfolio. The materials in the portfolio should include the best documentation the class and group have gathered in investigating the problem.

Task One: Explaining the Problem – The first thing you will need is to clearly explain the problem you have chosen. You will need to explain why the problem is important, which individual or groups in the community are interested in this problem, and which part of government has responsibility for dealing with it.

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Task Two: Examining Alternative Policies – You must identify several alternative policies for dealing with the problem you have chosen. These policies may include an existing policy or policies being proposed by individuals or groups in the community. You should also include your own original ideas for policies to address the problem.

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Task Three: Proposing a Public Policy – Next, you will need to propose a public policy to deal with the problem. It must not violate the U.S. Constitution or your state's constitution. It may be one of the alternative policies you discussed earlier, a modification of one of those policies, or it may be your own original idea.

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Task Four: Developing an Action Plan

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Constitutional Opinion Form: The United States Constitution and Bill of Rights place limits on what government can do in order to protect the rights of the people. So do the constitutions of each state. Whenever we suggest that government adopt a policy or enact a law to deal with a problem, it is important that we do not ask government to do something prohibited by our federal or state constitutions. Each citizen has the right and should take the responsibility to look at present and suggested policies and laws to see if they might be violating constitutional limits on government. This checklist includes some of the most important limits our federal and state constitutions place on our governments to protect our rights.

Use the checklist when you develop your policy. Be sure that, in your opinion, your

proposed policy does not violate the limits placed on government.

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Portfolio Criteria Checklist - Each Section

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email

Portfolio Criteria Checklist – Overall Portfolio

http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen?utm_source=Eblast+Educators+-+July+2012&utm_campaign=Educator+Eblast+7%2F3%2F12&utm_medium=email