



CHOOSING AN ISSUE

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students research an issue of interest to them and write a report about what they learned.

MATERIALS

Internet access; information on how to correctly conduct an interview (from the local library/ media center or Internet); magazines, newspapers, and/or books related to the students' topics

GET READY

- ✓ Set up a time for your students to meet with the school librarian to show them how to conduct research in the library (or show them yourself).
- ✓ Arrange for a technology teacher or a librarian to show your class how to properly search for resources on the Internet (or show them yourself).
- ✓ Hand out guidelines about how to properly conduct an interview (Some rules of thumb may be found at <http://www.kosmicki.com/102/htinterview.htm>.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask students to think about and choose a social or political issue that interests them. Possibilities include: crime, drug abuse, teen suicide, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, preservation of national wilderness areas, animal rights, etc.
- ✓ Have students research the issue in both its local and national contexts through two or more of the following activities:
 - ✓ Searching the Internet
 - ✓ Interviewing an expert

- ✓ Reading newspaper or magazine articles
- ✓ Contacting a community agency or national organization that focuses on the issue

- ✓ Have students write a report about what they learned. The report should include information from their research as well as their own opinions and ideas about the issue.

They should include:

- ✓ A discussion of the issue and why it is of concern to others
- ✓ A list of organizations and/or individuals working on this issue
- ✓ Current approaches to addressing the issue that reflect opposing positions
- ✓ Opinions about the issue including ideas for community service and other future action
- ✓ How voting and government action at the local, state, and/or national levels has impacted this issue historically
- ✓ Have students share what they learned with the rest of the class. Ask each student to highlight in their presentation the five most important points in their reports.
- ✓ Following the presentations, have the class discuss the connections they see between the different issues they researched. Instruct your students to listen for and take notes on these connections.

**CHOOSING AN ISSUE** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *What was the most intriguing thing you learned from this project?*
- ★ *What was difficult about this research paper?*
- ★ *What went especially smoothly while conducting your research? What was most challenging?*
- ★ *What are some suggestions you could give someone about researching and writing a research paper on a current issue?*
- ★ *What would you have done differently?*
- ★ *Why is it important to conduct good research before writing a report?*