

Law Project Participation in Government

The class will begin working on a law project, at the end of which you will have produced:

- 1) Your own, unique bill written in actual government format (proposed law). (50% of grade)
- 2) A two-minute speech to explain your issue/solution and to support your bill. (50% of grade)



All materials for this project can be found either on my school website or in the JrSrHigh common folder (K:) as "LawProject"

✓ **STEP 1: FINDING A TOPIC ... or "What should I do my project on?"**

Each student has to come up with their own idea for a law. It can either be a new law, a change in a current law, or the abolishment of a law. If you need help deciding on an issue or problem, try looking at the following sites for some ideas to get started:

ProCon.org

- <http://www.procon.org/>

Vanderbilt University's Public Policy page:

- <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/govt/pubpol.php>

Questia

- <https://www.questia.com/library/politics-and-government/public-policy/public-policy-u-s>

Alternatively, consider a topic that you are personally interested in. What are the issues related to that topic?

Each student will have a 'Unique' topic ... meaning, students may not choose a topic assigned to someone else in the class. On topic assignment day, consider having at least two possible choices for a topic/issue. In the event of students with conflicting topics, a coin toss (or other 'random' method) will be used to assign the contested issue.

✓ **STEP 2: What is your PRIMARY GOAL?**

WHY do you want to solve this problem? What is the primary, most important reason/purpose behind confronting this problem?

✓ **STEP 3: BRAINSTORM IDEAS**

Using the Public Policy Worksheet, spend some time considering possible effects, causes, potential solutions, the costs/benefits of those solutions, etc. This will help you when we begin research at the computer lab and will clarify your thinking about your topic and policy ideas.

✓ **STEP 4: RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC ... or “What information am I supposed to gather/find?” ... and WRITING YOUR SPEECH**

Students will need to do research in order to find out what specific law/solution is needed to deal with their issue/problem and to find information to support their law.

- **You also need to use and cite at least FIVE different sources of information, so be sure to keep a record of the websites/source you use as you do research.**

Part 1: Intro: This should include your name and thesis statement.

- **THESIS:** The issue/problem + brief statement of your solution

“Hello, My name is Mr. Trump. There are not enough High School students graduating within 4 years, therefore I am suggesting that we offer a one-time payment of \$5,000 to students who graduate on-time.”

Part 2: Background: Background information on your topic (describe the situation):

- Define/describe any terms that the audience may be unfamiliar with.
- Briefly explain what is happening ... What is the specific problem that is occurring?
- When did the issue first begin happening? Be specific.
- Discuss at least **one example of the problem actually happening recently**. Describe a news article or story that shows that this problem isn't hypothetical ... that the problem is occurring today.

Part 3: Effects of the Problem: demonstrate that this is a ‘significant’ problem, including:

- Why it is a problem?
- How often does it happen?
- Who is affected by the problem? Describe which people are affected and/or how many people are affected. Be specific.
- What are the costs of the problem? (Are there any economic costs to those affected? To society as a whole?)

Part 4: Causes: WHY is this problem occurring? What causes/contributes to the problem?

Part 5: Other Solutions:

- What OTHER SOLUTIONS have been tried to deal with this problem?
 - If no other solutions have been tried, explain WHY there have not been any efforts to address the problem.
- Evaluate those solutions: have they decreased the problem? Did they fail? Did they help?

Part 6: Your solution: Explain your bill. How will it work? What are the specifics about how it will operate?, Any rewards/punishments, Appropriations (money) needed and its source, When will it go into effect?, and **WHY THEY SHOULD VOTE FOR IT!**

Be persuasive ... present a compelling argument for why people should vote for your law.

✓ **STEP 5: CREATING A LIST OF WORKS CITED**

As stated earlier, each student needs to include a list of works cited. As you research, keep a list of your sources of information. Website addresses alone are NOT citations. See the websites below for websites that will help you turn a website address into a properly cited source. This should be attached to the speech that you hand in or placed at the end of your speech under a “Works Cited” title.

Here are some of the more popular websites that you can use to construct your citations:

www.easybib.com
www.bibme.org
www.citationmachine.net
www.citefast.com

✓ **STEP 6: WRITING YOUR BILL/PROPOSED LAW**

Here are some suggestions to help you understand what makes a well-written bill and therefore, a “good” proposal:

1. It deals with only **one** subject matter/topic,
2. It expresses the subject accurately in the long **title** of the bill,
3. It contains a matter that is addressed to an issue of **national** interest,
4. It conforms to the **Constitution** of the United States,
5. It expresses the author’s (your) intent in **precise, everyday language**,
6. It is brief, simple, and consistent with its purpose,
7. It is divided into sections as short as possible and conforms to the **proper format** for a bill,
8. It includes a **definition** of terms, if required, before the terms are used,
9. It stipulates the **specific amount** and **source** of appropriations of funds if the bill requires an expenditure of money,
10. It includes the **date** the bill will go into effect, and
11. It must be **typed** using the font: Times New Roman, size font: 12.

**** A sample completed bill and a blank bill template can be found in the common folder for you to use when you are ready to formally write up your Bill/proposed law. ****

✓ STEP 7: YOUR SPEECH, Format and Performance specifics

Each student is responsible for writing a minimum two-minute speech in support of their bill. Remember that you are trying to **persuade the other members in class to vote for your bill!**

- **Points will be deducted if your speech is under two minutes and it will be minus 30 points if you do not give your speech.**

1. Use the outline in Step 4, Parts 1-6, as a format for your speech.
2. The speech must be typed, double-spaced, and should have a heading that includes your name, date, and class period.
3. Attach or place at the end of your speech your Works Cited. A minimum of five sources of information are required for full credit. These sources should be in the correct format. A list of helpful websites to help you with this is found in Step 5, below..
4. An effective speech will use effective visuals that help the audience understand the issue, to effectively communicate information, and to keep their interest in your subject. Maps, graphs, pictures, statistics, handouts, physical objects, etc. can be used.
 - If you are planning on using the LCD projector for your visuals, be sure to save them in the K: Common Folder used by the class for this project.
 - **Be sure to use visuals/objects that are school appropriate.**



If you have any doubts if your visuals are appropriate ... ASK FIRST.