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 persuasive essay 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 “ ! Mr. T’s LawProject ! ”

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* **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 <https://www.procon.org/>

Vanderbilt University’s Public Policy page: <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/govt/pubpol.php>

Gale in Context <https://go.gale.com/ps/browseCategory?p=OVIC&u=nysl_se_saughs>

SIRS Issue Researcher <https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/home?accountid=37404>

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 selection 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 PERSUASIVE ESSAY**

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. FIVE sources are the minimum.

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

[www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com)

[www.bibme.org](http://www.bibme.org)

[www.citationmachine.net](http://www.citationmachine.net)

[www.citefast.com](http://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 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 (will the gov’t. need to spend 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. \*\*