

IDENTIFYING TOPICS AND DEVELOPING QUESTIONS FOR DELIBERATION

Guidelines: In *Step Two: Define* of the *deliberation* process, students are introduced to a topic and asked to explore different viewpoints related to it. The teacher will choose a fairly complex, multi-faceted topic (e.g., U.S. dropping atomic bombs on Japan) in which there are a variety (3 or more) of apparent perspectives that students can identify. The teacher will also develop a specific question that can serve as the focus of a deliberation (e.g., Should the U.S. have dropped atomic bombs on Japan during WWII?).

Note: *The sampling of examples below have been organized under typical high school subjects (economic, geography, English, etc.).*

Extension: *Students benefit even more when an interdisciplinary approach is taken in teaching global and international topics. For example, Free Trade is listed under Economics, but incorporating related aspects of geography, government and politics, sociology, history, etc. is critical for a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Helping students realize the interconnectivity between the subjects is important.*

Economics

1. Deliberation Topic: Free Trade
Question: Is Free Trade Fair?
2. Deliberation Topic: Foreign Aid for Development Assistance
Question: Should the United States give development assistance (also called foreign aid) to other countries?

English/Language Arts

1. Deliberation Topic: The English Language
Question: Should English be the world language?
2. Deliberation Topic: Lost Generation Writers
Question: Which writer from the Lost Generation was the most influential for subsequent literature?

Geography

1. Deliberation Topic: Environmental Responsibility
Question: To what extent are individual countries responsible for protecting the environment?
2. Deliberation Topic: The Zero Waste Movement
Question: Is the Zero Waste Movement that is becoming popular in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere a viable option for the U.S.?

Government and Politics

1. Deliberation Topic: Democracy
Question: Is Democracy in a state of crisis as the power of corporations grow and flaws, like low voter turnout, continue?
2. Deliberation Topic: World Government
Question: Should the world be organized under a single common political authority for all people, a world government?

Sociology

1. Deliberation Topic: Immigration
Question: How do immigrant families best thrive in a new country?
2. Deliberation Topic: Female Equality and Globalization
Question: How has globalization impacted women?

United States History

1. Deliberation Topic: Nuclear Weapons
Question: Should the U.S. have dropped atomic bombs on Japan during WWII?
2. Deliberation Topic: Invasion of Iraq
Question: Was the U.S. justified in invading Iraq in 2003?

World History

1. Deliberation Topic: French Revolution
Question: Was the French Revolution a step toward individual freedom and constitutional government?
2. Deliberation Topic: South Africa and Ending Apartheid
Question: Was the use of violence to oppose apartheid effective?

Tip: Questions should not be set in an either/or fashion because doing so could inadvertently encourage debate instead of deliberative dialogue.

Helpful websites for Global Issues

Global Issues - www.globalissues.org/

International Issues - www.international-issues.org/category/analysis-3/

United Nations - www.un.org/en/globalissues/

Choices - <http://www.choices.edu/>