

How To Successfully Complete Project

Citizen

A process paper

Project Citizen is a middle school process created to enhance students in the applied civics program. This paper will explain to you, step by step, the process you need to follow to be successful in the Project Citizen judging curriculum.

Overall Hints

- Teamwork is essential in this project; find a way, early on, to work individually as a team.
- Keep a first binder that you keep all of your information in, include telephone and interview summaries, and any other sources you used in the project. (Also keep drafts of your papers in here.)

Step Number One: Pick a public policy.

Pick a public policy that you feel strongly about changing, (remember: A public policy is a policy that effects the lives of your community, state, country, or world, and is carried out by either the government, or governmental agencies) it might help to first brainstorm ideas of public policies before you choose one.

Step Number Two: Identify The Problem

Research your public policy and whom it effects. (Remember: By the end of this section, you want to know exactly what the problem is.) Keep a bibliography going on all of your used sources (it will help you later in the process).

Step Number Three: Problem Paper

Write a paper no longer than two typed pages, double-spaced, on the exact problem of your public policy, make sure it answers these questions:

- How serious is the problem in your community?
- How widespread is the problem in your state or nation?
- Why is this a problem that should be handled by the government? Should anyone else take responsibility for solving the problem? Why?
- Which of the following do you think is true?
 - a. There is no law or policy for dealing with the problem.
 - b. The law for dealing with the problem is inadequate.
 - c. The law for dealing with the problem is adequate, but it is not well enforced.
- What disagreements, if any, exist in your community about this problem?
- Who are the major individuals, groups, or organizations taking sides on the problems?
 - a. Why are they interested?
 - b. What positions are they taking?
 - c. What are the advantages and disadvantages of their position?
 - d. How are they trying to influence government to adopt their views?
- What levels of government or government agencies, if any, are responsible for dealing with your problem? What are they doing about the problem?

Step Number Four: Alternative Policies

Brainstorm with your group three alternative policies for your public policy, (remember: An alternative policy is a policy that would take the place of the public policy) pick three alternative policies and write a paper no longer than one typed page on each of them. Make sure to answer these questions while writing these papers:

- What is the policy proposed by the individual group?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the policy?

Step Number Five: Chosen Policy

Out of your three alternative policies, choose one policy that you wish to carry out as your chosen policy. (Remember: Your chosen policy is the policy that you are proposing to take the place of your already existing public policy.) Write a paper no longer than two typed pages, double-spaced, that fully explains your proposed policy, and answers the questions:

- What alternative policy best deals with the problem?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the policy?
- Why, in your opinion, does your policy not violate the state or federal constitution?

(Fill out the Constitutional Opinion Form to help answer this problem, and include it with your paper as appendix A)

- What branches or agencies and what level of government should be responsible for carrying out you suggested policy? Why?

Step Number Six: Action Plan

In this section of the project you will need to write two separate action plan papers. Your first paper must be focused on how you will get the support of your community members, and make sure you include/identify:

- Influential individuals/groups who might be willing to support your proposed policy.
- Groups who might oppose your policy.

Your second paper must focus on how you will get the attention and support of your government, and make sure you include/identify:

- Influential government officials and agencies that might be willing to support your proposed policy.
- Persons in your government who might oppose your proposed policy.

Step Number Seven: Four-panel Display

This is the section in which you show your creativity, you must create a colorful, four-paneled board, that explains each section of the project (identifying the problem, alternative policies, chosen policy, and action plan), and the papers that you wrote must be posted, in order, on your board. It is important to have titles, charts, graphs, names of the people that worked on it, etc.

Step Number Eight: Bibliography

Now it is time to write your bibliography, to do this, take all of the sources you used to help your project, and, following the bibliography sheet (located on the project citizen web page) type up all of your sources in alphabetical order, and type of source.

Step Number Nine: Three-ring Binder

In this section of the project you will take all of the work you have done so far, and put it in to your final binder. You must have six sections, titled: Identifying The Problem, Alternative Policies, Chosen Policy, Action Plan, Reflection; each section must have a table of contents of what is in that section, and in the front of your binder you need a table of contents stating where each section is. Put the final copy of each paper in the right section, and when you do the Identifying the Problem section, put your bibliography, and all of your information there. (It helps to a very colorful and inviting cover for you're binder.)

Hint: it is helpful to have labeled dividers.

Step Number Ten: Reflection

This is a very important section of the project, what you do is, you and your team write a team reflection of the project answering the questions that are on the Project Citizen web page, and then you write a separate paper on your personal reflection, also answering the questions found on the P.C. web page. (These papers go in the reflection part of your binder.)

Step Number Eleven: Preparing For Oral Presentation

When you are preparing for your oral presentation in front of the judges it is important that you:

- Practice speaking clearly and slowly in front of a group of people.
- Write up a script for the section that each person will be explaining in front of the judges.
- Memorize your part and keep the script as a reference.

Make sure that your oral presentation is no longer than four minutes, and that you are prepared for any question asking from the judges.

Step Number Twelve: Oral Presentation

When you are presenting in front of the judges make sure you:

- Stay calm
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Introduce your team

Make sure that before you present you are ready to answer any questions from several people.

If you follow this process you will not only be successful in the project as a whole, you will also have learned how to effectively express your opinions, and make a difference in the lives of our fellow community members.