



Social Action "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally"

Critical Question

What is the most effective plan of action to help bring about meaningful social change?

OVERVIEW

In this challenge, students will develop criteria for an effective action plan by considering a variety of examples of how individuals and groups have taken social action. They will use these examples, and their previous knowledge, to build criteria for an effective action plan. Then, they will work in groups to research a global issue of social justice and come up with their own proposal for an effective action plan. Finally, they will present their proposal to the class. The class will decide on the most effective plan, based on the criteria they had developed earlier.

TYPE OF CHALLENGE

- A. Design to Specs
- B. Judge Better/Best

REQUISITE TOOLS

Criteria for judgment

Criteria for an effective plan of action:

- will contribute to bringing about meaningful change
- feasible
- supports protection/extension of human rights
- appeals to others to join

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- knowledge of the challenges presented by their assigned topic
- knowledge of the methods used by various NGOs to tackle these challenges

POSSIBLE TOPICS

- Homelessness
- HIV/AIDS in Africa
- Injustice
- Child Labour
- War
- Fair Trade

CRITICAL THINKING VOCABULARY

- Criteria
- Judgment
- Justify

HABITS OF MIND

- **Respectful:** Is willing to engage respectfully in discussion with others.
- **Constructive:** Is willing to take and give constructive feedback.
- **Inclusive:** Seeks to include all participants.
- **Accommodating:** Is willing to compromise and to adjust thinking and behaviour to the situation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Connect to students' previous knowledge

- Invite students to consider ways that people can make the world a better place. This activity might be done through a Graffiti strategy. Place several pieces of chart paper around the room with the following titles: "As an individual"; "As a class"; "As a school"; "As a community"; "As a nation". Divide students among pieces of chart paper and ask them brainstorm all the ways they can think of taking action. After a short period of time (1-2 minutes), ask students to rotate to the next piece of chart paper and repeat the process.
- Once students have returned to the original chart paper, ask them to choose as a group the 3 most effective actions that could be taken.
- Debrief the activity by asking groups to share what criteria they used to determine the 3 most effective courses of action.
- Set aside the pieces of chart paper to be used in a later activity.

SHARE OBJECTIVES WITH STUDENTS

- Explain that students will be building criteria for an effective plan of action to help bring about meaningful social change on a particular issue. Then, they will be creating a plan of action and the class will select the most effective plan of action based on the criteria we have come up with as a class.

BUILD CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE ACTION PLAN BY EXAMINING A VARIETY OF MODEL ACTION PLANS

- Invite students to think about a single person, a group or an organization that has taken action on a global issue of concern. Ask them to share their ideas with a partner and then randomly select partners to share their ideas with the class.
- Explain that before students research and come up with an action plan on their assigned issue, the class will examine some examples of people who have developed and carried out action plans. Provide students with readings or short documentary clips that highlight the actions of specific individuals and organizations that have taken social action (e.g. Craig Kielberger, Doctors Without Borders, etc).
- As students read or view materials, invite them to consider and record the following information: What action was taken? What were the results?/Did it make a difference? What made this plan of action effective? You may wish to create a graphic organizer for students to record this information.
- Once students have reviewed the materials provided and recorded their ideas, invite them to share their ideas. Use this as an opportunity to draw out the criteria for an effective plan of action (will contribute to bringing about meaningful change; feasible; supports protection/extension of human rights; appeals to others to join).
- Re-distribute the chart paper generated by the graffiti activity earlier and ask students to assess the ideas recorded on the chart paper by the criteria that you have developed as a class.

INTRODUCE THE CRITICAL CHALLENGE

- Explain to students that their challenge is to work in groups to research an issue and to develop an effective action plan that would help bring about meaningful social change on their issue. They will ultimately "pitch" their action plan to the class and the class will decide which proposal to follow up on.

GATHERING INFORMATION

- Assign each group an issue.
- Ask groups to first develop a list of questions that they have about that issue. Consider providing guidance on how to develop powerful questions to guide their research.
- Provide time and/or resources to research the issue and a method by which they will gather research notes.

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE ACTION PLAN

- Guide students to prioritize the challenges faced by those dealing with their issue before trying to think of an action plan. They might do this by first listing all the challenges they have discovered through their research. Then, they might rank order those challenges based on which are most pressing. Finally, they might apply the criteria for an effective action plan to each challenge to decide which one seems to lend itself to effective action on the local level.
- Once students have chosen one challenge to attempt to address with their action plan, ask them to choose a goal (e.g. fundraising, raising awareness, influencing government(s) to take action, influencing corporations to change behaviour, etc.)
- Challenge students to develop an effective action plan that meets the criteria identified by the class. You may wish to provide them with a template to frame their planning.
- You may wish to consider assigning roles to various group members. See below for one idea about how to assign roles

MAKING A PROPOSAL TO THE CLASS

- Invite each group to "pitch" their proposal for an action plan to the class. Provide parameters for their pitch (e.g. must include background information about the issue, highlight the importance of the issue, use criteria to frame their justification for their action plan, etc.)
- Ask the class to decide (e.g. by voting or consensus building) on the most effective plan of action.
- Consider having the class carry out the plan of action.

ROLES FOR EACH GROUP MEMBER:

Team Leader (How am I supporting my team members? Is everyone pulling their weight? Do I have any questions for the teacher?)

- delegate
- organise
- accountable to teacher for progress
- leads by example
- motivates group
- supports all members (gopher)
- problem solver
- asks teacher questions and reports to group
- reports on group activity through an Activity Log

Artistic Director (What medium will I use to communicate our proposal?)

- uses media effectively to capture message
- constructs a catchy and provocative message
- makes audience think
- captures audience attention
- focus is on the "medium of the message"

Communication Consultant (Is the content clear, concise, relevant to the audience?)

- writes copy (content of message)
- message is clear and concise
- works closely with Artistic Director
- makes calls to community organizations if necessary

Researcher (What is the focus of our research?)

- finds focused, relevant information
- collects info that answers the following:
 - Who, What, Where, When, Why, How
 - Why should we care?
 - What can we do?
 - What are the issues?