



# *Social Studies*

## Resource Guide

### PART II.5

Student Investigation of a Key Public  
Policy Issue in Participation in  
Government and Economics.....2

**Note:** This document is a work in progress. Parts II and III, in particular, are in need of further development, and we invite the submission of additional learning experiences and local performance tasks for these sections. Inquiries regarding submission of materials should be directed to: The Social Studies Resource Guide, Room 681 EBA, New York State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 (tel. 518-474-5922).

*Student Investigation of a Key Public Policy Issue  
in Participation in*

# GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMICS

SS

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- ▲ identify/locate/evaluate economic information
- ▲ apply problem-solving model to economic problems

SS

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- ▲ analyze issues
- ▲ take/defend/evaluate positions on attitudes

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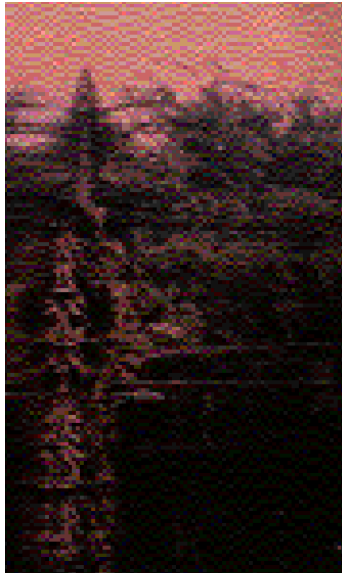
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Grade 12



The ability to analyze a public policy issue is critical to good citizenship. To be truly informed on an issue and to make knowledgeable decisions about it requires knowledge of multiple viewpoints, individuals, and past and proposed legislation. Furthermore, electronically accessing information allows for expansion of knowledge to include databases, information retrieval systems, and other library and museum resources throughout the world.

## What Students Do:

- Select and analyze a public policy issue.
- Create a hot list of web sites that have been explored and investigated as a result of a web search on the Internet. The list must include the accurate web address, a brief description of each web site explaining why it is useful and/or for what it is used, a list of email addresses, and at least one contact.
- Access two different viewpoints on the issue via CD ROM. Submit a hard copy of these sources with a brief description of why the source was or was not useful.

- Locate information through traditional/print methods including textbook searching, magazine articles, first-person interviews, television reports, newspapers, microfilm, or other sources. Obtain two viewpoints from the above sources, one in favor of the topic position and one opposed to the topic/position.

- Create a journal in which students reflect upon the search process citing searches and resources they found useful and productive and those they found to be frustrating and difficult. The journal must indicate the reasons for success or failure of a particular search and offer evidence of substantial time on task.

- Produce a group *Hot Issue Newsletter* containing the following:

- a list of useful web sites and e-mail addresses
- a summary of positions on all sides of the issue
- a list of key individuals involved in the issue
- two visuals, one of which is a political cartoon, the other a student created graphic representation
- information incorporated from previous stations.

- Individually produce a position letter following the format of the National Issues Forum and send it via e-mail to one or more of the following:
  - elected public officials
  - editors of news periodicals
  - corporate leaders.
- Function effectively as a cooperative work group.

**Dewey or Truman 1948, Environmental Bond Act Pass or not 1996**

Albany - In 1948, Truman went to bed thinking he was the loser. In the morning he was the President. Forty eight years later, when New Yorkers looked at the election results one last time Tuesday night before going to bed, they thought the bond act was defeated. The reason was, with 73% of the polls reporting, the bond measure was losing by 9 points. The next morning many New Yorkers awoke to surprising news, the bond won with 56% of the vote.

How could this dramatic change happen? On Tuesday night most of the precinct reporting were from upstate New York. When the New York city precincts finally tallied their votes, the upstate landslide in defeat changed to a downstate landslide in approval.

It wasn't surprising that New York city voters wanted this passed, while upstate New Yorkers wanted it defeated. It has been suggested that 1.3 billion, or 77 percent, of the money could conceivably go to New York City projects.

Actually, specific projects aren't detailed in the bond act legislation. Now that New York voters approved the borrowing, eligible projects will have to compete for funding, and they'll be reviewed by technical experts in state environmental and park agencies.

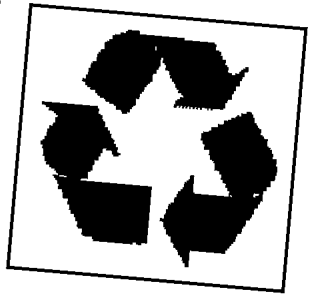
The money New Yorkers pay for this act will be used for the enjoyment and future of all. Most money that is paid in taxes aren't always paid back directly to the taxpayer, but this act is different. Every person will be paid back whenever they walk through a cleaner park, drink water, fish, swim, or breathe.

The people who are complaining about this Bond act should think about how much they enjoy the environmental before they open their mouths.

**Editorial**

It is about time that the voters got a chance to decide if they want to fund an environmental project or not. New York does need to spend more money on the environment. If not, the future of this state will be grim.

The Bond Act will provide funding for much needed clean water, clean air, land conservation and waste site cleanup activities. It will improve drinking water facilities, solid wastes areas, and encourage environmentally sound technologies.



### The Editor Speaks

The time has come to determine what is more important: the obese funding of the defense industry, which swallows massive amounts of capital with no visible product or additional funding for environmental preservation and protection, currently undefended and undersupported by those who stand in a position to lend their support.



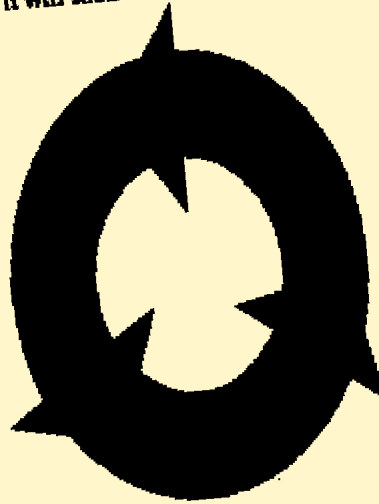
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le it is possible to ignore any political issue for an extended period of time, until it becomes a rallying cry for an unknown group, the environment must cease to be a political issue and become strictly a matter of common sense.

It is incomprehensible to imagine that anyone would not favor increased funding for a cause so benevolent as the environment, and while the Clean Water, Clean Air Bond Act recently proposed in New York State passed by a fair margin, it was still widely protested by groups of mostly middle and upper class citizens, who have children whom will reap the harvest of their parent's greed. The bond act means an

additional \$3.25 per tax payer, per year for the next 20 years. For the price of a cup of coffee and a donut the citizens of NYS could improve their environment on a grand scale.

As a member of the Nature Conservancy I heartily believe in increased funding of the environment. I find it hard to believe that a general apathy for the environment can be the universal feeling of the public majority. Unless the current level of funding is increased the environment is in most certain danger of destruction by industrial landfills, suburban sprawl and the American tendency toward disposable goods. We must act now or it will soon be too late.



### Learner Outcomes:

- to recognize key issues in public policy debates, examine all sides, and defend positions on the issues
- to become knowledgeable and competent in the tools of the electronic work place, including electronic mail, CD ROM, and on-line services
- to enhance skills relative to data collection through the use of online resources, CD ROM, e-mail, print resources, interviews, and speakers
- to organize, analyze, and interpret data collected into a newsletter informing classmates about the multiple aspects of an issue

- to work effectively as a cooperative group.
- to take action on an issue by writing a letter to involved individuals and agencies explaining one's position and, where appropriate, prescribing a specific response.

Groups will be created to study a public policy issue. Each group will be required to use a variety of sources, both electronic and traditional print, to analyze a public policy issue. Class time and time after school will be utilized to collect information on the issue through the use of online services, e-mail, CD ROM information banks, print resources, interviews, and speakers. Each individual student will be required to keep a journal that reflects upon their successes and difficulties when engaged in electronic searching. The following represent the objectives for each search section:

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## Online Objectives

1. Create a Hot List that pertains to your issue. This Hot List is a list of web sites that you have explored and investigated as a result of your web search on the Internet.
2. Each Hot List must contain:
  - a list of web sites' accurate addresses
  - a brief description of each web site explaining why it is useful and/or what it is used for, a list of e-mail addresses, and at least one contact.

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## CD ROM Objectives

1. Using CD ROM sources, locate information on your project. Obtain two different viewpoints on your issue.
2. Submit a hard copy of any information you accessed via CD-ROM with a brief description of whether the source was useful or not and reasons why it was or was not useful.

### Speaker Presentation Group Objectives

1. Choose an issue or topic. Find resource persons or organizations related to the issue. Include name, address, and phone number.
2. Group must find speakers who represent views on a particular side of an issue. Two such speakers must be contacted in order to present their viewpoint to the class at large. Speakers may be contacted via letter, phone, or email.
3. All issues and speakers must meet the approval of instructor prior to any arrangements being made. Aspeaker request form must be approved by the social studies supervisor, Mr. Corr.
4. Adirectory must be kept by group of persons or organizations contacted.
5. An outline of topics or subtopics must be prepared to address points of interest the group wants speakers to address. This should be typed in standard form and presented to class for discussion.
6. Compile a list of e-mail addresses of speakers on both sides of the issue.

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## Traditional/Print Objectives

1. Locate information on your project by using the following methods: textbook searches, magazine articles, first-person interviews, television reports, newspapers, microfilm, etc.
2. From TWO of the above sources, obtain TWO viewpoints, ONE in favor of your topic/ position and ONE in opposition to your topic/ position.

- Then, submit from your group to your teacher for inspection the hard copy of the item(s) that have been researched using traditional search methods.

Groups will then be required to produce a *Hot Issue Newsletter* containing the:

- a hot list of useful web sites and e-mail addresses
- a summary of positions on all sides of the issue
- a list of key individuals involved in the issue
- two visuals, one of which is a political cartoon, the other a student created graphic representation
- information incorporated from previous stations.

After the newsletter has been completed, each individual student is to produce a position letter. This letter should follow the format of the National Issues Forum and should be sent via e-mail to one or more of the following:

- elected public officials
- editors of news periodicals
- corporate leaders



## ASSESSMENT

The completed project will be evaluated using a rubric (scoring guide) to measure four components in varying amounts. You must complete all four components of the project for it to be accepted. The following is a list of the project components and their grading value:

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL RUBRIC

EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNACCEPTABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A thorough and complete listing of resources is given using proper citation as specified in the <a href="#">Shaker High School Guide to Research</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A thorough and complete listing of resources is given using proper citation as specified in the <a href="#">Shaker High School Guide to Research</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listing of most resources is given with few errors in citation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listing of resources is incomplete and/or contains significant errors in citation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to list the resources used in the search.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective commentary includes an evaluation of all resources with specific reasons offered as to the usefulness or lack of usefulness of each specific resource.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective commentary includes an evaluation of resources with specific reasons offered as to the usefulness or lack of usefulness of most specific resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective commentary includes some evaluation of resources with some specifics offered as to usefulness or lack of usefulness of resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective commentary merely summarizes content of resources. Little or no evaluation offered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no reflective commentary.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of outstanding effort and time on task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of substantial effort and time on task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of satisfactory effort and time on task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of inconsistent effort and time on task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of minimal or no effort. Attention to task is infrequent or nonexistent.</li> </ul>

## POINT BREAKDOWNS

**Reflective Journal**  
20%

Exemplary	18-20 points
Proficient	16-17 points
Satisfactory	14-15 points
Needs Improvement	12-13 points
Unsatisfactory	Below 11 points

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**TOTAL:**

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**Letter**  
10%

Exemplary	9-10 points
Proficient	8 points
Satisfactory	7 points
Needs Improvement	6 points
Unsatisfactory	Below 6 points

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**TOTAL:**

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**Group Process**  
20%

Exemplary	18-20 points
Proficient	16-17 points
Satisfactory	14-15 points
Needs Improvement	12-13 points
Satisfactory	Below 11 points

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**TOTAL:**

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**Newsletter**  
50%

Exemplary	47-50 points
Proficient	42-44 points
Satisfactory	37-39 points
Needs Improvement	33-35 points
Unsatisfactory	Below 32

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**TOTAL:**

**FINAL MARK:** \_\_\_\_\_

Letter Rubric

	OUTSTANDING	COMMENDABLE	COMPETENT	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNACCEPTABLE
QUALITY OF INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Accurate information</li> <li>*Uses 2 or more specific examples</li> <li>*demonstrates a clear understanding of the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Accurate information</li> <li>**Uses at least 2 specific examples</li> <li>*Demonstrates an understanding of the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Generally accurate information</li> <li>*Uses 1 example</li> <li>*Demonstrates a general understanding of the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Generally inaccurate information</li> <li>*Uses no example</li> <li>*Has a vague understanding of the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Inaccurate information</li> <li>*No example</li> <li>*Has little or no understanding of the issue</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATION AND STYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Letter is clear and concise yet thoughtfully presented</li> <li>*Writer makes his/her point while remaining polite and complimentary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Letter is clear and concise</li> <li>*Point is made in a polite manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Letter is generally to the point</li> <li>*Tone of the letter is generally polite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Letter is unclear and poorly put together</li> <li>*Letter is neither polite nor impolite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Letter is wordy and/or vague and poorly put together</li> <li>*Letter is not courteous</li> </ul>
ACCURACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Grammatically perfect</li> <li>*No spelling errors</li> <li>*Format is followed perfectly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Few, if any, grammatical errors</li> <li>*Few, if any, spelling errors</li> <li>*Format is followed perfectly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*No serious errors in grammar</li> <li>*No serious errors in spelling</li> <li>*Format is generally followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Basic grammar needs improvement</li> <li>*Basic spelling needs improvement</li> <li>*Format is partially followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Many grammatical errors</li> <li>*Many spelling errors</li> <li>*Format is disregarded</li> </ul>

GROUP PROCESS RUBRIC

<u>EXEMPLARY</u>	<u>PROFICIENT</u>	<u>SATISFACTORY</u>	<u>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>UNACCEPTABLE</u>
•all students enthusiastically participate	•almost all students actively participate	•some ability to participate	•strong reliance on one or two spokespersons	•exclusive reliance on one spokesperson
•students reflect awareness of others' views and opinions	•students reflect awareness of others' views and opinions	•students generally reflect awareness of others' views and opinions	•students reflect some effort to reflect others' views and opinions	•students reflect little or no effort to reflect others' views and opinions
•consistent preparedness of notes, discussion, and evidence of planning	•consistent preparedness of notes, discussion, and evidence of planning	•generally prepared	•inconsistent preparedness	•consistently unprepared



NEWSLETTER RUBRIC

EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNACCEPTABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All for components are present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All four components are present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All four components are present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Missing one of the four project components.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Missing more than one component of the project.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•"Hot List" clearly and concisely provides useful and accurate information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•"Hot List" provides useful and accurate information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•"Hot List" provides useful and accurate information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•"Hot List" provides some useful information. May contain errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•"Hot List" fails to provide useful information.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Summary thoroughly, specifically and accurately discusses both sides of the issue and identifies the key individuals involved in the issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Summary includes mostly specific information. Both sides of the issue are clearly discussed. However, one side may not be discussed as thoroughly, specifically or clearly as the other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Summary is a general discussion of the issues and individuals involved. May lack specifics on one or both sides of the issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fails to address one side of the issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Summary fails to discuss the issue in any meaningful manner.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graphics are clear and enhance the reader's understanding of the issue. Attention to presentation is evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graphics are related to the topic. Attention to presentation evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graphics are generally related to the topic. Some attention to presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graphics are remotely reflective of the issue. Little attention to presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graphics fail to reflect the issue. No attention to presentation.</li> </ul>

## REFLECTION

As a group product, there existed opportunities to demonstrate multiple intelligences. For example, students were required to search and arrange for speakers as an effective group. (interpersonal). The requirement of producing a graphic appealed to the visual/ motor domain. Students were accorded the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do and know in an arena other than "on demand" traditional pencil and paper exam.

**REFLECTION:**  
*REFLECTION:*