

Student Assignment

Research & Writing on a Global Issue



Research, think about, and write about a global problem and possible solutions, using multiple sources of information

- **Research & Write** about a problem in the world, including solutions or ways to alleviate the problem
- **Use Multiple Sources** (*at least 2*) for the research
- **Collect & Organize** relevant important information using the note-taking and question worksheets
- **Summarize & Explain** the problems and concerns, the causes and effects, and any proposed solutions
- **Apply Skills** of analysis, evaluation, summarizing, synthesis, reasoning, persuasion, and other writing skills

The purpose of this writing assignment is to *inform and explain*, though it can also include *personal opinion and persuasion*.

The form of this writing assignment is an organized summary or essay, yet this can be styled with sections and bullet points. Alternatively, a powerpoint or a self-created webpage could be presented, if teacher approved.

Choices of research

- Research a global problem, issue or concern – learn *why* this is a problem, then explain & summarize the problem
- Research possible solutions to a problem – explain and summarize *how* these solutions will solve the problem
- Research both – a problem and its solutions

Other suggestions or additions to the above

- Explain a global problem in relation to an ethical concern or moral value
- Research political or social actions for solving a problem
- Research two different problems, explaining their related causes, inter-dependence, and related solutions
- Research two organizations helping to solve a global problem; explain what they do and why
- Research two kinds of jobs or careers helping to solve a global problem, including the education & skills needed

Teacher approval

The topic and research sources need to be teacher approved; so first submit a brief description of the issue or problem to be researched, including 3-5 possible sources of information.

Researching the internet – *assignment guidelines*

First Steps – (have paper or a worksheet for note-taking)

- 1) from a list of global topics, write down one topic of interest
- 2) next, write down 2-3 specific issues within this general topic, issues you are concerned about or interested in
- 3) next, make an internet search for websites and organizations with information on these issues or problems
- 4) find at least 3 informative websites for each issue; look over each of these websites to see which ones are most interesting and informative, and make note of how are they related
- 5) write down each of these website addresses for use later on

Choose one specific issue for a research & writing assignment

- 1) search for a few more information sites on your chosen issue – based on: easy to understand & relevant to your interest
- 2) use the student worksheets for note-taking and key questions
- 3) make notes of key information & facts from each source; also make notes of your own thinking about the issue
- 4) outline the important information from each source
- 5) begin to write a summary of the information, along with your own understanding and opinions

Internet searches

The most popular search tools show an abundance of related websites; some links are informative but other links are trying to sell things. Look for websites from educational sites or government agencies. One helpful search site for global issues, problems and solutions is Educationforworldsolutions.org

From each Information Source –

Read, Understand, Think, Take Notes

- Read carefully, understand what is being communicated, and think about each part and the overall of it
- what are the main topics?
- what are the main problems?
- what's important to the authors, important to know and do, and why do you think it's important to them?
- what is their proposed solution or right action?

Make an outline *(or an idea-web)*

- of how the website information is organized
- show the main topics and sub-topics
- summarize key problems and causes
- summarize proposed solution(s) and ways of action

Identify

- their purpose or thesis, or their reasons for publishing
- main concerns, problems, ideas, and suggested actions
- important facts & evidence, related causes & effects
- opinions, persuasions, reasoning, & emotional appeal
- beliefs, values & ethical concerns; explicit or implicit
- any perceived bias or prejudice, or unreasonable beliefs
- ways to solve the problem, or actions to alleviate it
- suggested ways to help or to participate in group action

Show your Skills *(in the writing assignment)*

- *communicate* what you have read and understand, including your own ideas, values, and solutions
- *show* your references & provide citations in your writing
- *use* exposition, summary, analysis, synthesis, persuasion
- *explain* the situation or problem, the context, causes and consequences, practical solutions and the need for action
- *ask & answer* what is, how it occurs, why care, what to do
- *summarize* the source's information, their main concerns, reasons for concern, and proposed solutions
- *distinguish* between facts, inferences, and opinions
- *provide* evidence and examples to support your summary
- *evaluate* the source's arguments and proposals, reasoning and conclusions, usefulness and importance
- *evaluate* the source's credibility and validity –give reasons *why* you believe this, and *why* you agree (or not) with it
- *compare* the similarities and differences, in your sources
- *synthesize* all of the learned information, concerns, ideas; which is to combine, integrate, simplify, and organize it all (including your own ideas)
- *persuade*, with reason & facts, the importance of this problem, the need to do something, and what to do
- *critical thinking* applied in both the study and writing

Learning objectives

Students learn to

- research, read and write across integrated content areas
- formulate useful questions relevant to the issue of inquiry
- identify and locate relevant online resources and information
- evaluate the comprehensiveness, currency, credibility, authority, and accuracy of resources
- compare and contrast different arguments or perspectives
- analyze the causal relations between various factors, such as economic, environmental, health, and sociocultural
- evaluate the positive & negative impacts of business activities, government policies, and proposed solutions to problems
- formulate conclusions & opinions, based on critical reasoning
- use summary and synthesis in writing about what is learned
- use rational argument in writing about an opinion or proposal

Key learning objectives

Textual analysis – students examine primary and secondary sources to understand complex issues from multiple perspectives

Media literacy – students learn from a variety of multimedia and information sources, as well as critique and evaluate the content, reasoning, implicit meaning, values, perspectives, beliefs & bias

Critical thinking – students learn to analyze and evaluate media information, solutions and policy options, as well as question the underlying values and interests motivating different perspectives

Communication – students learn how to express their views and ideas, engage in collaborative discussions, formulate reasonable arguments, and use various mediums to communicate their ideas

General objectives

- developing a Global View and understanding of issues
- developing intelligent understanding and opinions
- able to effectively communicate beliefs, ideas & opinions
- able to challenge status quo beliefs, biases, prejudices
- relating Global issues to local issues and to responsible informed action
- becoming interested in and inspired by global issues

Skills objectives

- *summarizing & explaining* a global problem or issue
- *summarizing & explaining* the facts, causes & effects, and proposed solutions
- *exploring & researching* multiple information sources perspectives, and contrasting arguments
- *comparing & evaluating* different perspectives, beliefs, ideas, and opinions.
- *recognizing & identifying* implicit values or concerns, including economic or cultural interests in a viewpoint
- *providing evidence & examples* to support one's summary and conclusions

Teaching approach

- show your own passion about learning about global issues and engaging in global challenges
- teach and think-aloud with a global perspective, finding connections and relationships between global issues
- encourage global inquiry, interest, and world concern
- emphasize questions, discussion, thinking and reasoning
- teach students to question and how to think with reason
- be interested in each student's questions and thinking
- be curious about student ideas, opinions, and concerns
- encourage student choices and student-led activities
- be positive, hopeful, and optimistic about the future
- show open-mindedness for learning from a diversity of sources, people, organizations, and perspectives
- show respect for cultural diversity in class & in the world
- show concern for decisions & actions affecting the world
- show respect for each student's power to make positive contributions and to be catalysts for change in the world
- encourage ethical thinking and responsible action
- encourage positive social values such as cooperation, collaboration, caring, sharing, and conflict-resolution
- provide examples of compassionate & responsible action
- provide opportunities for participating in positive change
- collaborate with other teachers, schools or organizations

For the classroom

This research & writing assignment, along with its learning objectives, can be used for classes, online courses, or independent studies.

In some class sessions the teacher could present lessons and guided practice, in order to help students develop *key skills* in – identifying important ideas, analyzing, evaluating, note-taking, summarizing, synthesis, as well as vocabulary and key concepts.

In other class sessions the students could read a teacher-selected section from an online information source, proceeded then by a class discussion about the issue and information, as well as about how this information is presented and organized by the website.

Class discussions about an issue could include: the problems and those affected, along with possible solutions. Exercises in critical thinking and socratic questioning can also be integrated into class discussions. [see the book pages on '*inquiry & discussion*']

Small-group work is also an option, which could be interspersed with individual project time. Once a global topic is generally introduced, students could be grouped into *specific* issue-tables, for the purposes of small-group discussions and group collaborative assignments.

In summary, some of the class time (or some days) could be allotted for class lessons, showing examples of issue-researching and note-taking, with guided skills practice and class discussions, while at other times students could work on their individual projects or in small groups.

Teachers can also add in interdisciplinary lessons involving science, math, geography, ethnic studies, economics and government, along with lessons in critical reading and expository writing.

Note – *This global issues assignment is part of a booklet on Global Education, Research & Writing:*

[Global Education: Research & Writing on Global Issues](#)

This includes a student assignment for researching and writing about a global issue, though any particular issue can be chosen. It also includes assignment guidelines, learning objectives, class and semester ideas, question and note-taking worksheets, critical thinking questions and discussion guidelines, writing guidelines and rubric, general objectives and themes in global education, and an extensive outline of global issues for research and study.

from **EducationForWorldSolutions.org**

a non-profit website, free of ads, dedicated to global education on world issues, with hundreds of links to information websites

Questions & Note-taking

Worksheets



Introductory Questions

- 1) What are some world problems, or global issues, you already know about?
- 2) What do you already know about this problem or topic?
- 3) Which of these problems are you most interested in, or most concerned about?
- 4) Why do you care about this, or why is this a concern?
- 5) What are some questions you would like to explore?

Think-About Questions

*to help students think about their concerns, values, beliefs,
and to help them choose their specific research*

● Values –

- What are some *values* important in your life?
(examples: safety, peace, health, freedom)

- What do you believe is important in life,
for the world, or for your community?

- What circumstances do you wish for others?

● Concerns –

- What are some problems in the world that you are
concerned about?

- Why are you concerned about each of these?

● **Ideals –**

- Imagine an ideal world
– write down some descriptions of your ideal world
- How is life for people in the world?
What is good in their lives?
- How do people get along?
How do nations and cultures get along?
- How do people treat the shared environment
and the Earth?

● **Needed Action –**

- What is an important solution needed in the world?
- Write this out as a sentence –
We need to (or we should)... “ _____ ”
example: “*We need to protect the oceans and stop pollution*”
example: “*We should help to eliminate hunger in the world*”
- Why is this needed?
(reasons can be practical or ethical)
example: “...because unpolluted oceans are needed for life”
example: “need to end world hunger, because of compassion”

Researching a Global Issue

What is the Issue of your research?

Why are you interested in this? or ***why*** is this issue important?

Main problems at issue (state problem, along with a fact)

1.

2.

3.

Related problems (or related causes, or related effects)

1.

2.

3.

Main solutions suggested

1.

2.

3.

Key Questions & Note-taking

*This can be expanded to a 2 page question-sheet
(this can also be used as a question-guide for the research & writing)*

Problems and Concerns

List significant facts about the problem and concerns about it

Causes and Effects

List the various causes of the problem, any understood connections between the causes, and the various consequences

Values and Principles

Why are the authors concerned about this problem?
What values or principles are important to them?

Solutions and Strategies

What solutions and strategies are proposed for dealing with this?
What are people trying to do? How are people trying to help?

Anything accomplished already with success?

Global–Local Connections and Organizations

How does this problem or issue affect us locally or nationally?

How can I personally help in a positive solution?

List any suggested local connections, ways to get involved, or organizations you could join, participate in, or work for

Components of Research & Thinking

- Researching and summarizing FACTS
- Investigating and Inferring CAUSES
- Thinking about and expressing VALUES
- Researching and summarizing SOLUTIONS
- Summarizing and evaluating DISAGREEMENTS
(*arguments or reasons against the solutions*)
- Personal OPINIONS and CONCLUSIONS

Questions to explore & answer

Students answer these questions, which can then be used to organize the research essay. Students should also make note of the sources.

Researching & Summarizing FACTS

What kinds of facts about this problem are important?
– write 3-10 relevant facts gathered from your sources.

Here is just an example: *(world hunger)*

How many children are in daily hunger?

What regions have the most hunger?

Investigating & Inferring CAUSES

1. What are some causes of this problem?

(for example: droughts, poverty, bad-planning)

2. What situations or other problems are connected to this?

(use facts along with your own reasoning)

3. What human choices and actions are partly responsible?

Summarizing and Evaluating DISAGREEMENTS

(arguments or reasons against the solutions)

- 1.** What are some facts or solutions that others question or disagree with?
- 2.** Are these disagreements reasonable or not?
- 3.** Are their values different?
- 4.** Are there any facts or solutions that you question? and why?

Personal OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Think about and make notes of any opinions, feelings, or conclusions you have while researching or reading.

Also make note here of any facts, quotes or sentences that you think are especially important points, truths, or concerns.

Student note-taking *for students to gather & organize notes*

Researching & Summarizing FACTS	Researching & Summarizing SOLUTIONS
Investigating & Inferring CAUSES	Summarizing & Evaluating DISAGREEMENTS
Thinking about & Expressing VALUES	Opinions & Conclusions
Notes & References	

Note to teachers:

*The following 3 pages can be student handouts
but are also useful as teaching outlines for class lessons*

Explaining

After *stating* a problem, issue, solution, or belief, – then *explain* more about it, elaborate with more detail and give examples. The *purpose of explaining* is to improve the reader's understanding of an idea, a belief, an issue, a problem or solution.

- *sharing* what you know or understand, or what you have read
- *informing* others about a situation, problem, idea, or solution
- *summarizing* information to make it more easily understood
- *elaborating* on key aspects of a situation, problem, or issue
- *describing* the situation – the facts, causes, consequences
- *clarifying* one's reasoning, inferences, core beliefs, or values

Some important types of explaining

- Clarify or define the meaning of key terms
- Describe a situation, an example, or a discovered fact
- State the causes of a situation or problem
- State the effects, consequences, or implications
- State the reasons for a belief or a concern
- Answer the questions of: what is, why, how, and what for

What is a *Summary*

- identifying what is *most important* from the research, then stating this in fewer words and in your own words
- identifying the main ideas from a source of information, while ignoring irrelevant or excessive details
- main ideas are not the same as information details, yet some details can *support* the main ideas or proposed conclusions

What is *Synthesis*

- *combining & integrating* multiple ideas or types of facts, *organizing* it all in a logically connected and related manner, to produce a more comprehensive coherent understanding
- *simplifying* the combined information, without ignoring the complexities and nuances involved in the subject
- *combining & integrating* newly learned knowledge with prior knowledge, to form a larger interrelated understanding
- synthesis produces an *integrated & holistic* understanding of the topic or issue, with new insights and a wider perspective
- instead of just summarizing the main ideas & concerns from each source; synthesizing *combines, integrates, and unifies* these ideas, to create a more comprehensive exposition
- synthesis is a kind of summary that is especially *integrated, comprehensive, organized and united*; using multiple sources of information, multiple ideas and truths, to build a synthesis

What is *Analysis* – *(the various aspects of analysis)*

- *inspecting thoroughly* the presented information
- *dividing* a topic or issue into its various aspects (or sub-topics)
- *finding connections*, related causes & effects, and patterns
- *finding meaning* in the information, and comprehending what is being implied or inferred; it's not merely a list of facts
- *determining* what problems and facts are most important
- *finding* the important values or concerns, explicit or implicit
- *removing* excessive or unimportant details

Kinds of *analysis & evaluation*

analysis and evaluation work together

(evaluation comes from analysis; analysis supports evaluation)

- *evaluate* the source's credibility, validity, and truthfulness – give reasons *why* you believe (or *not*) with this source
- *check* on the organization or author of the information
- *evaluate* the overall importance and usefulness of the presented information in each source
- *compare & contrast* different conclusions or proposals
- *evaluate the logic* of an argument, inference, or proposal
- *recognize* over-generalizations and hasty conclusions
- *distinguish* reasonable conclusions from unreasonable
- *distinguish* between facts, inferences, and opinions
- *identify* the implicit values & concerns in the information
- *uncover* any cultural, economic, or ideological interests

The book, *Global Education: Research & Writing on Global Issues*

includes:

- Student assignment
- Learning objectives
- Teaching ideas
- Student worksheets
- Writing guidelines
- Critical thinking questions
- Critical thinking glossary
- Global education objectives
- Global education resources
- Global topics & issues