

“Developing Issue Expertise - Part 1”

Print this file and fill it out. *Put your name on the top of the first page!* Staple or pinch the pages together and turn in your work according to the submission instructions.

Step One: Begin to narrow the focus of your target issue by reviewing the data gathered from your research.

Review your research on contemporary issues from the newspaper articles you analyzed, and from discussions with your Socratic Seminar peers in class.

What specific problems exist within your target issue? What are some of the causes of your issue in your area? What are some of the problems associated with this issue? Which segments of the population are most affected by the issue?

Step Two: Develop a working understanding of the agencies that address your target issue.

Review last week’s research on *governmental* agencies that address your target issue, and choose the one you think has the most influence on the issue.

Name of agency:

Name of agency leader:

Government position:

Term of service:

Appointment: ___Appointed ___Elected

Level of Government: ___Local ___State ___National



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Step Three: Review the following examples of stronger versus weaker questions for political leaders and identify distinctions between the two.

Strong questions require the respondent to provide information, details, and explanations. The goal of the questions is to clarify the position of the agency and to fill in any gaps in your knowledge about the issue.

Examples: “What is your plan for addressing this issue? How do you plan to vote on this issue? Why do you plan to vote that way?”

Weak questions do not require detailed responses, and can often be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” response. They do not add to your knowledge or understanding around the issue, nor do they enhance your understanding of how the agency functions.

Examples: “Do you support this issue?” “How do you feel about this issue?”

Step Four: Write original questions to ask the agency leader.

Your questions may focus on some of the following topics:

- A request for information on contemporary political issues that are important to you
- An explanation of the responsibilities of the agency and agency leader
- Background information on the agency and agency leader
- Clarification of a complex issue
- Goals during his/her term of office

1. _____

2. _____

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3. _____

4. _____

Submission:

Please place your completed printout in the designated folder when you arrive on Wednesday. I will review your work and comment as needed. I will return your work at roll call in class. If you have any questions, please ask! The dedicated email address for this class is WEBAmCiv@gmail.com.