**Whom Should We Ask?**

**Subject area/course**: Social Sciences, U.S. Government

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**INSTRUCTOR PROCEDURES**

1. **Task overview**:

Students first select and research a policy issue, then a corresponding interest group. Students write a 5- to 6-page proposal to their chosen interest group, suggesting which branch of government the interest group should attempt to influence and explaining why they believe that branch is the proper target for interest group activity. Using the policy objectives of the interest group, they analyze the powers and roles of each branch of government to determine which branch would be best to provide the policy solutions desired.

1. **Prior knowledge required:**

Students should be able to:

* Explain and discuss the policy-making powers of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of government.
* Understand the role of interest groups in promoting policy.
* Write an argumentative essay.
* Use MLA style.

1. **Common Core State Standards aligned to this task:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.R.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

**C3 College, Career & Civic Life Framework Standards**

D2.Civ.10.9-12.Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights

D2.Civ.11.9-12.Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.

D2.Civ.12.9-12.Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

1. **Time requirements:**

After students have studied all three branches of the federal government, their corresponding bureaucracies, and a variety of interest groups, plan about 2 to 3 weeks for them to complete the task. Alternatively, you may have them begin researching the policy question and interest groups prior to completing study on each branch of government. Schedule one or two class periods to discuss the task and define appropriate sources, but plan for student research and writing to be completed outside of class.

1. **Instructor materials to use during administration:**

* Every American Government textbook will cover the powers of the institutions of the national government, as well as the strategies used by interest groups to attempt to influence public policy.
* Access to the computer lab to research Interest group web sites.
* Handout A: Source Analysis Handout

1. **Instructor procedures during administration:**

* Students should work independently throughout the task.
* Understanding appropriate sources for public policy analysis is often challenging for some students, so class time should be set aside to ensure that students understand how to identify unbiased political analysis.
* This task can be introduced and referenced in the course through the use of current events, which customarily arise in class discussions.
* Handout A. Students may be tempted to select a policy issue about which they are passionate. While passion can be good in terms of student motivation, it may also cause some students to overlook the primary purpose of the assignment – to evaluate the powers of the branches. This passion may lead students to turn their paper into a one-sided presentation of their opinion. It will be important to emphasize the primary purpose of the paper and the need for evenhanded presentation of information. Handout A is designed to help students see how best to assess the sources they use so as to achieve this even-handed approach. Teachers are urged to meet with students individually to go over their responses to Handout A’s questions.

1. **Student support:**

The following suggestions are examples of scaffolding that can be used to meet the diverse student needs within the classroom.

* Provide class time for research on students’ topics.
* Provide definitions of new vocabulary words ahead of time.
* For the final product, all learners will benefit from peer assistance while brainstorming their topics, as well as a peer or teacher edit of their papers before final submission.
* Some students will have good research skills, but some will need guidance in the determination of appropriate sources and where to look for them. It is important to spend class time in review of what constitutes an appropriate source in advance of students’ independent work time. One way to do this is to discuss Handout A with each student individually.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Students could present the results of their research to the class via an oral or multi-media presentation.
* If there is a particularly interesting and/or controversial topic, a debate could be organized where students choose sides on the topic and defend their views.

1. **Scoring and assessment considerations**

EPIC developed the *College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric* to accompany this task. If your school or department uses a standardized rubric that would fit the content and requirements of this task, you may choose to use your existing rubric. The following notes and suggestions are meant to clarify the intent of the rubric and include considerations for the assessment of student work.

* When assigning the task, provide students with the rubric that will be used to score their final product and discuss it as a class.
* Unlike some rubrics, the *CCR Task Bank Rubric* does not predetermine “point values” for the scoring criteria. The rubric thus allows for flexibility with different instructors’ scoring systems and individual determination of the “weight” of each criterion.
* Student work that scores at the *Accomplished* level is considered to be entry-level college work.
* The *Exceeds* category on the rubric provides an example of how a student can go above and beyond the *Accomplished* level. These examples are intended to be only ONE way a work product can exceed expectations, thus allowing room for your professional judgment.
* If needed, consider including task-specific criteria as an additional scoring category to the rubric or providing a checklist of requirements for the task.