



Local Development Persuasive Essay

This project is designed for use with the following episode:

- **e² design season three — New Orleans: The Water Line**

Objective: To research a proposed development project in your community and advocate for or against its implementation.

TIMING: 1-3 class periods (not including episode discussion). Students will have 2-3 weeks to complete the essay.

THE ASSIGNMENT:

- 1) Follow the teacher's guide for discussion of **e² design season three** episode "New Orleans: The Water Line." Post-viewing question #3 is an appropriate lead in to this assignment.
- 2) Research a development project proposed for your community and write a persuasive essay to do one of the following:
 - a. advocate for its implementation as proposed.
 - b. advocate for its implementation with changes that you propose.
 - c. advocate against its implementation.
- 3) Because students will be able to take different views, it is not necessary for each student to choose a different topic. Some possible sources for topics could include:
 - a. Local newspaper articles, editorials and letters to the editor
 - b. Local television news
 - c. Flyers posted in windows or on community notice boards
 - d. The city or town's website, especially the planning section
 - e. Internet research
- 4) In their essays, students should:
 - a. Determine who the major stakeholders are
 - b. Examine the platforms of each individual or group of stakeholders
 - c. Decide what the best course of action is for the community
 - d. Use evidence from several sources to advocate for the course of action that they choose.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) What are the short-term and long-term effects of the proposed action? Are there short-term negative effects that may be outweighed by long-term positive effects or vice versa?
- 2) Who will benefit from this proposal? Is it many people or a few? How does this compare to the number of people who may be negatively affected by the proposal?
- 3) Are the negative effects of the proposal definite or predictions? Are these predictions accurate and based on evidence (i.e. research, similar projects in comparable communities)? Could the results be different in this time and place (i.e. property values will fall, noise pollution will affect residents, crime will increase)?
- 4) What are the positive or negative environmental effects of the proposed development?
- 5) Have you examined all of the proposed actions in an unbiased way? Do you have personal opinions or influences that may cloud your ability to be unbiased? What about the stakeholders? Can they be unbiased or are their interests (financial or otherwise) likely to affect their opinions?
- 6) Are the arguments that you have seen from different stakeholders emotionally charged? How might those emotions affect the positions these individuals or groups take?
- 7) Of the major stakeholders, which group holds the most power, in your opinion? Is that group acting responsibly with that power or abusing its position?
- 8) Have there been similar proposals in the past? Have they been implemented? What were the results? Were they prevented from being implemented? What was the reasoning to stop the proposals then? Do those reasons still apply today?

FOR THE TEACHER

The teacher should check in with students periodically to track their progress with interim assignments (i.e. topic approval, bringing in research, thesis approval, outline, first draft, final draft). The length of the essay can be determined by grade level and/or writing experience.

OPTIONAL INTERIM CLASS PERIODS (50 minutes each)

- Students can be given a period to work on their outlines so that the teacher can circulate and assist students who are having a hard time organizing their thoughts.
- Students can spend a class period peer editing, either just before the first draft is due or between the first and final drafts.