

PART 1

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF AN ISSUE

“There is no deficit in human resources-the deficit is in human will.”

OBJECTIVE:

Students apply their close reading skills to understand a societal issue as a context for various perspectives, positions, and arguments.



ACTIVITIES

1- INTRODUCING THE UNIT

The teacher presents an overview of the unit and its societal issue.

2- EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a background text to develop an initial understanding of the issue.

3- DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a second background text to expand and deepen their understanding of the issue.

4- QUESTIONING TO REFINE UNDERSTANDING

Students develop text-dependent questions and use them to refine their analysis.

5- WRITING AN EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIM ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE

Students develop and write an evidence-based claim about the nature of the issue.

MATERIALS:

Text Sets 1 and 2
Guiding Questions Handout
Forming EBC Tool
TCD Checklist
EBA Terms



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARDS:

RI.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11-12.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

W.11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

SUPPORTING STANDARDS:

SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

RI.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).



ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING THE UNIT

The teacher presents an overview of the unit and its societal issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

INTRODUCE ARGUMENTATION

Introduce the central purpose of the unit: to develop, practice, and apply the skills of argumentation in the context of a societal issue by:

- 1) Understanding the nature of a challenging *issue* for which there are various *perspectives* and *positions*.
- 2) Understanding and comparing *perspectives* and *arguments* on the issue.
- 3) Developing an evidence-based *position* on the issue.
- 4) Developing, sequencing and linking *claims* as *premises* in an evidence-based *argument* for one's position.
- 5) Supporting one's premises with logical *reasoning* and relevant *evidence*.
- 6) Developing an argumentative *essay* through a series of guided editorial processes.

Emphasize that in this unit, students will learn and think about a complex societal issue for which there are many explanations, perspectives, and opinions, not simply two sides of an argument to be debated. Let them know that they will read and research to better understand the issue and various perspectives on it *before* they form a position of their own and develop an argument in support of that position. Explain that the unit will culminate in a collaborative process for developing and strengthening an argumentative essay that each student will write on the unit's societal issue.

- Establish a clear definition of the term *issue* in general. An issue can be defined as *an important aspect of human society for which there are many differing opinions on an appropriate course of action*. Brainstorming a list of societal issues might be helpful.
- Using examples from various fields and topical areas, discuss the general question: *"How do strategic thinkers discuss and understand challenging issues or problems?"* Brainstorm a list of approaches and skills used by experts who regularly have to propose and support responses to issues or problems.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The topic area and texts focus on our duties to others, or our "Social Responsibility." This issue area should involve in depth and thought provoking discussions on topics as diverse as relative vs. abject poverty, charity and philanthropy, altruism vs. self-interest, ethics, morality, religion, economics, policy, and human rights, among others. For some students, this may be their introduction to global poverty and the variety of perspectives addressing it. For others who have an understanding of these issues, these texts will challenge assumptions, present historic and novel arguments, and help enrich, strengthen, or even change their current positions.

FORMULATE A PROBLEM-BASED QUESTION

Formulate a problem-based question from which students can begin their discussions, reading, and development of an argumentative position. Choose or develop a general, though still focused, question that causes students to think about the problem with many directions for argumentation, and that connects to students' backgrounds and interests. An example/option for a problem-based question is:

We are inexhaustibly surrounded by others – human and nonhuman alike. What is our duty to them? What do we owe them? And, if we are obliged to help, what are the best ways to do so?

TEXT-BASED QUESTION

If these questions are selected, or a similar ones developed, provide a little background to get students thinking; in this case, students can read closely the following passages from various spiritual traditions and texts.

- **Christianity:**
 - ◇ Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6.2
 - ◇ If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. I Thessalonians 3:10
- **Jainism:**
 - ◇ Rendering help to another is the function of all human beings. Tattvarthasutra 5.21



ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING THE UNIT (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES (CONT'D)

- **Judaism:**
 - ◇ All men are responsible for one another. Talmud, Sanhedrin 27b
- **Islam:**
 - ◇ The best of men are those who are useful to others. Hadith of Bukhari
- **Sikhism:**
 - ◇ Without selfless service are no objectives fulfilled; In service lies the purest action. AdiGranth, Maru, M.1, p. 992
- **Confucianism:**
 - ◇ The man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others. Analects 6.28.2

Let students know that they will be returning to these questions often as they read texts related to social responsibility. Emphasize that their task in this argumentation unit is not simply to answer them, but rather to use them as a stimulus for reading and discussion. Thinking about these question as they read, analyze, and discuss will eventually lead them to perspectives on our duties to others, and finally to a position about current models for social responsibility from which they can build an evidence-based argument.

KWL

Teachers might choose to use an activity to help students access their prior knowledge of the subject while also making sure to be careful of erroneous prior conceptions of the topic (KWL, class brainstorm, image brainstorm, free write, etc.).

These spiritual texts also provide a first opportunity for close analysis, using a text-based question set such as:

Text-based Question: What do these scriptural texts from various religions suggest about our obligation to the needy? What kinds of values do these texts promote? Apart from religious teachings, what other sources from society guide your understanding of how to approach issues such as poverty? To what extent do these sources agree or differ with one another?



ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a background text to develop an initial understanding of an issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

READING

- Students read the text independently, annotating and making notes on how it relates to the unit's problem-based question.
- The teacher introduces one or more text-based questions to drive a closer reading of the text. Students then follow along as the text is presented to them.

- In reading teams, students discuss the text-based questions and search for relevant details, highlighting and annotating them in their text (and might use a *Forming EBC* tool to record their thinking).

WRITING CLAIMS

- The teacher models the development and writing of an explanatory claim that addresses something the



ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE ISSUE (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES (CONT'D)

text has presented about the unit's issue. The claim is explanatory not argumentative at this point.

- Students individually develop explanatory claims about the text's presentation of the issue (a *Forming EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students compare claims and the evidence they have found to derive and support them.

Students write a short claim-based synopsis of the text and the information it presents about the nature of the issue or problem, citing specific details and evidence to support their explanatory claim. [NOTE: Emphasize that at this point in the process, student claims should focus on interpreting what the text says about the nature of the issue, not on the validity of the text's perspective or position and *not* on articulating the student's own, still-developing position. Those sorts of claims will come later.]

NOTE ON TEXT SETS

Instruction in this unit links to a sequence of *text sets*. Each text set provides multiple entry points into the issue, giving teachers and students flexibility with respect to the time and depth with which they wish to explore the topic.

Teachers may choose to use the text sets in a variety of ways:

- Select one of the three texts for all students to read, analyze, and discuss. Provide links to the other two so that students can do additional reading if desired.
- Have all students read, analyze, and discuss all three texts (or two of the three) in a more extended instructional time sequence.
- Place students in "expert groups" and have them read and analyze one of the three texts. Then have students "jigsaw" into cross-text discussion groups to share and compare what they have learned from the text each has read. [Note: students might be grouped by reading level and assigned texts based on their complexity/difficulty.]

TEXT SET #1: TEXTUAL NOTES

Text Set I includes three texts that can be used to provide initial background information about social responsibility, global poverty, and US income inequality.

TEXT 1.1: "AUDREY HEPBURN'S STATEMENT TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS STAFF"

Author: Audrey Hepburn; **Source/Publisher:** Audrey1.org and C-Span video library; **Date:** June 13, 1989; September 4, 1989

Complexity Level: Measures at 1490 due to specific medical terminology, but is highly accessible to 12th graders.

Text Notes: This speech from the UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) Goodwill Ambassador Audrey Hepburn, not only provides background information on the global issue of childhood hunger, poverty, starvation, and death, but also presents the context in which these issues play out. The text, while slanted toward a solution, delivers a personal perspective from the frontlines of the problem. It also evinces how effective responses to the issue can produce unexpected results (i.e., Hepburn was a recipient of UNICEF aid). Finally, the speech introduces important topics such as malnutrition, global economy, population growth and absolute poverty. Both the transcript and a video, though slightly different, are available on-line.



ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE ISSUE (CONT'D)

TEXT SET #1: TEXTUAL NOTES

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In paragraph 3, what is the specific social issue at play and how does it relate to the general theme of one's duty to others?
2. In paragraphs 5 and 6, Hepburn introduces the theme of the global economy. In what ways does Hepburn use the economy to further her discussion on poverty?
3. Hepburn makes a distinction between "humanitarian institution" and "charitable organization," and "development" and "welfare." What are the differences between these terms?
4. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of the issue of poverty, and how or whether society should work to address the problem? In what ways?

TEXT 1.2: "THE STATE OF THE POOR: WHERE ARE THE POOR, WHERE IS EXTREME POVERTY HARDER TO END, AND WHAT IS THE CURRENT PROFILE OF THE WORLD'S POOR?"

Author/Source/Publisher: The World Bank; **Date:** October 2013

Complexity Level: At 1430, this report provides data on extreme poverty in terms of condition and context. The written figures may be difficult for some students, but the graphs and charts will help their comprehension of the report's findings.

Text Notes: This current (2013) report from the World Bank – an institution your students should investigate for contextual reasons – demonstrates that global poverty at the most extreme levels has not widened but deepened.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. According to the authors, why is it important to understand the trends of poverty?
2. What is the relationship between the Aggregate Poverty Gap and Low Income Countries?
3. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of the issue of poverty, and how or whether society should work to address the problem? In what ways?

TEXT 1.3: "WEALTH INEQUALITY IN AMERICA"

Author: NA; **Source/Publisher:** YouTube.com; **Date:** November 20, 2012

Complexity Level: Not available. The video is highly accessible due to its incorporation of graphics and paced speech.

Text Notes: This video illustrates in various graphic demonstrations the reality of America's wealth distribution. The content dispels myths and delineates between the ideal, perceived, and real wealth of Americans. It should be noted that the video highlights wealth distribution and not income distribution.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In what ways is the reality of wealth distribution in American different from what we think it is?
2. How does the total wealth, respective of our economic system (capitalism vs. socialism) of the United States influence how we think it should be distributed?
3. What evidence does this video provide that influences your understanding of the issue of poverty, and how or whether society should work to address the problem? In what ways?

ACTIVITY 3: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a second background text to expand and deepen their understanding of the issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

READING

- Students read the text independently, annotating and making notes on how it relates to the unit’s problem-based question.
- The teacher introduces one or more text-based questions to drive a closer reading of the text. Students then follow along as the text is presented to them.
- In reading teams, students discuss the text-based questions and search for relevant details, highlighting and annotating them in their text (and might use a *Forming EBC* tool to record their thinking).

WRITING CLAIMS

- The teacher models the development and writing of an explanatory claim that addresses something the

text has presented about the unit’s issue. The claim is explanatory not argumentative at this point.

- Students individually develop explanatory claims about the text’s presentation of the issue (a *Forming EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students compare claims and the evidence they have found to derive and support them.

Students write a short claim-based synopsis of the text and the information it presents about the nature of the issue or problem, citing specific details and evidence to support their explanatory claim. [NOTE: Emphasize that at this point in the process, student claims should focus on interpreting what the text says about the nature of the issue, not on the validity of the text’s perspective or position and *not* on articulating the student’s own, still-developing position. Those sorts of claims will come later.]

TEXT SET #2: TEXTUAL NOTES

Text Set #2 includes three texts that can be used to provide additional background information about social responsibility and poverty from religious, political, and economic points of view.

TEXT 2.1: “POPULORUM PROGRESSIO: ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PAUL VI ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES”

Author: Pope Paul VI; **Source/Publisher:** The Vatican; **Date:** March 26, 1967

Complexity Level: At 1310, this publication from the Vatican is highly accessible to 12th grade students.

Text Notes: The “Populorum Progression” is a circular letter by Pope Paul VI that addresses various social issues from a Catholic perspective. Chief among the issues found in this encyclical are wage and employment rights and the distribution of resources. Students should focus on sections 20-34 for the purposes of this study.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. Pope Paul VI cites both scripture as well as past popes and saints. How do these quotations influence the author’s writing and reasoning?
2. How does the author present both industrialization and work as “double edge swords?” What is the problem with both?
3. How should the current “present state of affairs” influence our moral duty to others? [section 32]
4. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of the issue of poverty, and how or whether society should work to address the problem? In what ways?

ACTIVITY 3: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE (CONT'D)

TEXT SET #2: TEXTUAL NOTES

TEXT 2.2: "THE DUTY OF HOPE"

Author: President George W. Bush; **Source/Publisher:** Houston Chronicle, Texas on the Potomac blog; **Date:** July, 22 1999

Complexity Level: At 1310, President Bush's speech, found on this blog, is highly accessible to students in the 12th grade.

Text Notes: This speech was delivered by then Texas Governor Bush to an audience of inner-city clergy in Indianapolis, Indiana. It is the first campaign speech of his successful campaign for US President. He introduces "Compassionate Conservatism" as his platform, proposing federal funding initiatives to increase the sustainability and scale of faith-based and community based organizations as social catalysts for change.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. What reasons does President Bush give for turning to faith-based initiatives to solve social problems?
2. In what ways does America's prosperity influence its social responsibility?
3. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of the issue of poverty, and how or whether society should work to address the problem? In what ways?

TEXT 2.3: "ETHICS-CHARITY: INTRODUCTION"

Author/Source/Publisher: BBC; **Date:** NA

Complexity Level: This encyclopedic entry measures at 1130L.

Text Notes: The BBC Ethics guide is an online portal that examines a variety of contemporary moral issues such as abortion, capital punishment, animal ethics, and slavery, among many others. Divided into five main subsections (Introduction, Arguments against charity, Fundraising, Choosing between charities, and Peter Singer: It's our duty to give), this area of the guide covers the ethical issues that arise when discussing charity work, which include the relevance and role of the beneficiaries, outcomes and accountability, motivation, and duty, among others.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In what ways could charity be seen as accepting of injustice?
2. What reasons does ethicist Peter Singer give for charity being our duty to others? And, what elements of his argument seem most challenging (behaviorally, logically)?
3. Describe the primary ethical concerns related to raising funds. In what ways could a charitable gift be unethical?
4. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of the issue of poverty, and how or whether society should work to address the problem? In what ways?

ACTIVITY 4: QUESTIONING TO REFINE UNDERSTANDING

Students develop text-dependent questions and use them to find additional evidence and further refine their claims.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

QUESTIONING TEXTS

Students now apply skills they have developed in a *Reading Closely for Textual Details* unit to frame their own, more focused questions about the issue and texts. They use these questions to drive a deeper reading of the previous texts, or of additional texts providing background and perspectives on the topic.

- Starting from the unit’s problem-based question, students work in reading teams to develop a set of more focused, text-based questions to drive further inquiry into the issue. (Students can use the *Reading Closely for Details: Guiding Questions* handout to help them develop their questions.)
- Individually, students use these new questions to re-read one of the two background texts, find additional details, and further refine their explanatory claim.
- *If additional background information is necessary or desired*, students then use their question sets to drive close reading and analysis of one or more additional texts. (Note: Suggested texts are listed in the Instructional Notes or may be identified by the teacher or found by the students. Students might work in teams to become “experts” and develop explanatory claims about one or more of these additional texts, then “jigsaw” into new groups and share what they have learned. In this way, all students can become familiar with a wider range of background texts.)
- Students write or revise one or more explanatory claim(s) based on additional evidence they have found through further or deeper reading.

TEXTUAL NOTES

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND TEXTS

To expand their understanding of the topic, students might be assigned any of the texts from Text Sets #1 and #2 that have not been read by the class. They might also access other sources found by the teacher (or by students themselves) or the additional source texts listed in the unit plan.

The source texts provide additional, and different, information about Social Responsibility, and can be used to expand students’ understanding and/or as independent reading/research assignments. “On the Edge of Poverty, at the Center of a Debate on Food Stamps” is a New York Times article that, accompanied by a dozen relevant photographs, provides a perspective on how safety net policies like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program affect everyday families. “How should a post-2015 agreement measure poverty?” is a blog post on OXFAM’s “From Poverty to Power” blog. In addition to offering links to valuable resources, the blog allows readers to participate in polls and join the discussion. “What are poverty thresholds and poverty guidelines?” is published by the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Institute for Research on Poverty and offers a clear explanation of the various classifications of poverty in the United States.

ACTIVITY 5: WRITING AN EBC ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE

Students develop and write an evidence-based claim about the nature of the issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

In the culminating activity for Part 1, students now develop a synthesis claim about the nature of the issue that they will expand and revise when drafting their final argument. Before they can take a position and make their case for a response, they must be able to use evidence to explain their understanding of the issue or problem.

- The teacher models the development of an evidence-based claim that synthesizes information from multiple sources and presents the writer's understanding the unit's issue.
- In reading teams, students go back to the background texts to find additional evidence/details that support this synthesis claim. (An *Organizing EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students review the explanatory claims they wrote about each text.
- In reading teams, students brainstorm alternative ways of viewing or understanding the problem, based on evidence from the background texts.
- Individually, students develop a multi-part claim that synthesizes how they have come (so far) to view and understand the nature of the issue and its components. (An *Organizing EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students compare their synthesis claims and the evidence that supports them.
- If teachers and students are familiar with the *Evidence-Based Claims Criteria Checklist* and the *Text-Centered Discussion Checklist* from work in previous units, students can use them as criteria for evaluating their claims and reflecting on their discussions and participation in their reading teams.
- As a class, return to the unit's problem-based question to consider revising it based on the emerging understanding of the issue.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a formative assessment, and a building block for their final argument, in Activity 5, students draft a written, multi-part claim that:

1. Synthesizes what they have learned about the nature of the unit's issue.
2. Presents their current way of understanding the issue and its components.
3. Cites evidence from multiple sources that explains and substantiates their perspective.
4. Represents their best thinking and clearest writing.

Teachers can use an *EBC Criteria Checklist* to evaluate student writing as well as each student's initial comprehension of the background texts and understanding of the issue.