



The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities



Violence & Bullying Prevention through Human Rights Education—Action Research

Teacher Guide

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Introduction

Safe and Caring Youth Action

The Youth Action projects provide an opportunity within the school for youth to identify and address specific issues or interests. Youth participants conduct research among their peers and then develop, undertake and evaluate projects that will address the issues/interests they uncover.

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities' has prepared this guide and other youth action and youth engagement resources to provide support for students and their adult supervisors to carry out each step in the youth action process.

The steps involved in the Action Research portion are:

1. Selecting a Focus

- The focus or topic will be violence and bullying prevention through human rights education.
- Human rights are a fundamental set of guarantees protecting people and groups from actions that interfere with fundamental freedoms and human dignity. Fourteen per cent of elementary school children reported they had been bullied because of their race or ethnicity. Studies also show that some high school students experienced significantly more bullying, racism, and bigotry related to their ethnic background.

2. Collecting Data

- Focus groups will be conducted with peers and other groups of people as a means of collecting data.

3. Analyzing Data

- Themes will be identified from the data collected. These will help guide the action plan.

4. Reporting Your Results

- The action research process will be summarized in a report.

Involvement in this project encourages students to improve their research skills, problem-solving skills and knowledge in the area of their action plan. It provides a valuable opportunity for students to adopt leadership roles within their schools and to develop teamwork, communication and presentation skills.

How to Use This Guide

The guide is organized according to the following headings:

- **Topic**
- **Background Information**

These sections will include background information regarding the topic that may be helpful in preparing for work with the students. This information is also included in a student guide that could be provided to students if it was deemed to be an appropriate reading level for the students involved with the youth action project.
- **Suggested Presentation Strategies**

The corresponding pages of the Student Guide will be shown in parentheses.

Topic 1: Why Research?

Background Information

People conduct research for a variety of reasons. Often it is the result of a concern or issue that needs to be addressed. Research on a particular issue provides valuable information that can help guide people in their action.

Research in education has helped educators in many ways. Some of these ways include: determining best practices in teaching, understanding student growth and development, recognizing effective models of leadership, and identifying social issues that can impact the learning environment. The research that we are concerned about within this project is directly tied to social issues and youth action.

Methods of Research and Data Collection

There are two main types of research.

- 1. Qualitative research** focuses on obtaining peoples' ideas, opinions and experiences. This kind of research is concerned with the quality of information rather than quantity. Qualitative research design is somewhat flexible and adaptable. Results in qualitative research are considered subjective which means that they are interpreted from the data through the voice of the researchers.
- 2. Quantitative research** focuses on information that can be quantified, that is, expressed as an amount or percentage. This kind of research design is largely predetermined prior to the start of data collection. As in science, quantitative research often relies on control variables and one variable that can be manipulated. Researchers are most often external to the research project which allows for the results to be analyzed in an objective manner.

Data can be collected through a variety of methods. Some commonly used methods include: surveys, interviews, case studies, observations and focus groups. For the purpose of this youth action project, your method of research will involve **focus groups**. Data collected from the project surveys may also be used to inform your next steps.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 2 in the Student Guide)*

Qualitative research focuses on the quality of something; it looks at ideas, experiences and opinions.

Quantitative research focuses on quantifiable information, things that can be expressed numerically.

For the purpose of this youth action project your method of research will involve **focus groups**. The focus groups will provide data regarding the students' knowledge of violence and bullying prevention, human rights and previous school projects and activities that may have addressed this topic.

Topic 2: Focus Groups

Background Information

Focus groups are used when looking:

- for possible solutions or improvements;
- to identify a main topic or concern to focus on;
- for a variety of ideas and opinions from a range of people;
- to empower others to contribute to the process.

A focus group involves a small number of people, approximately six to ten, gathered together to discuss a topic of interest.

The discussion is guided by a group **facilitation team**. The team introduces the topic of research and facilitates a natural discussion among the group. The team then keeps the group “focused” on the topic. They do this by asking guiding questions they have developed prior to the focus group for the purpose of gathering information. The team is also responsible for collecting the information produced by the focus group participants and analyzing the information to create a summary report.

To obtain useful information from your sessions you need:

- a topic that matters to people;
- the right participants;
- a trusting atmosphere;
- a prepared facilitation team;
- a set of good questions;
- a system to record the information;
- a plan for analyzing and interpreting the data.

(Taken from Taking Measure, by Robby Champion. National Staff Development Council, vol. 24, no. 4, Fall 2003.)

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 3 in the Student Guide)*

Since the data that you are collecting involves drawing information from your peers and making sense of that information, is your research quantitative or qualitative?

Topic 3: Knowing Your Topic–Violence and Bullying Prevention through Human Rights Education

Background Information

Human rights education is a participatory way of empowering people and communities, giving them the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills they need to enjoy and exercise their rights. The amount of time spent on this initial review will vary depending on the amount of information available, how specifically the issue has been defined and the type of information you are seeking to gain. Increasing your background information will help you more fully understand your topic and will be very valuable when creating your questions. Learning more about your topic will also better prepare you to facilitate the discussion within the focus group. People experienced in conducting focus groups say that time spent on this activity is time well spent.

There are two strategies that can be used to develop your background knowledge. They are:

Researching Published Material

Accessing published material may be a challenge. Ask your school or public librarian to assist you in designing an efficient way to search for print and web-based materials. Refer to the bibliographies of material you find valuable to identify additional sources of information.

Connecting in the Community

Seek out expert information from every available source beginning your search in your school. Does your school counsellor have any information? Is there a department of community services in your area? Are there people at post-secondary institutions who are working in this area of study? Are there agencies or people in your local community who may be able to help you? Contact these people by telephone or e-mail to arrange a meeting to ask for advice.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 4 in the Student Guide)*

Your topic or research focus will be on violence and bullying prevention through human rights education.

Remember that your team will be your most valuable resource. Gather your team together frequently to discuss the focus group topic and to share what each individual has learned through connecting with the community or published material. When meeting as a group, remember to compile all of the individually gathered information into a centrally available resource.

Activity: Identifying Your Sources

Time: 10–15 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- *Handout 1: Information That Might Be Helpful*
- *Handout 2: Identifying Your Sources (Mind-Map)*

Purpose:

This activity will allow students the opportunity to work as a team to brainstorm ideas of where they may obtain information about violence and bullying prevention and human rights education.

Activity:

Instruct the students that as groups they will be researching the topic of violence and bullying prevention through human rights.

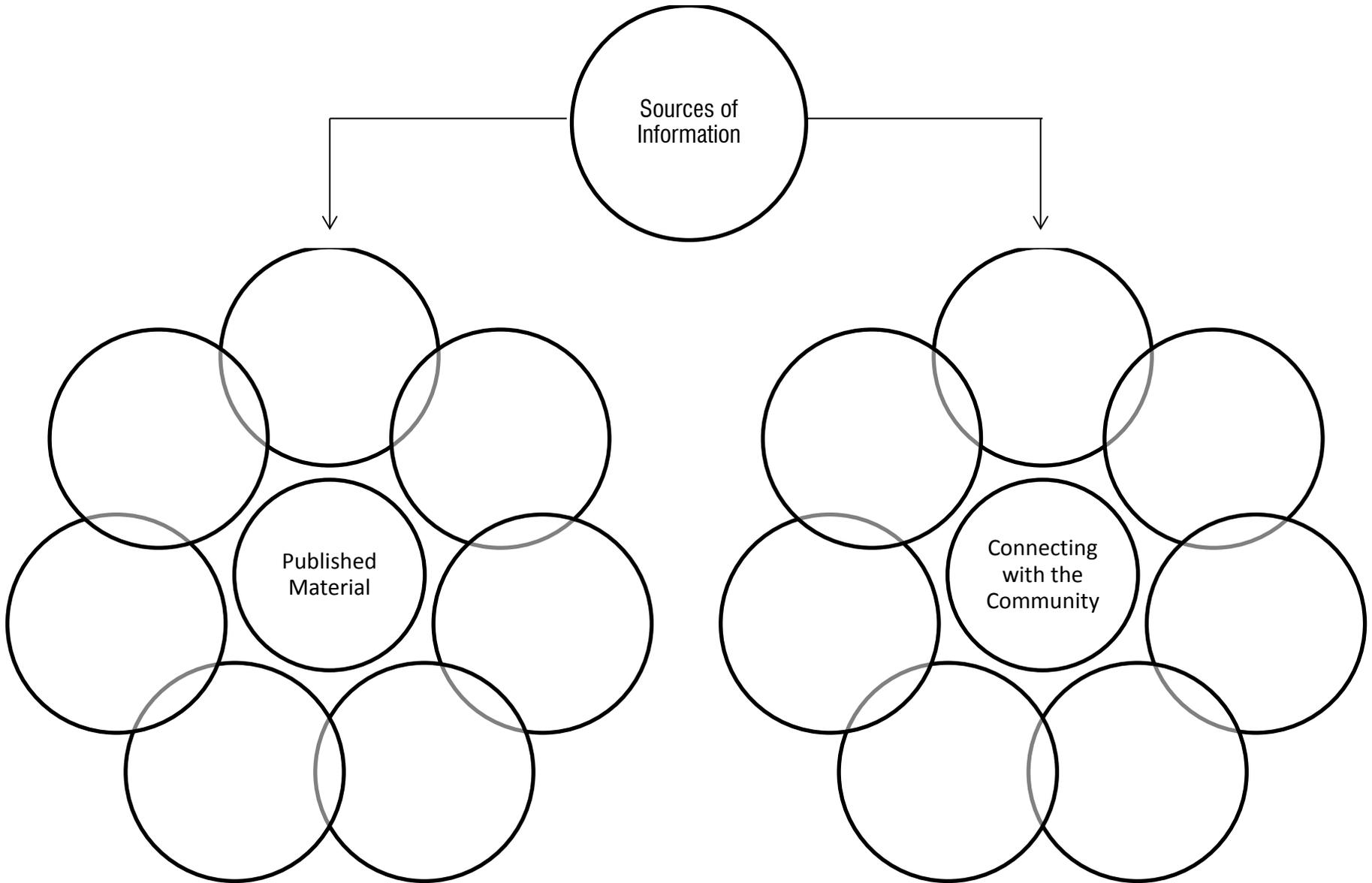
Provide each team with a copy of the handouts.

Ask the team to:

- Brainstorm a list of the information that they believe might benefit them in their understanding of the topic (What is bullying? What does it look like? What does human rights education mean? Where does bullying most often take place? What are the characteristics of someone who has been bullied?)
- Write this list on *Handout 1—Information That Might Be Helpful*.
- Use the list just developed to decide who you might speak to or where you might find resources to provide you with this information (principal, teachers, community organizations, internet, and library).
- Complete the mind-map *Handout 2—Identifying Your Sources*.

If time allows, ask groups to share their lists and mind-map with the group. As you move from one group to another, ask students to only present information that has not been yet discussed.

Handout 2: Identifying Your Sources (Mind-Map)



(Adapted from Action Research Guide for Alberta Teachers, ATA, 2000)

Activity: What are human rights?

Time: 50–80 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Markers
- Chart paper
- “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Objective:

The objective of this lesson is for students to gain an understanding of basic human rights, as outlined by the UN charter, and how these rights affect themselves and others. This lesson will provide the foundation for further work with the action research project. A thorough appreciation of basic human rights is essential for understanding issues of violence and bullying in schools. With this knowledge students will be able to perform thoughtful and respectful research, as well as implement an effective and appropriate action plan for their school.

Programs of Study Outcomes

Grade	Subject	Outcome	Grade	Subject	Outcome
7	Social Studies	7.1.2 7.2.6 7.S.5 7.S.8	10-1/10-2	Social Studies	2.2
					2.3
					2.11
					3.5
					4.2
4.7					
S.5					
S.8					
8	Social Studies	8.2.2 8.S.5 8.S.8	20-1/20-2	Social Studies	2.2
					2.7
					2.8
					3.3
					3.6
					3.7
					3.8
					S.5
S.8					

9	Social Studies	9.3.1	30-1/30-2	Social Studies	1.5
		9.1.6			1.7
		9.1.7			2.8
		9.1.8			3.8
		9.S.5			4.2
		9.S.8			4.6
					4.7

Standards:

Students will be expected to examine, in groups, one human right and brainstorm ways in which this right affects them as well as others. Each group will then present their ideas to the class in order to spark discussion. Participation in discussion is an expectation. Formative assessment with oral feedback will be conducted of discussion, brainstorm results and presentation.

Activity:

Anticipatory Set:

Begin by asking the class to define “human rights”. Come up with a class definition using the students ideas, combined with teacher guidance. Write this definition on the board. Now ask students to come up with what they think may be basic human rights. Write these on the board as well.

Process:

Input: The teacher will divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and give each group a large piece of paper and a marker. The teacher will explain that each group will be responsible for one article in the declaration. Assign articles to each group based on what types of issues that you intend on examining in further classes, or that may relate to specific issues at your school. Explain that each group must discuss their particular human right and brainstorm any ideas relating to their article by writing them on their piece of paper. Provide these guiding questions and post them for the students:

- What does this human right mean?
- What aspect of life does this relate to? (ex: work, food, safety, society)
- How does this right affect me?
- How does this right affect others?
- Are there people in the world who are unable to enjoy this right? Provide examples.

Modelling: Chose one article to use as an example and briefly explain how you would answer some of the guiding questions in regard to that right. If students are unfamiliar with brainstorming, provide examples of formats for their paper such as lists, webs, mind maps, etc.

Checking for understanding: Ask students to answer some of the guiding questions as well. Ask students if they need anything to be clarified.

Guided Practice: Give groups 15-20 minutes to discuss amongst themselves and complete their brainstorming. Be clear that they must write down their ideas. Circulate through the classroom to make sure that students are on task, to spark discussion and to address any questions that may arise. After the time is up, have each group briefly present (2-3 minutes) the results of their brainstorming. Allow the rest of the class to add ideas, or asks questions for each of the short presentations.

Closure:

Provide feedback to the students regarding the standards for the class – how well did they participate, etc. Finally, let the students know where you will be going next class with this new knowledge. Explain how this knowledge fits in with the overall project.

Activity: Human Rights Case Studies

Time: 50-80 minutes (with possible extension)

Materials and Resources:

- case articles, or video (see examples below)
- devices (if students are choosing their own case)
- question handout (see below)
- “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Objective

The objective of this lesson is for students to examine a case in which human rights are a central issue. This case could be a historical or a current event. Students will analyse a case and evaluate the treatment of human rights in real situations. This ability to analyse situations critically will be an essential skill in evaluating the school culture and conducting interviews for the action research project. Depending on the grade, all students could be assigned the same case, or students could have the opportunity to choose their own case.

Programs of Study outcomes

Grade	Subject	Outcome	Grade	Subject	Outcome
7	Social Studies	7.1.2 7.2.6 7.S.5 7.S.8	10-1/10-2	Social Studies	2.2
					2.3
					2.11
					3.5
					4.2
					4.7
8	Social Studies	8.2.2 8.S.5 8.S.8	20-1/20-2	Social Studies	S.5
					S.8
					2.2
					2.7
					2.8
					3.3
					3.6
					3.7
3.8					
S.5					
S.8					

9	Social Studies	9.3.1	30-1/30-2	Social Studies	1.5
		9.1.6			1.7
		9.1.7			2.8
		9.1.8			3.8
		9.S.5			4.2
		9.S.8			4.6
					4.7

Standards:

Students will be expected to examine, individually or in pairs, a current event or historic event. They will then answer questions that challenge them to critically examine the case. A possible extension of this assignment would be to have each student present her case to the class. The question sheet is a formative assessment. The presentations could be formative or summative.

Activity:

Anticipatory Set: The teacher will have this statement written on the board as students enter: “Name a situation, past or present, in which human rights have been violated.” Have students write their response on a piece of paper and hand it to the teacher.

Process:

Input: The teacher will choose whether students will be researching their own case, or studying the case provided by the teacher. The teacher will then present the assignment accordingly, handing out cases or devices, and the question handout.

Modelling: Choose one of the situations from the student responses to the anticipatory set. Ask the class to identify which human rights are at issue for that specific case. Challenge the class to find more than one issue for each case. Discuss responses with the class.

Checking for understanding: Go over each question on the handout to ensure that students understand how to answer.

Guided Practice: Show a video, or give the students time to read through the articles (see examples below.) If the students are researching their own case, give them more time. Then give students the remainder of the class to work through the questions. Remind them that they must submit their handout at the end of class for formative assessment. Circulate through the classroom to ensure that students are on task and offer guidance.

Closure: Collect the assignments before students leave and instruct them that they will do a debrief of the assignment at the beginning of next class.

Possible Extension: If students conducted their own research, have each student or group present their case to the class.

Current Events	Resources
<p>Malala Yousafzai</p>	<p>Aung Than, Gavin. (2013, February 19). 104. MALALA YOUSAFZAI: I have the right. Retrieved from http://zenpencils.com/comic/104-malala-yousafzai-i-have-the-right/</p> <p>A simple cartoon by Gavin Aung Than that outlines the journey of Malala from education activist to shooting victim to Nobel Peace Prize nominee. The cartoon is visually appealing and easy to understand, however one image may be too graphic for younger children.</p> <p>Brocklehurst, S. & Merrifield, C. (October 9, 2013). <i>Interview with Malala by Anna-Marie Tremonti</i>. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5M9L4k-HTI</p> <p>In an interview with CBC, Yousafzai discusses her experiences since being shot by the Taliban. This video would be a great introduction to the topic as briefly covers her story from her rise as an activist, to the shooting, to her nomination for a Nobel Peace Prize. Included are analyses of Yousafzai’s role in the world by Canadian leaders.</p> <p>www.malalafund.org</p> <p>The website for Yousafzai’s organization that raises money for girl-centred education projects around the world. This site provides information on Malala and other issues around the world. This is also a good start for social action and fundraising projects.</p> <p>Yousafzai, M. w. Lamb, C. (2013). <i>I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban</i>. London: Orion Publishing Group Ltd.</p> <p>Malala Yousafzai’s autobiography in which she tells the story of her experiences growing up in Pakistan and having her right to education taken away by the Taliban. After being shot in the head by a Taliban member at age 15, Malala miraculously recovered and continued to fight for girl’s rights. She is now the youngest person to have ever been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.</p>
<p>Cyberbullying and Amanda Todd</p>	<p>Kelley, M (Writer), & Weinstein, T (Director). (November 15, 2013). <i>The Sextortion of Amanda Todd</i> [Television series episode]. In T. Weinstein <i>the fifth estate</i>. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Accessed at: http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/episodes/2013-2014/the-sextortion-of-amanda-todd</p> <p>A short documentary outlining the online threats that preceded the suicide of Amanda Todd. A great source on online safety, this resource is useful for teachers.</p>

	<p>As a classroom resource, this video is only appropriate for senior high students, at the discretion of the teacher, as it contains sexual content.</p> <p>Todd, A. (September 7, 2012). <i>My story: Struggling, bullying, suicide, self harm</i>. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vOHXGNx-E7E</p> <p>The youtube video posted by Amanda Todd prior to her suicide outlines her struggles with cyberbullying. This video is very emotional, and is a primary source that can be used in the classroom. Again, due the sensitivity of this type of material, video should be used at the discretion of the teacher.</p> <p>www.b-free.ca</p> <p>This website was developed by the Government of Alberta in collaboration with youth from across the province. The site offers both anti-bullying messaging as well as information on the definition of bullying and the legal consequences of cyberbullying. Finally, with resources for victims, this site is valuable for all students.</p>
<p>LGBTQ Bullying</p>	<p>McAteer, A. (November 22, 2012). <i>Students Should Act Less Gay Says Alberta School Trustee (Seriously?)</i>. <i>The Globe and Mail</i>. Retrieved from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/the-hot-button/students-should-act-less-gay-says-alberta-school-trustee-seriously/article5576121/</p> <p>An article outline the case of an Alberta school board trustee who suggested that if students do not want to face homophobic bullying, they should “act less gay.” This story illustrates the important idea that homophobic bullying is systematic and is not only perpetrated by students. This would be a good case study for students to examine the complex nature of this issue and how it occurs in their own environment.</p> <p>www.b-free.ca</p> <p>This website was developed by the Government of Alberta in collaboration with youth from across the province. The site offers both anti-bullying messaging as well as information on the definition of homophobic and transphobic bullying. Finally, with resources for victims, this site is valuable for all students.</p> <p>www.ismss.ualberta.ca</p> <p>Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta conducts research into changing attitudes toward the LGTBQ community. The institute has great academic papers and research for teachers on LGBTQ issues in education. Furthermore, there are great resources for students including school programs and Camp fyrefly, a leadership program for gender and sexual minorities.</p>

	<p>www.nohomophobes.com</p> <p>This website tracks the use of homophobic language on social media (specifically Twitter) throughout the day. The site is an excellent tool for some primary research and analysis for students. It is very eye opening for them to see the extent that this language is used on platforms with which they are familiar. Also an invaluable tool for examining the importance of language in human rights issues, particularly cyberbullying.</p>
<p>Quebec Charter of Values</p>	<p><i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 2, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982.</i> Retrieved from http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html</p> <p>An online copy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to be compared with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and used to evaluate cases of potential rights conflicts of violation. This is a good source for having students examine the idea of competing rights.</p> <p>Wyatt, N. (December 26, 2013). Secular charter looms large in Quebec’s potential snap election in 2014. <i>The Globe and Mail</i>. Retrieved from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/secular-charter-looms-large-in-quebecs-potential-snap-election-in-2014/article16107221/</p> <p>The Quebec Charter of Values case in 2013-2014 provides an excellent example for students to compare how certain human rights may be more fundamental than others. This case, banning the sporting of “religious symbols” by public sector employees in Quebec, can be provided to students to analyse alongside the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. A conversation of group rights vs. individual rights can also be drawn from this case.</p>

Historical Cases	Resources
<p>Residential Schools</p>	<p>CBC Digital Archives. <i>A Lost Heritage: Canada's Residential Schools</i>. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/education/a-lost-heritage-canadas-residential-schools/topic---a-lost-heritage-canadas-residential-schools.html.</p> <p>This online resource offers several videos related to Indian Residential Schools. Some of the most interesting videos are promotional clips from the 1950s and 1960s that paint a positive picture of assimilation. These videos are valuable in comparison to more contemporary clips of aboriginal people recalling their</p>

	<p>experiences of abuse and neglect while attending residential schools. This resource is useful for both teachers and students.</p> <p>Harper, S. (June 11, 2008.) <i>Residential Schools Apology / Excuses pensionnats indiens</i>. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qo5cG-RjE8Y.</p> <p>A video of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s official apology to survivors of residential schools, this is a good resources for studying the attempts at rectifying human rights abuses. The clip is a short bilingual speech in the House of Commons. Students may examine the video and consider how effective this type of apology and acknowledgement is in reconciliation. They may also consider the importance of this statement is on the road to healing, particularly when coupled with monetary compensation.</p> <p>www.trc.ca</p> <p>The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was mandated to research and document the truth behind the operation of residential schools in Canada. Through public events, commemoration, education, and research, the TRC has been central to the process of healing for Residential School survivors. This website has numerous resources including video statements from survivors, upcoming events and projects, and commission facts and findings. This is an excellent resources for teachers as well as students.</p>
<p>Japanese Internment</p>	<p>CBC Digital Archives. <i>Relocation to Redress: The Internment of the Japanese Canadians</i>. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/war-conflict/second-world-war/relocation-to-redress-the-internment-of-the-japanese-canadians/topic---relocation-to-redress-the-internment-of-the-japanese-canadians.html.</p> <p>This online resource offers several videos related to internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II. The videos explore both the perspectives of victims who were forced from their homes, and promoters of the internment who had concerns for national security. These videos are valuable in exploring how fear is one of the major factors that can lead people to violate the human rights of others. This resource is appropriate for students and teachers.</p> <p>Fukushima, M. (1992). <i>Minoru: Memory of Exile</i>. Retrieved from https://www.nfb.ca/film/minoru-memory-of-exile.</p> <p>This National Film Board film outlines the experiences of Fukushima’s grandfather, who was interned at New Denver during the Second World War, and then deported to Japan. All of their belongings were taken and sold off. The 18-minute film combines archival footage with animation and provides a personal account of the internment.</p>

	<p>This film is an excellent classroom resource for all grades 3 and up.</p> <p>Nakano, T. with Chan, L. (1980). <i>Within the barbed wire fence: A Japanese man's account of his internment in Canada</i>. Toronto: Lorimer.</p> <p>This first-hand account of his experience in an internment camp is not only historically valuable, but also beautifully written. Nakano, a poet, and his family were taken from their home and moved to an internment camp in the British Columbia interior. After protesting against forced labour in the camps, Nakano was separated from his family and moved to a site in Ontario. This short book would make an excellent cross-curricular novel study for grades 7 and up.</p>
<p>Persons Case</p>	<p>Historica Canada. <i>Emily Murphy</i>. Retrieved from https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/emily-murphy?media_type=&media_category=39.</p> <p>In this Heritage Minute video, an actress portraying Emily Murphy gives a brief account of the case before the Privy Council that granted women “personhood” within Canada. This video would be a great introduction to the subject, but would have to be supplemented with further details on the case. This leads to a great examination for students on which people are entitled to human rights. Are there ever exceptions? For example, today do children have full access to human rights?</p> <p>Benoit M. (2000). <i>Are Women Persons? The Persons Case</i>. <i>Library and Archives Canada, No. 119</i>. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/015/002/015002-2100-e.html.</p> <p>This government-archived article outlines all of the legal details surrounding the Person’s Case from Emily Murphy’s initial experiences as a magistrate to the final ruling. This source would be most appropriate as a teacher resource, or as a research resource for senior high students as the reading is quite expensive and includes some sophisticated language.</p> <p>www.famous5.ca</p> <p>The Famous 5 Foundation is an organization created in honour of the five Alberta women who fought for female “personhood.” This website offers information on upcoming events, speakers, and fundraisers. The site also offers educational materials for teachers, including lesson plans for both elementary and secondary students. There is also an educational site for students with many multimedia resources on the women’s rights movement in Canada.</p>

Handout 3: Human Rights Case Analysis

Briefly describe the case you have studied:

What specific human rights are at issue in this case?

Describe the power relationship in this case. Who holds power? Who does not?

Describe how the above human rights are dealt with in your school or community:

How could issues of violence or bullying in regard to these specific rights be solved?

Topic 4: Working Independently Within Your Team

Background Information

When collecting your background information, a standard format makes it easier to compare materials and share information with other team members involved in the project. The following template can be used to summarize the information you gather to share with your team.

Try to include three or four points under each heading. Review the categories on the cards and provide examples if needed.

Published Material	Topic:
Title	
Author	
Date	
Publisher	
Key Points—What did the author say about the issue?	

Connecting with the Community	Topic:
Name	
Position	
Date	
Phone/E-mail	
Key Points—What did the community contact say about the issue?	

(Adapted from Action Research Guide for Alberta Teachers, ATA, 2000.)

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 5 in the Student Guide)*

Describe the relationship between the mind-map and the cards.

Topic 5: Developing Your Focus Group Questions

Background Information

As you review your background information keep track of common themes that are apparent from your research. At the end of each meeting with your team, develop three or four questions that relate to the themes that have been discussed. Save these questions in your question bank and refer to these when finalizing the questions.

Research Topic: Bullying and Violence Prevention through Human Rights Education

Question Bank

- What does human rights education look like?
- What is bullying?
- What have you seen?
- What have you experienced?
- What methods do students use to bully each other?

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 6 in the Student Guide)*

You will meet often with your team. At each meeting, team members will present their research cards. Before the end of the meeting, be sure to take a few minutes to record the themes and write questions that relate to the themes.

Topic 6: Structuring Your Questions

Background Information

The questions you ask during a focus group will determine the type of information you get from the participants. Sessions should be designed to encourage people to provide their opinions or experiences through a discussion about the topic. As a result, questions should be **open-ended** so that participants cannot answer with a simple “yes” or “no”.

Remember that questions should:

- Explore people’s attitudes, opinions and beliefs.
- Allow participants to answer in the way they want.
- Be open-ended and encourage participants to “open up”.
- Be natural.
- Allow for conversation to flow between participants.
- Be flexible.

Focus group questions should not:

- Insinuate an opinion or suggest the answer that you are looking for.
 - How many times have you been bullied based on your race or culture? *This implies that the person has been bullied.*
- Allow only for a yes or no answer.
- Use acronyms, jargon or technical language.
- Be worded in a way that sounds like an interrogation. Avoid the question “why”.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 7 in the Student Guide)*

Review guidelines in the student guide.

Ask students to give examples as you go through each of the guidelines.

Activity: Writing Your Focus Group Questions

Time: 30 minutes

Purpose:

This activity allows students to practise writing focus group questions.

Activity:

- As a group facilitation team, review the themes that have been previously presented and develop four or five questions that could be used in a focus group. This will be part of your bank of questions.
- As a group, review and critique the questions and adjust the wording as the group (and the teacher) feels is necessary. Try to arrive at 4-6 questions to be used for the focus groups.

Sample questions:

- What do you know about human rights education?
- What is bullying?
- What projects or events have already occurred in school that relate to violence, bullying and human rights education?

Topic 7: Selecting Your Participants

Background Information

When selecting the participants, it is important to first think about whose opinions you are interested in and who can provide you with the best information. Consider selecting participants that represent the diversity within your school. If your participants are representative of the entire student body, they are better able to help influence the action that develops from the focus group.

You may want to conduct more than one session and group people together with common connections or shared experiences. This will depend upon your topic. If you are asking questions about a sensitive issue, you will need to think about the comfort level of all the people you have grouped together.

Aim for six to ten people per session. More than ten participants may be difficult to control and there may be too many people to allow adequate participation from each member. Groups with fewer than six participants run the risk of not creating lively enough conversation to provide adequate information.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 8 in the Student Guide)*

It is important to involve all “groups” of students in the focus groups. More representation throughout the school increases the chances of your action being carried out. For instance, if you have a focus group represented with only members of the “Youth for Peace” organization, when you determine the kind of action to take, you will have less success in attracting allies to your project outside of the “Youth for Peace” organization because their voice will be the only one represented in the data. The project may not interest anyone else.

Topic 8: Your Team

Background Information

The success of your focus group is often dependent upon your team being able to fulfill their roles. Therefore it is important that all team members are aware of the roles within the facilitation team. Ideally, each team member will be responsible for doing something they enjoy or something they do well. As a group, discuss the roles that each person feels the most comfortable fulfilling.

Focus group facilitation team members fulfill the following roles:

- **Moderators (1 or 2 people)**
 - Are very familiar with the purpose.
 - Guide the direction that the focus group takes.
 - Encourage lively and natural group discussion.
 - Ensure that each participant has an opportunity to share opinions.
 - Ensure that questions are answered within time allotted.
 - Ensure the focus group stays on topic.
 - *Characteristics of Your Moderators*
 - Knowledge of topic;
 - Leadership skills;
 - Sensitivity and tact;
 - Patience and flexibility;
 - Listening skills.

- **Recorder(s) (1 or more people)**
 - Are very familiar with the purpose.
 - Records the answers to the questions.
 - Records non-verbal communication.
 - Acts as a back-up to the moderator by asking any major questions not covered and asks follow up questions to clarify responses.
 - Keeps the moderator on topic and on time.
 - Are responsible for recording equipment (flip charts, markers, recorders).
 - *Characteristics of Your Recorder(s)*
 - Attuned to the subtleties of body language;
 - Leadership skills;
 - Ability to recognize group dynamics;
 - Excellent written communication skills;
 - Ability to pick out key pieces of information from participant responses.

- **Assistants**
 - Are the hosts and take care of logistics (book the room, organize refreshments).

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 9 in the Student Guide)*

We cannot stress enough that this is really a team effort and there is not one person who is more important than any other.

Characteristics of Youth Recorder – Leadership Skills

This may involve the recorder making sure the discussion stays on track if the moderator is deep in discussion with participants.

Topic 9: Success of Your Team

Background Information

The success of your team is dependent upon each team member being able to fulfill his or her roles. As you can see, each role has clear responsibilities. Sometimes one person's responsibilities will overlap with another person's responsibilities. This overlapping allows for fewer mistakes because the team is looking out for each other. The overlapping also means that it is very important that all team members communicate effectively with each other.

There may be times when you believe the focus group is losing control. Know that this is a normal feeling as a group facilitator. What is important here is that your entire facilitation group does not experience this at the same time.

Your focus group facilitation team must maintain confidence when working with participants so that there is a feeling of ease and importance about the work being done. If your facilitation team loses its confidence, you may lose the interest of the group thereby affecting the quality of the information being gathered.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 10 in the Student Guide)*

Take 5 minutes and discuss the characteristics of their team members and how these characteristics might best suit one of the roles of focus group facilitator team.

Topic 10: Conducting Your Focus Group

Background Information

The following is an overview of the entire process of conducting a focus group. It will start with the planning and conclude with the managing of the results of the focus group discussions.

10-1: Planning Your Focus Group

Prior to each focus group, the team should ensure that all preparations are complete. These preparations could include:

- Booking a site that is an appropriate size and easy for participants to get to.
- Visiting the site of the session so that you are aware of the room set up.
- Creating a list of potential participants.
- Inviting participants. This may be done in person, through written invitations or via e-mail. Ask noted participants to respond so you are aware of who will attend and can invite more, if necessary.
- Developing a checklist that includes all of the material that you need to bring to conduct the focus group. This may include:
 - participant list
 - chairs
 - equipment (pens, clipboard, recording devices, flipchart paper)
 - paper work (copy of focus group questions, note paper)
 - extra batteries
 - name tags
 - relevant questions written on flip chart paper (to keep group focused)
 - refreshments
- Testing the equipment to make sure that it is in working order. The checklist should be used before every focus group, even when you feel you know all that is required from memory.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 11 in the Student Guide)*

10-2: Beginning Your Focus Group

This part is important as it sets the tone for the whole session. The facilitation team will need to find a balance between a casual atmosphere and a formal one. The following are suggestions that may help you find this balance.

- Welcome the participants and thank them for coming.
- Introduce the team and provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the focus group and the team's project without giving away the nature of the research questions.
- Describe the different roles of the team.
- Ask the group if they feel comfortable with you using an audio recorder (if appropriate) as a means of collecting accurate information. Explain that this is only to ensure all responses are collected, as information is easily missed through note taking. Assure participants that all tapes or raw data will be destroyed once the data is analyzed.
- Describe how you would like the focus group to work. Encourage group discussions and different opinions.
- Inform participants that you would like to hear from everyone regarding their thoughts on the subject.
- Given that you hope to complete the session in the allotted time, explain to the group that you may need to move on to the next question before the group has completed the exploration of the previous question.
- Ask if participants have any questions or concerns before you begin.
- Begin the focus group with a question that will put the participants at ease. This question will likely be very open-ended and more general in nature. For example, "As I have just described I am interested in finding out more about your understanding of human rights education and how knowing more can help reduce and prevent violence, bullying and other hurtful behaviour."

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 12 in the Student Guide)*

10-3: Proceeding with Your Focus Group Questions

Once the focus group session has been introduced, you can proceed with the prepared questions. Initially, it is important to ask the questions in exactly the same way as you have prepared them. Follow-up questions, that will not be listed, may come to mind as part of the discussion. Moderators and recorders are encouraged to ask these questions as they may provide for richer data.

As you proceed, you may need to encourage the discussion. A variety of techniques can be used and are described in the following.

Techniques for Encouraging Discussion

- Maintain a friendly atmosphere so that participants feel comfortable.
- Pause after you ask a question. The pause should not last more than five seconds. Pausing will allow you to make eye contact with a participant as a means of encouraging them to respond and it may allow someone who is shy to also respond.
- Rephrase a question if participants are finding it difficult to answer.
- Ask a probing question to clarify a response from a participant. (For example, “Could you provide me with an example of what you mean?”)

You may also find that sometimes participants do not respond in an ideal manner. These participants may create some problems with the group dynamics. The following describes techniques for controlling the discussion.

Techniques for Controlling the Discussion

- Some participants may want to answer all of the questions and speak on behalf of the group. Try avoiding eye contact with dominant talkers and using other subtle body language. If these techniques do not work with a dominant talker in your group, the teacher may need to step in to assist you.
- Some participants will be shy about responding. Try including them by addressing them by name or asking them specifically for input on a question.

Since the data should be representative of the group, before you continue on with the next question, be sure that all participants have had a chance to participate in the discussion. It is also important to keep track of participant agreement when one person is making a comment. For instance, if one person says that their school has been involved in two activities related to bullying and three people nod in agreement, writing this in your notes will provide you with more complete data than just writing down what the one person said. Keeping track of group agreement or disagreement of individual statements will determine the importance of each answer.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 13 in the Student Guide)*

Even though you ask the questions initially in the way that they have been prepared, you are not tied to only your prepared questions. If the participants seem to need to talk about something that you did not anticipate, it is very important for you to allow this conversation to be heard and be recorded.

10-4: Keeping Track of Your Focus Group Data

Your group's ability to accurately record the data is highly important to the interpretation of the information. If the record of data is incorrect, your results will not be accurate.

The three main methods used to record data are note taking, tape recording and video recording. Although tape recording and video recording can be used as a back-up for note taking, focus group sessions should always have a recorder present.

Recording notes involves:

- Recording the number of participants involved in the focus group;
- Summarizing all the responses for each question;
- Noting the number of people in agreement or disagreement with other participants' responses;
- Writing some direct quotations;
- Writing up notes in detail immediately after the session;
- Checking with the facilitation team to see if there was anything missed.

The audio recorder and video recorder should be placed in a stationary spot in the room so as not to be distracting. Remember that some people are shy about being recorded.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 14 in the Student Guide)*

Be sure you are recording not just what is said but how others respond to what is said. For example, nodding of head and/or rolling of eyes.

A good moderator will be constantly reading the group and be willing to ask clarifying questions. For example, John has said "A" and the group is nodding, a good moderator will then say to the group, "I notice, many of you are nodding in agreement, does anyone want to add anything to that?"

10-5: Concluding Your Focus Group

It is important to ensure that participants leave the session feeling that their time has been well spent and that their contributions have been appreciated. These are some helpful tips to ensure the success of your focus group as you come to a close.

- Allow the recorder(s) to ask any clarifying questions that may come out of the note taking.
- Leave the last few minutes for any questions the participants might have and allow for closing comments from all participants.
- Share with the participants, again, what will come out of the focus group and how their contributions have been valuable to this process.
- Thank the participants for their time and their knowledge.
- If time and money is available, consider having a social time with snacks following the session.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 15 in the Student Guide)*

Topic 11: Debriefing Your Focus Group

Background Information

It is important to have a short meeting with the group facilitation team immediately following the session to discuss all aspects of the focus group. During this meeting, make your comments about the session itself and not about the participants or your team members. For instance, you could say, “I think it is important to keep close track of the time allotted for each question. How can we do this?” Instead of saying, “Johnny, you need to signal us about time so that we do not go over.” These kinds of conversations should focus on building your skills as a facilitation team.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 16 in the Student Guide)*

This allows the group to debrief the session and examine its effectiveness. This will allow for information to be shared while it is still fresh in your mind. This is not a meeting to discuss members of the facilitation team or participants. This is a meeting to share ideas that can strengthen your work as a facilitation team. Be sure each team member knows what he or she needs to do before you meet again.

If time allows, you could conduct a practice session using the questions that the group facilitation team developed.

Topic 12: Analyzing Your Data

Background Information

The data that is collected in a focus group is qualitative, which means that the team must use their intellect to analyze and interpret the collected information. The intellectual process of qualitative analysis includes critical thinking, finding connections between data, forming judgments and determining answers to the questions.

To analyze your data, the recorders must first have worked together to write out the notes into the fullest possible record. If a video or any other recording was made during the session, the recorders will have used that data to ensure the accuracy of the record. Each team member must be provided with a copy of the notes to review prior to the analysis meeting.

During the analysis meeting, each question will be analyzed by the team separately. The goal is to provide an answer to the question using the data provided by the focus groups. The answer may not be a simple one-sentence answer but may contain many different parts. It is important to include all parts that seem representative of the group.

The following steps should be used to help your group analyze your data:

- Work as a team.
- Review all answers provided for a particular question.
- Remember that a response that negates the necessity for the question is as important as a response that provides an answer to the question.
- Reach consensus about what the answers mean in relation to the question.
- Determine connections and themes within the group of answers provided.
- Summarize the answers to the question as briefly as possible.
- Move on to the next question.

Your analysis will provide information that will be used to guide your group in the selection of your action plans.

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 17 in the Student Guide)*

Recorders work together to write out the notes before the team gathers to analyze the data. Copies of the notes should be provided for each team member.

Topic 13: Reporting On Your Results

Background Information

Once the data has been analyzed, the team should prepare a final report of your focus group or groups and share the results. The following is a template for a report that you could use.

Youth Action: _____

Youth Action Team Members: _____

School: _____

School District: _____

Grade Levels of Focus Group Participants: _____

Number of Focus Group Participants: _____

Teacher Supervisor(s): _____

Introduction

- *What was your topic?*
- *Introduce how your facilitation team managed this within your school.*

Review of Background Information

- *Summarize the information that you collected from your:*
 - *Connections in the community*
 - *Research of published material*

Summary of Process used

- *Describe your overall plan*
- *List the questions being addressed*

Results and Conclusions

- *Summarize the answers to the questions*
- *Discuss your conclusions*

Implications

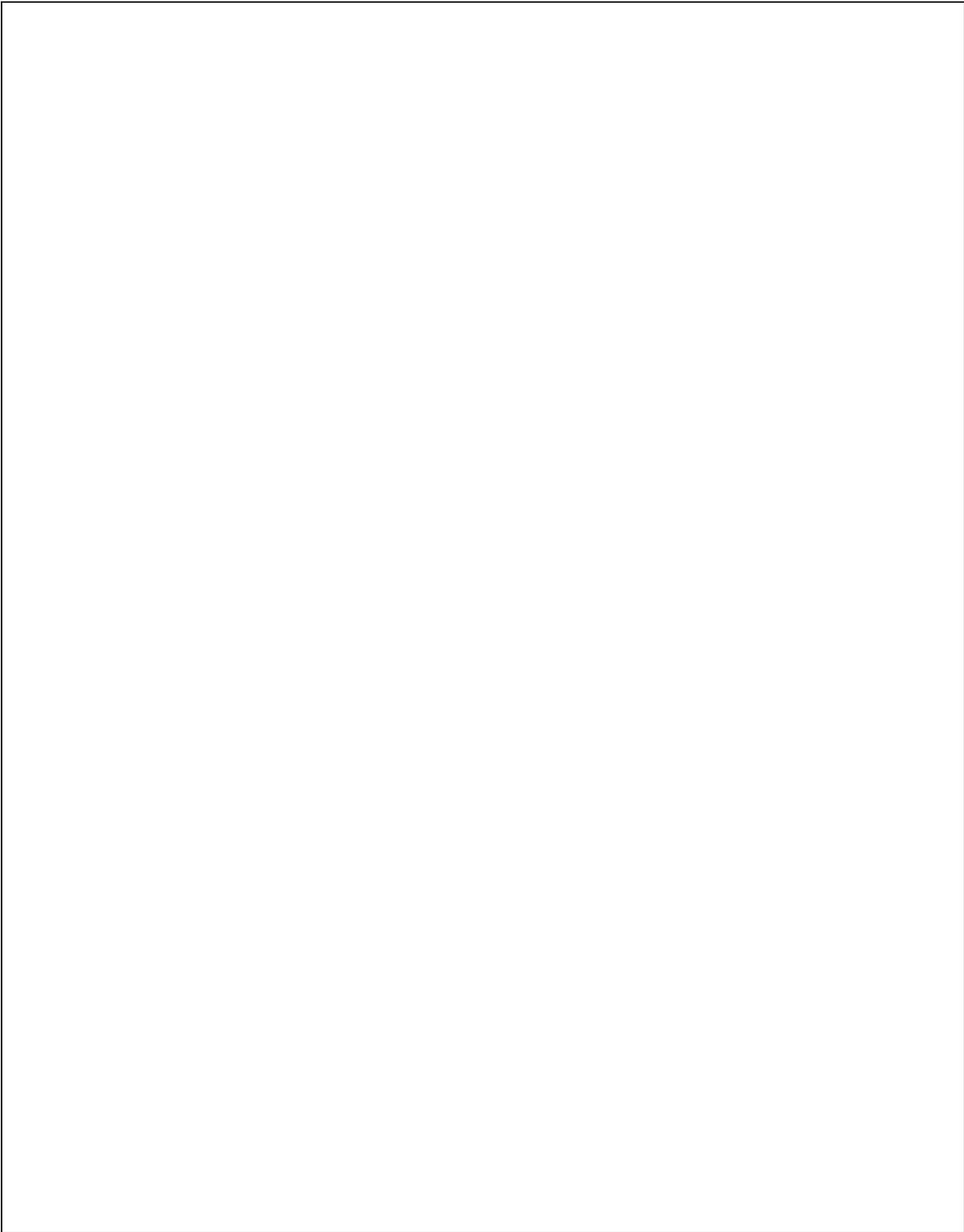
- *Discuss how this data informs your choice of your action plans.*

Suggested Presentation Strategies

Script suggestions: *(Refer to page 18 in the Student Guide)*

Review points in the student guide and provide examples of each category for clarification.

Notes:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their notes. It occupies the central portion of the page.

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