

Birmingham City Schools
National Issues Forums in the Classroom

Lesson Plans

Introduction

The first step in preparing for a National Issues Forum is to teach the NIF Guidelines for conducting a public forum. A discussion of the NIF Guidelines is important to set the tone for a deliberation which is not a debate. Teachers may design creative ways to review the guidelines, i.e. ask students to list important rules for a public discussion, then compare their rules with the NIF Guidelines; or, ask students in small groups to explain why each NIF guideline is important in a public discussion. Before beginning this process, the teacher should read the entire NIF Binder to develop a clear picture of the deliberation process and the main focus for the lesson.

Secondly, students should choose an issue for deliberation. They may use an issue featured in a NIF issue book, or your class may decide on its own forum issue. Creating your own issue does require experience with the NIF deliberation process. Please know, whichever route your class takes, the strength of the forum is in the deliberation itself – the issue you choose is secondary. Choosing an issue that is of interest to your students is important to motivating student engagement in the process.

LESSON PLAN
Youth and Violence *Reducing the Threat*:

Teacher: Latoya Posey

Date:

Grade: 7th Subject: Civics/Geography Period

Objective: Students will analyze *Youth and Violence*, a NIF issue, and they will follow the deliberative process to achieve common ground and plan what they can do together.

Social Studies Standards:

Alabama Course of Study for 7th grade Civics:

- AL9 – Identify individual and civic responsibilities of citizens of the United States.
- AL11—Describe examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence of groups, societies, and nations using past and current events.

National Standards:

- IV. Individual Development and Identity,
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions,
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance,
- X. Civic Ideals and Practices,

Big Picture Question: Does it matter who hits first if words kill?

Materials:

Violent Kids NIF Issue Book, whiteboards, smart/promethean board, dry erase material, ELMO, LCD projector, laptops, NIF binder and Introductory Video.

Preparing for the Forum: (Introduction/Motivation) Date(s) _____

DAY 1 **NOTE:** Begin using the NIF lessons 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 provided in the binder as bell ringers about two weeks before you begin the forum. These should take about 10 minutes to review and which provide the groundwork for students to understand the method of deliberation.

- Teacher will explain the deliberative process. (Use the Debate, Discussion, Deliberation handouts)
- Students will view the NIF introductory video.
- Students will define/identify important NIF vocabulary terms (IDs) in their NIF notebook/folder.

Suggested terms to cover – public policy, public opinion, deliberation, trade-offs, forums

ACTIVITY:

- Divide Students into groups of 4.
- Each group member will be assigned to research the crime rate for adolescences in Alabama and 2 additional states.
- Each member will create a bar graph displaying the various crime rate differences for their 3 states.
- Each group will produce 1 line graph or pie chart showing the crime rates for all 9 of their states.
- Each group will make a small presentation and hang their charts so it will be visible throughout the NIF forum process.

Introduce Issue: Provide Context/Guidelines/Student Roles/Pre-Forum Questionnaire) Date(s) _____

DAY 2

The teacher will review the guidelines, student roles and vocabulary for the NIF forum process.

Youth and Violence

- Teacher will introduce Guidelines for forum procedures. Teacher will point out poster. Teacher will remind students of classroom discussion rules.
- Students will use pre-forum questionnaire. (provided in NIF issue book)
- Teacher will introduce roles: moderator, recorder, and participant. Students will vote for moderator and recorder. Teacher will reiterate that the moderator and recorder do not have an opinion.
 - Moderator- Remains unbiased throughout forum and ensures equal time allotments for discussion of the 3 Approaches.
 - ♣ Teacher may serve as moderator
 - ♣ Moderator can be selected by class or appointed by teacher.
 - Recorder- Keeps records of points and comments made by participants during the forum. (**Note Taker**)
 - Participants-members of the forum. They are to abide by the NIF guidelines and remain respectful and open to the opinions and participation of their peers.
- Students will use their issue map to deliberate – What should we do?
- Students will complete the Issue Book Handouts provided in the NIF binder. (**Have these copied and ready for students in a folder**)
- **Think/Pair/Share:** Students will discuss their responses to the prompts on the NIF handouts with a partner

Deliberating the Choice: (Forum) Dates

DAY THREE, FOUR AND FIVE

Differentiate Learning Activity Style

Day 3

- Teacher and students will read Approach One
- Students will define content identifiers in their forum notebooks while reading.
- Teacher will hand out Approach One synopsis from Youth and Violence issue map (students may have their own copy in their folder). This will give students an easy reference while discussing the issue.
- Students will work in small groups will come to a consensus identifying the benefits and consequences of Approach One. They will present their consensus in one of the following ways:
 - Visual Image (i.e. a protest/rally poster, political cartoon, advertisement)
 - Written: (i.e. a letter to their state representative, a poem, editorial in a newspaper)

Day 4

- Teacher and students will read Approach Two
- Teacher will hand out Approach Two synopsis from Youth and Violence issue map
- Students will draw a picture, write a paragraph, and select five key vocabulary words to express their understanding of Approach Two.
- In small groups of 4, students will alternate reading their summary and explain their illustration.
- Each group will create a visual representation of the group consensus of the benefits and consequences of Approach Two.

Day 5

- Teacher will review students' concepts from the previous days.
- Teacher and students will read Approach Three
- Teacher will hand out Approach Three synopsis from Youth and Violence issue map
- Students will deliberate Approaches 1, 2, and 3
 - Desks should be set up in a circle so the students can see each other.
 - ♣ Make the point to students that they are on equal footing throughout the forum.

- ♣ The moderator should stand at a podium.
 - ♣ The recorder may sit outside the circle.
 - ♣ Moderator will go over rules and begin discussion. Students must wait to be called on. As students discuss, the recorder writes the comments.
 - ♣ Leave about five minutes at the end of class for a wrap up.
- Students will be given an opportunity to define, discuss, and apply their personal perspectives about violent kids.

Content Identifiers: (ID's / Vocabularies)

Forum, deliberation, group, individual, cooperative, perspective, opinion, respect, moderator

OPTION ONE FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY

OPTION TWO FOCUS ON PREVENTION

OPTION THREE CHANGE OUR VIOLENT CULTURE

Summary and Reflection: (What have you learned? /Post-Forum Questionnaire) Date(s) _____

Students will complete a post-forum questionnaire and compare responses to pre-forum questionnaires.

Assessment Strategies: Date(s) _____

Test Informal assessment on Agree/Disagree _____

Classroom Forum _____

Presentation _____

Research Homework assignment

Post Survey Questionnaire

Rubric for the moderator

Rubric for the student participation

Oral Participation

Students will complete self-assessment tools from the NIF binder.

Students will be assessed on daily activities included in lesson plans.

Extension Activities: (What do you plan to do, i.e. PTA presentations, with other classes, etc.?) Date(s)

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- Students will produce posters of each approach using pictures from magazines and quotes and pictures from the Internet.
- Students will invite community members to attend forums.
- Forum will be conducted during a City Council meeting and during a PTA meeting.
- Students may write to their U.S. Senator or Representative about their experience in the forum.

Oral Presentation: Students will participate in a NIF Forum about Youth and Violence.