

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO MAKE CHANGE

Inspire your class to take civics into the real world by researching and creating a plan to improve their community through elected office.

OBJECTIVE

Students will research a local civic issue they'd like to change and use evidence to write a persuasive argument about their action plan.

STANDARDS

Common Core ELA

- **CCRA.W.1** Write arguments with evidence.
- **CCRA.W.7** Conduct short research projects.

C3

- **D2.Civ.12.6-8** Assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as means of addressing public problems.
- **D2.Civ.12.9-12** Analyze how people challenge local and state laws.

TIME

40–60 minutes (plus research and writing time)

MATERIALS

Want to Change the World? classroom poster
Find the Facts! activity sheet
Plan Your Contest Entry sheet
Optional internet access

OPTIONAL PREP

A few weeks in advance, direct students to monitor local news to identify local issues.

1 Begin by having a few volunteers read aloud the stories featured on the classroom poster. Engage the class in a pair/share: *Which stories did you like best? Which one did you relate to most? What surprised or intrigued you?*

2 Segue into a class discussion. Have students identify issues in their own community that they want to change. Collect students' ideas on the board (for older kids, assign this role to a student).

3 Ask: *What is the role of local change? How can local change lead to global change?* Discuss the concept of incremental change and local change as a method of tackling large, complex issues. (Key ideas: Local change can be easier to make, and many local changes will add up to global change. Also, local change can act as proof of concept and help persuade decision makers that a given solution will be effective when scaled up.)

4 Prompt students to brainstorm by writing ways they can start to make local change (for example, writing a letter to a city council member, organizing a boycott, etc.). Have students share their responses with the class.

5 Pose these larger questions: *What's the difference between an influencer of change and someone who makes decisions to enact change through laws, policies, and programs? Why do we need both in our community?*

WHAT WILL YOU ★ RUN FOR? ★ STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

- ▶ **Entry:** A 2- to 3-page persuasive essay outlining a local issue the student would like to change, an office for which they could run to effect change, and their plan for taking action.
 - ▶ **Entry Details** Each essay will be judged for content, creativity, persuasiveness, and organization. Visit [scholastic.com/createchange](https://www.scholastic.com/createchange) to view the full rubric.
 - ▶ **Prizing** Three grades 7–8 student winners and three grades 9–12 student winners will receive \$1,000 and a brand-new laptop to help them organize their community around their cause. The teachers of student winners will receive \$500 for their classrooms!
- Visit [scholastic.com/createchange](https://www.scholastic.com/createchange) for more information and to enter your students.

ENTRIES
DUE
MARCH 29,
2020

6 Introduce the essay contest and hand out the Find the Facts! activity sheet and the Plan Your Contest Entry sheet to aid in writing. As needed, review the distinctions between mayor, city council, and state legislature.

7 Allow students independent time to research and plan their writing. Support them in submitting their essays to the contest.

CHANCE TO WIN FREE BOOKS!

Tell us what you think of these materials! Take our survey at [scholastic.com/createchange/survey](https://www.scholastic.com/createchange/survey).

★ SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS ★

- ▶ **To increase the challenge** Direct students to create their own campaign poster that creatively illustrates their issue with a graphic image and tagline that represents them as a candidate.
- ▶ **To decrease the challenge** Assign and define the office for which students will run (such as mayor) rather than having them research and choose a role.