MyImpact Challenge: Identifying Your Problem

Activity 1

| In this activity you will... |
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| * Identify the purpose of the MyImpact Challenge project. * Evaluate issues impacting your local community. * Identify a primary issue on which to focus your project. |

MyImpact Challenge (MIC) is a civics project opportunity developed by the Bill of Rights Institute that encourages young people to use their voice to develop projects that positively impact their community. You will have the option to submit your project to a national contest.

Let’s start by asking the ultimate question:

# Do I Have an Impact on My Community Now?

Think about the communities you belong to. How have you interacted with them recently?

| **Directions**: Use the guiding questions below to consider the ways you impact your communities and how they impact you. | |
| --- | --- |
| What communities are you a part of? Are you a part of… |  |
| ...a club? |  |
| ...a team? |  |
| ...your school? |  |
| ...your neighborhood? |  |
| ...your town? |  |
| How has being a part of these communities shaped your life? |  |
| What have you done in your communities? |  |
| Who in your communities have you helped? |  |
| Are you happy with your contributions to and interactions with these communities? |  |

# What Does it Mean to Contribute to Society?

What you do, or your contribution to society, is the process of discovering your passions and talents, and using them to create what is beautiful and needed to make the community a better place. Contributing to society is just one of many civic virtues.

Now think about the ways you would like to contribute to your community. Maybe you feel like you already contribute enough. Maybe you hope to contribute more. Or maybe you struggled to answer these questions at all because you aren’t sure what it means to do something in your community, and why serving your community is important.

Whatever your situation may be, it’s good to start the process by thinking about how contributions are good for your community or society as a whole. A good way to do this is to learn from individuals who have contributed to American society throughout history.

| **Directions**: The following are quotes from individuals who have contributed to American society throughout history. Highlight the key terms in their quote. Then rewrite the quote in your own words. | |
| --- | --- |
| In their words... | In my words…. |
| *“Every man is under the natural duty of contributing to the necessities of the society.”*  -Thomas Jefferson to Francis Gilmer, 1816 |  |
| *“A community is like a ship: everyone out to be prepared to take the helm.”*  -Henrik Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People* (1882) |  |
| *“If you want to feel proud of yourself, you’ve got to do things you can be proud of.”*  -Oseola McCarty, *The Power of Character,* “Living the Clean, Clean Life,” 2004 |  |
| Now reflect on what these famous Americans believed about contributing to society. What does being part of a society or community mean to you? What does contribution mean to you? | |
| I think being part of society means…I think contribution means… | |

# What Should I Do?

| **Directions**: Think about the communities you are a part of. List at least three different communities. Then consider the challenges or problems that those communities are facing. List 1-3 issues for each community. | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The communities I’m a part of include... | | The challenges facing this community include... | |
| 1 |  | 1.1 |  |
| 1.2 |  |
| 1.3 |  |
| 2 |  | 2.1 |  |
| 2.2 |  |
| 2.3 |  |
| 3 |  | 3.1 |  |
| 3.2 |  |
| 3.3 |  |
| Now think about 3-5 of the challenges that most interest you. Rank them below with 1 being the most interesting and 5 being the least interesting. Then explain your thinking. | | | |
| My Ranking | | I ranked these challenges like this because... | |
| 1.  2.  3.  4.  5. | |  | |

# My Project Component

Now it’s time to narrow your list of problems to a single problem that you will focus on for the rest of this course.

| **Directions**: Use the questions below to help narrow your focus and design your project topic. |
| --- |
| Which challenges or problems touch your life most closely? |
| The challenges that touch my life the most are… |
| Which of the above challenges or problems are you, personally, most passionate about? |
| I am most passionate about... |
| Which of these challenges or problems would you most like to solve and why? |
| I would most like to solve the challenge or problem of... |
| Rephrase this challenge into a question. What’s the impact you’re trying to have? For example, if your problem is about improving the lives of children, your question may be something similar to *“How can I improve the lives of children?”* |
| How can I... |
| What impact would you like to have on this problem? Can you see yourself spending a significant amount of time and energy on a solution? |
| I hope my impact on this issue is... |
| Brainstorm a broad solution(s) to this problem. What could you as an individual do to be a part of this solution? |
|  |
| What roadblocks might you face in implementing your solution? |
| Some roadblocks I might run into are… |
| Explain how your project idea connects to this year’s project theme. |
| My project idea supports this year’s theme by… |

# What Do I Do Next?

Take a second look at the learning objectives at the start of this activity. Check off the objectives you feel you have successfully completed. Revisit the content or steps that you still have questions about. When you’re confident in your understanding of the objectives and the problem you have identified, continue to the next step.

