

Appendix J: Sample Rubric for the High School Civics Project

The 2a Civic Project rubric below reflects the basic criteria for assessing student learning in the project. You will need to modify it so that it reflects the specific task investigated by students, including adding additional sections where needed. Civic projects should earn holistic scores of proficient or advanced to receive credit towards the Seal of Civic Readiness. Students may revise and improve their Civic Projects to meet the criteria for proficient and/or advanced.

Civics Project Rubric	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
<p>Identification and Definition of the Issue Under Investigation</p> <p><i>Focus on a civic issue or problem within a policy area that may be predetermined by the teacher or advisor. The Civic Project is focused on a civic issue or problem that can be interpreted in a variety of ways by a broad array of citizens holding various viewpoints.</i></p>	<p>Civic issue/problem under investigation is identified clearly and effectively explained in depth.</p> <p>Presents a precise and knowledgeable central claim (thesis) that convincingly answers the question or issue under investigation.</p>	<p>Civic issue/problem under investigation identified and described clearly. Understanding by the reader is not seriously impeded by omissions.</p> <p>Presents a knowledgeable central claim (thesis) that answers the question or issue under investigation.</p>	<p>Civic issue/problem under investigation identified but description may be ambiguous. The boundaries of the issue may be broad or unclear. Minor inaccuracies may be present.</p>	<p>Civic issue/problem under investigation is vaguely or partially identified without clarification or description. Thesis and position are unclear.</p>
<p>Analysis and Use of Sources</p> <p><i>Analyze data and primary, and secondary sources of evidence related to the civic issue under investigation and its impact on communities.</i></p> <p><i>Sources should be evaluated for bias and credibility.</i></p> <p><i>Sources can be provided by the teacher, advisor, or student.</i></p>	<p>Student constructs a strong, coherent claim or argument by integrating relevant, varied, credible, compelling evidence from sources.</p> <p>Integrates relevant and compelling evidence to analyze the historical background of the issue and its impact in our current society.</p> <p>Cites complete and accurate source information for each piece of evidence.</p>	<p>Student constructs a coherent claim or argument using relevant, varied, credible evidence from sources.</p> <p>Integrated useful and relevant evidence to analyze the historical background of the issue and its impact in our current society.</p> <p>Cites accurate source information for each piece of evidence.</p>	<p>Student presents a claim or argument using evidence from credible sources.</p> <p>Uses some relevant evidence to analyze the historical background of the issue and its impact in our current society. Some evidence may not be useful or relevant, may be uneven or may even refute the argument.</p> <p>Source information is cited for some evidence. Minor inaccuracies exist.</p>	<p>Student makes an implausible claim or argument using irrelevant and/or disconnected evidence from sources. Sources may lack credibility.</p> <p>Evidence selected is not useful and does not support the argument.</p> <p>Limited evidence is cited. Major inaccuracies exist.</p>

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<p>Analysis and Evaluation of Current Policies</p> <p><i>Evaluate at least 2 current public policies related to the issue or problem under investigation. Policies may be local, state, national or international.</i></p>	<p>Policies under investigation are described and analyzed clearly and comprehensively.</p> <p>Thoroughly evaluates the impact, strengths, and limitations of current policies on communities.</p>	<p>Policies under investigation are described and analyzed clearly (may include more description versus analysis).</p> <p>Evaluates the impact, strengths, and limitations of current policies on communities.</p>	<p>Policies under investigation are identified and minimally described. May include minor inaccuracies.</p> <p>Attempts to evaluate the policy may be present, but may be unclear, vague, unbalanced, or one-sided.</p>	<p>Policies under investigation are identified with no description or are not identified. Information may be inaccurate.</p> <p>Evaluation of policies is missing or unclear.</p>
<p>Justification of Potential Alternatives, Strategies/ Courses of Action</p> <p><i>Recommend and evaluate potential strategies/courses of action to address the issue or problem that is under investigation.</i></p>	<p>Plan of action/alternatives to current policy, recommended strategies and arguments are presented, and described and justified thoroughly.</p> <p>Recommendations and arguments are clearly connected to the student's evaluation of current policies.</p>	<p>Plan of action/alternatives to current policy/ recommended strategies and arguments are presented and described and justified.</p> <p>Recommendations and arguments are connected to the student's evaluation of current policies.</p>	<p>Plan of action/alternatives to current policy/ recommended strategies and arguments are presented but may lack adequate description or justification.</p> <p>Recommendations and arguments may be somewhat disconnected to the student's evaluation of current policies.</p>	<p>Plan of action/alternatives to current policy/ recommended strategies and arguments may be omitted or are presented but lack description and coherence.</p> <p>Recommendations are disconnected from the student's evaluation or are inconsistent with the issue under investigation.</p>
<p>Reflection</p> <p><i>Explains how the project influenced their civic knowledge, skills, mindsets and, where appropriate, actions.</i></p>	<p>Includes a thorough self-reflection on how their project impacted their civic knowledge, skills, mindsets and, if appropriate, actions.</p> <p>Reflections are connected to the issue under investigation.</p>	<p>Includes a self-reflection on how their project influenced their civic knowledge, skills, mindsets and, if appropriate, actions.</p> <p>Reflections are connected to the issue under investigation, but may be somewhat uneven, favoring one aspect over another.</p>	<p>Includes a self-reflection on how their project influenced their civic knowledge, skills, mindsets and, if appropriate, actions.</p> <p>Reflections may be minimal, omit one or more of the domains or may be somewhat disconnected from the issue under investigation.</p>	<p>Project does not include a self-reflection.</p>

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<p>Organization, Cohesion & Conventions</p> <p><i>Projects are organized and communicated in a manner that enhances the argument and the audience's understanding.</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization that supports the student's argument; includes an introduction and a conclusion that support the argument presented.</p> <p>Maintains a fluent, cohesive style and appropriate tone in attendance to the domains of civic knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Relationships in the text are strengthened and clarified using accurate words, phrases, and varied syntax. Little to no grammatical errors are present.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization that supports the student's argument; includes an introduction and a conclusion that support the argument presented.</p> <p>Maintains fluency, cohesion, and appropriate tone in attendance to the domains of civic knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Relationships in the text are clarified using accurate words and phrases. Few grammatical errors are present.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a general plan of organization; may lack focus; it may not be clear which aspect of the project is being addressed. May lack an introduction and/or conclusion.</p> <p>Fluency, cohesion, and appropriate tone is uneven.</p> <p>Attendance to the domains of civic knowledge and skills, is uneven or unbalanced.</p> <p>Relationships in the text/aspects of the task are unclear at times.</p> <p>Use of accurate words and phrases is uneven. Grammatical errors are present.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a weakness in organization; lacks focus; aspects may be omitted or are disconnected from the issue under investigation; lacks an introduction and/or a conclusion.</p> <p>Lacks fluency, cohesion, and appropriate tone to the task.</p> <p>Relationships in the text/aspects of the task are unclear or omitted. Use of accurate words and phrases is uneven or inappropriate for the issue under investigation.</p> <p>Grammatical errors are present.</p>
<p>Presentation</p> <p><i>Communicate their project using written, audio/visual, and/or oral presentations.</i></p>	<p>Communicates civic project in an SCR committee-approved format. Format chosen enhances the communication of the project.</p>	<p>Communicates civic project in an SCR committee-approved format. Format chosen is appropriate for the communication of the project.</p>	<p>Communicates civic project in an SCR committee-approved format. Format chosen is for the communication of the project and vice versa.</p>	<p>Communicates civic project in a format that is not approved by the SCR committee.</p> <p>Project is not submitted or is unfinished. Format chosen degrades the quality and communication of the project.</p>

Adapted from: [Performance Level Descriptors, United State History and Government \(Framework\); NYS Next Generation Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Other Technical Subjects, 11-12](#)

Resources:

How to Write an Op-Ed or Column from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Accessed at: https://projects.ig.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/new_seglin_how_to_write_an_oped_1_25_17_7.pdf

A Political Science Guide: What is a Policy Paper? (2017). Accessed at: <https://politicalscienceguide.com/home/policy-paper/>