

Appendix T: Sample Student Assignment for a High School Civic Capstone Project

Sample Student Assignment for a Civics Capstone Project

Participation in government and in our communities is fundamental to the success of American democracy¹. You have chosen to complete the Civic Readiness Capstone project to demonstrate your readiness to become engaged in the political process in your community. Through this project, you will demonstrate the civic knowledge, skills, and mindset that you have developed through your K-12 Social Studies education. You will need approval from your teacher/mentor to progress through the different steps of this project.

Timeline/Action Plan

Student Name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

List of Meeting Dates if completing as an independent study:

Due Dates:	Civics Capstone Project Steps	Links to product(s)
	<p>1. Examine your community to identify a civic issue (problem) facing you, or your school or your community</p> <p><i>Suggested activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conduct community walks/drives and asset map the community. Asset Mapping is a tool that relies on a core belief of asset-based community development; namely, that good things exist in communities and that those things can be highlighted and encouraged — these are assets suited to advancing those communities. There are six categories of community assets: physical, economic, stories, local residents, local associations, local institutions. For more information about asset mapping, visit https://www.vistacampus.gov/what-asset-mapping.</i> • <i>Conducting interviews and administering surveys will help you understand the issue from different perspectives, including diverse cultural groups. Be open to alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas.</i> • <i>Think about what you have learned in other coursework you have completed. How can this information help you identify a civic issue?</i> • <i>Critically evaluate what you hear, see, and read in the news and social media about potential civic issues for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility.</i> 	
	Mentor Feedback:	

¹ Grade 12: Participation in Government and Civics, NYSED Social Studies Practices, 2014, page 45

	<p>2. Analyze a civic issue (problem) in your school or community Suggested activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe past attempts to address the issue. • Identify, describe, and evaluate the relationships between people, places, regions, and environments by using geographic tools to place them in a spatial context. • Gather data to describe the number of people affected by the issue, the age/gender/socio-economic status of the people affected by the issue, the geographic impact of the issue, the environmental impact of the issue, etc. • Critically evaluate what you hear, see, and read in the news and social media about the civic issue for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility. • Weigh appropriate evidence from multiple disciplines to support claims, which may include political science, history, natural sciences, economics, geography, and sociology. • Demonstrate respect for the rights of others in discussions and debates; respectfully disagree with other viewpoints. 	
	Mentor Feedback:	
	<p>3. Identify the cause of the civic issue. Suggested activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and frame questions about events and the world in which we live, form hypotheses as potential answers to these questions, use evidence to answer these questions, and consider and analyze counterhypotheses. • Weigh appropriate evidence from multiple disciplines to support claims, which may include political science, history, natural sciences, economics, geography, and sociology. • For example, conducting interviews and administering surveys will help students understand the issue from different perspectives, including diverse cultural groups. • Analyze and evaluate news, media, social media, and other sources of information for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility. 	
	Mentor Feedback:	
	<p>4. Generate alternative solutions to address this civic issue. Suggested activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for and the role of the individual in social and political participation in the school, local, and/or state community. • Learn about the structure and function of government and democracy at the appropriate level, and how to participate therein. • Reflect on how different cultures have values, norms and beliefs that shape how they understand their communities and the problems they face. • Integrate what can be learned through engagement with diversity into the Capstone Project. 	
	Mentor Feedback:	

	<p>5. Evaluate alternative solutions Suggested activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the feasibility of proposed actions to address the community or civic issue with a cost-benefit analysis. • Analyze factors that influenced the perspectives of stakeholders involved in the civic issue central to your Capstone Project. • Organize and participate in a discussion about alternative solutions, setting ground rules to respect the rights of others in discussions so that participants can respectfully disagree with other viewpoints. 	
	Mentor Feedback:	
	<p>6. Develop strategies and solutions Your plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of your recommended solution to address the issue, including specific references to the level, primary unit, and body of government that you want to address the issue. • A cost-benefit analysis for potential solutions. • A description of who will be affected by your proposed action. An evaluation of your solution from the perspectives of 3 different stakeholder groups and at least two different cultural groups represented in your community. Identify potential positive and negative outcomes on these different groups from your action. Be sure to comment on ways to mediate negative consequences. <p>The plan should address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where will your solution occur? • When will your solution occur? • How will you communicate about your issue and your action? How will you strategically use different forms of communication* to persuade/advocate, present and express ideas? 	
	Mentor Feedback:	
	<p>7. Take informed action Suggested activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement your proposed action, engaging the school and/or out-of-school community. • Communicate in a civic context, showing the ability to express ideas, discuss, persuade, debate, negotiate, build consensus and compromise to organize and conduct civic action. • Strategically use different forms of communication to persuade/advocate and express ideas. 	
	Mentor Feedback:	

	<p>8. Reflection Suggested activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflect on what you have learned: Include an analysis of your Civic Readiness Capstone Project experience, reflecting on the relevant civic knowledge and skills that you acquired, the process that you implemented, the challenges you faced, the successes of the project, and how what you have learned will affect future civic actions you may take. Include artifacts (i.e., photographs, video recordings, newspaper articles) that document your actions and reflections.</i> 	
	Mentor Feedback:	
	<p>9. Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prepare and make a presentation about your Civic Readiness Capstone Project.</i> 	
	Mentor Feedback:	

Sources:

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