Current Events Research Project

Introduction

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.
- George Santayana

Everything that is happening today in the world is happening for a reason. Sometimes the reason is not always clear. Sometimes the reason dates back to struggles and conflicts that date back hundreds if not thousands of years. Even though something is happening half way across the world it still affects life here in the United States. If we are to become informed, responsible citizens in our community and world we need to be willing to learn why things are happening especially when the reason is not always easily found. Events that are happening around the world directly affect the United States foreign policy, political elections, military deployments, friends and family here and abroad.

For every conflict there is always at least two sides to the issue and more than one group of people that are affected by it. You will be assuming the role of some of these groups of people and learn how these conflicts have affected the lives of those directly and indirectly involved. You will also be learning about the historical background of the conflict to help you have a better understanding of the issue today which will in turn help you become a more informed citizen of the United States. And, finally, once we gain a better understanding of the events themselves, maybe we will be able to break the repeating cycle.

The Task

To become responsible informed citizens in our world, even if only for the purposes of voting, we need to be aware of what is happening in our world, where and why. We need to know the historical background of the event, the various viewpoints of the parties involved and how crises around the world affect our lives (politically, economically, socially) here in the United States. Only through understanding the various facets of these issues will we be able to form an educated opinion about them.

Your task, should you choose to accept it, will be to take the topic that has been assigned to your group research it from the following viewpoints: newspaper reporter, an advocate, a dissenter, and an innocent bystander. Once you have researched the information from the viewpoint of the role you have been given you will present to the other members what you have learned.
You will then work as a group to create a historical timeline of the event, create an informational brochure on the topic which summarizes the issue and presents each of the editorials the have been written. The group will need to determine how they would like to present the information i.e. PowerPoint, web page, poster, newspaper/newsletter, scrapbook, etc. which will then be presented to the class.

**The Process**

Students will work in groups of 4. Each student will take on a role that is defined below.

You will be researching your event from one of the following viewpoints: reporter, an advocate, a dissenter, and an innocent bystander. As you research your role make sure that you record exactly where you have gotten your information and make sure that it is reliable information. Research information can be obtained from via the Internet, newspapers, and don't forget about the good old standbys, encyclopedias and books (even your textbook). You will need to create a list of sources that you used to find information (at least 2 will need to be from non-Internet sources), and write at least a 3 paragraph editorial (written in your own words) that explains and supports your role’s position.

Make sure as you work through this you are filling out your Information and Checklist paper.

Once you have researched the information from the viewpoint of the role you have been given and written your editorial, come back to the group and present to the other members what you have learned. Along with presenting your information to your group you will need to provide for each a short handout that outlines or summarizes your perspective of the issue/event. This should **NOT** be a printout of all the information that you found, keep it to less than one page.

You will then work as a group to create a historical timeline of the event, create an informational brochure on the topic which summarizes the issue and presents each of the editorials the have been written. The group will need to determine how they would like to present the information i.e. PowerPoint, web page, poster, newspaper/newsletter, scrapbook, etc. which will then be presented to the class. In this group project, you will need to have your information organized in the following sequence: What started it and when, what changes/advances have taken place over time, what is currently happening now, what is the intended outcome.
Things that will be turned in (for each group member):

- Information and Checklist paper completely filled out.
- Copy of your summary sheet given to the group.
- Copy of your editorial used in the group project.

Things that will be graded:

- Individual items listed above.
- Group presentation to class.

Conclusion

As you have looked more closely at your event, the background information on it, how it has progressed to what it is today, hopefully you have a better understanding of the topic. You may not have a complete picture of it, but at least you will know how it affects the lives of the people involved and its impact on world affairs. It is important as you move on in your life to become familiar with the current events of the world and their impact on you and the United States.

As we have looked at this event, and as you look at others, what are the common theme's between them? How are they similar or different from other events?

It is important that you are able to form your own educated opinions about events around the world, if not, like the quote above, we will be condemned to repeat the past mistakes. How can we as informed citizens, help to break the cycle of repeating historical mistakes? What can we, as individuals, do to make sure that we have the best leadership to lead us in times of world and national conflicts? What can we do as community members to make the city that we live in a better place, free of prejudices and safe for all?
The Advocate

The advocate is a person who is in favor of the event or issue. You believe in what is happening, why it is happening and that the end result will be worth the struggle that it takes to accomplish it. You will need to look at the arguments/reasons that are being given that support the event and be able to support them with historical information and facts. Why is this a 'good thing'? Why do the means justify the end? How will this make things better for the people involved? What freedoms or rights will it give them in the end?

The Dissenter

The dissenter is a person who is against the event or issue. You disagree with what is happening, why it is happening and believe that the end result will not be worth the struggle that it takes to accomplish it or that anything needs to be done about it. You will need to look at the arguments/reasons that are being given against the event and be able to support them with historical information and facts. Why is this a 'bad thing'? Does this issue even need to be addressed? Why don't the means justify the end? How will this make things worse for the people involved? What freedoms or rights will they lose in the end?

The Innocent Bystander

This role can take a couple of viewpoints depending upon the issue or event that you are researching.

If your event involves an armed conflict or war, take the viewpoint that the fighting is happening within your city or country. You may take a side, either for or against, but your role's perspective needs to be from how it affects your daily life, your livelihood, and your family and friends, is the 'hopeful end result' going to be worth it in the end? What does it feel like to be 'caught in the middle'?
If your event does not involved an armed conflict, take the viewpoint that you are an average citizen. How does this event affect you? How does it change your perspective on those that are involved? Is there anything that you could do to change or alter the outcome of the event? How would you feel if this event was happening directly to you?

**The Reporter**

The reporter is someone who looks at the issue/event without bias. They are neither for nor against, they only present the facts and relevant information about the event or issue. The reporter, throughout the process of the story, will come to an opinion of their own, but has the responsibility to his readers to present the information on both sides as fairly as possible. You will need to look at the arguments/reasons that are being given for both sides of the event and state the historical information and facts for each side. Why is this an issue? What is each side working/fighting for? What groups will suffer/benefit from the outcome?