# Tactic Toolkits Overview

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Tactic Toolkits Overview

The Tactic Toolkits are a collection of guides that will support your students during Unit 4: Taking Action. Each Toolkit contains additional information about the specific tactic, recommended steps for students to take, and relevant example materials or templates. Just as your students used Action Research Toolkits to structure their research, the Tactic Toolkits will support your students in taking effective civic action.

Example Class Action Plan

Before beginning action, facilitators should lead students in creating their class action plan (see the blank copy on page 112 of the curriculum). Below is an example of a past class action plan:

**Class Goal:** We will convince the Board of Education to pass an anti-violence resolution, including funding for grief counseling and violence prevention workshops in schools

**Targets:** Board of Education, Superintendent, BVHM students, parents, “HOMEY SF” org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Members</th>
<th>Target - Decision Maker (DM) or Influencer (I)?</th>
<th>‘Ask’ (Group’s Goal)</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alma, Brandon, Camila, David, Eddie, Francesca</td>
<td>BVHM Students (I)</td>
<td>Take our survey to share your experiences with teen violence</td>
<td>Conduct a survey and compile results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg, Hannah, Ivan, Jorge, Kaitlyn, Lila</td>
<td>Middle school parents and families (I)</td>
<td>Sign our petition and attend the Board of Education meeting on 5/2</td>
<td>Canvass with a petition and invite to a meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael, Neille, Oscar, Paul, Quincy, Raina</td>
<td>Board of Education (DM)</td>
<td>Pass our anti-violence resolution at the Board of Education meeting on 5/2</td>
<td>Send emails and testify at a meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven, Troy, Ursula, Vicky, Will, Xavier</td>
<td>Superintendent (I)</td>
<td>Help urge the Board of Education to pass our anti-violence resolution at the meeting on 5/2</td>
<td>Send letters, create a video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmine, Zach, Antonio, Briana, Corey, Deedee</td>
<td>“HOMEY” SF organization (I)</td>
<td>Meet with our class to provide more evidence for our argument, allow us to participate in your violence prevention workshop</td>
<td>Hold a meeting, participate in an outside event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You’ll notice that students are split into groups based off the individual targets the class has chosen. From there, each group has different “asks,” again dependent upon their target. Finally, the tactics are listed and they also align with the specific target and the ask. It should also be noted that the work of one group could overlap or be beneficial to the work of another group. For example, Group 5 might want to use the survey results from Group 3 in their meeting with the local organization.

Using the Tactic Toolkits

In order to help structure small group work during the Action lessons, it is strongly recommended that you provide each group with a print or digital copy of the aligned Tactic Toolkit. For the example action plan above, the class facilitator would provide their students with copies of the following Tactic Toolkits:

- Group 1: Conduct a Survey and Compile Results
- Group 2: Canvass with a Petition
- Group 3: Send an Email to a Decision Maker, Testify at a Hearing with a Decision Maker
- Group 4: Write a Letter with a Decision Maker, Make a Video
- Group 5: Hold a Meeting with Influencers, Participate in an Outside Event
Compiling research and data is an essential tool for persuading your audience to support your goals, but it is often overlooked. In order to convince an audience that you are correct, you must first compile evidence that supports your cause. You must also become aware of counterarguments and plan how to use the research/data to address these counterarguments. The research and data you gather will help to set the focus of your work and will lay a foundation for your argument.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have a general topic, but not enough detailed information.
- You have a clear idea, and want to find evidence to support it.
- You need to persuade others about your cause, but don’t have enough information.
- You already performed some research, but want to learn more.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t selected a focus issue.

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**Steps for Compiling Research and Data**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus your research. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).

- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Develop a plan for your research.

Come up with a set of 4-5 questions that you want to answer through your research. The questions will help guide your research, but you can also add in more ideas in your next step when you conduct the research.

Example Case: Homelessness

- How many people are homeless in our city/town?
- What is the demographic makeup of the homeless population?
- What are some causes for homelessness?
- How is homelessness in our city/town different from the surrounding area? Why?
- What are some strategies that have successfully combated homelessness?
Step 3: Conduct the research.

Library:
- Visit your school’s library and see what books are available on the topic. Even if there are no books specific to your topic, librarians can often point you toward other sources relevant to your topic.

Internet:
- Make sure your sources are legitimate!
  - While Wikipedia can be a great starting point, do NOT use information from Wikipedia.
  - Good Sources:
    - Online Databases
    - Google Scholar
    - An advanced Google Search limiting responses to “.edu” websites
    - City, State, or Federal government websites with useful statistics or facts
    - Local news – An article from a local newspaper or a YouTube clip of a local news show
    - Advocacy organizations

News Sources:
- News articles often contain relevant information to your topics. Local news articles are often the best.
- Be sure to evaluate news sources for bias!
  - Bias is defined as prejudice in favor of, or against a certain thing.
  - Factors to Consider:
    - Author: What are the author’s views?
    - Time Period: What were the views of the time period in which the source was written?
    - Purpose: Why was the source written? Was it intended to persuade or inform? If it was made to persuade, if may contain a greater amount of bias.
    - Quotes/Facts: Who is the information from? What motives might that source have?
  - It’s important to be aware of bias, but biased articles and opinion pieces can be beneficial – They can help us understand the different perspectives and opinions about our focus issue and help us prepare for counterarguments.
- Tips for Articles
Tactic Toolkit: Compile Research

- Skim the article first to get the general idea.
- Read it carefully, highlighting the points that answer some of your questions.
  - One suggestion would be to write which question is answered by each point.
- Pay close attention to where the source obtained its information.
  - Make a note when outside sources are cited.
- Keep an open mind when reading – maybe the article will point you to new sources!
- Keep an eye out for counterarguments and those who disagree with your goals or tactic. Understanding these perspectives will help you successfully address those who disagree with you.

**Step 4:** Combine the research!

Now that you have conducted the research, it is time to combine individuals’ research into a set of group research.

- **Topic**
  - Combine all of the relevant information for each topic.
  - Sort the data by research question.
- **Analyze**
  - What forms of data do we have?
  - Is any of the evidence contradictory?
- **Evaluate**
  - Did we collect data from a range of sources?
  - Did we answer all of our questions?
  - What are some other questions we want to answer?

**Step 5:** Draw Conclusions

- What does the data show? Does the research support your goal?
- What are the big picture implications of this data?
- Brainstorm methods of presenting the research in favor of your goal. See the Tactic Toolkit for ideas on presenting material.
Sample

**Boston Globe**  What do we know about this source?

More Boston residents are living in emergency shelters than in any of 25 major cities surveyed nationwide, according to a report released Thursday by the US Conference of Mayors.

The survey provided a detailed snapshot of Boston’s homeless population, including the revelation that a quarter of the city’s homeless adults have jobs. In Trenton, N.J., by comparison, only 4 percent are employed.

Still, these jobs don’t pay enough to put a roof over their heads.

“The gap between incomes and housing costs is extreme here,” said Jim Greene, director of the Emergency Shelter Commission for the Boston Public Health Commission. “We have one of the highest rates of family homelessness of any state in the country, and there are not affordable housing resources aligned to the emergency system.”

Few of the homeless people in Boston are on the streets, in part because of the Massachusetts “right to shelter” law that guarantees qualified families a place to stay. But traditional shelters have been over capacity for years — thousands are being put up in motels — and getting people into permanent housing is a constant struggle.
The number of homeless families increased by almost 6 percent in Boston in the past year, higher than the average rise of the cities surveyed, and the demand for shelters is roughly 22 percent higher than the number of beds available.

Greene cited several reasons that homelessness has become such a major problem in Boston, all stemming from state and federal policy changes in the mid-1990s: welfare reform, the end of rent control, and substantial cuts in the state’s rental assistance program.

Nearly 17,000 people were in emergency shelters in Boston over the past year, according to the report, with an additional 3,900 in transitional housing. More than a third of them are severely mentally ill and nearly a third are physically disabled. This answers the question about how many people are homeless!

Services for people struggling with mental illness or addiction are lacking, Greene noted, and as a result, many of these people end up homeless, further straining the system.

Boston data in the annual Hunger and Homelessness Survey are based on a one-night census conducted in December of 2013, as well as data collected by the city throughout the year. Among the major cities that took part in the survey were Chicago, Los Angeles, and Dallas.
Statewide, homelessness is increasing faster than anywhere else in the country – up 40 percent since 2007, according to a US Department of Housing and Urban Development report released in October, even as the nationwide homeless population declined slightly.

Requests for emergency food in Boston were down slightly from the year before, but the demand still exceeded the amount distributed by more than a third, even as the city increased its food distribution by more than 4 percent over the past year.

Despite the increase in need, state funding for homeless families has decreased 6 percent since 2011, according to the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. But efforts are being made to shore up assistance. Earlier this week, the state launched an initiative to house up to 800 chronically homeless individuals, using $3.5 million from private investors.

One “bright shining spot” in the US Mayors report, according to Greene, is the reduction in homeless veterans. Nationwide, about 11 percent of homeless adults are veterans, down by a third over the past five years – a result of federal efforts to devote resources to veterans and their families.

In Boston, more than 400 homeless veterans have been housed in the past year. A group of local agencies in the city collaborated to create a registry of homeless veterans and then matched each veteran with services, including aid to help maintain housing after they were placed.
While raw data and facts are great ways of presenting evidence, testimonials and interviews can put a human touch on the information, and can help your cause come to life. The testimonials you collect can be used as evidence in future presentations or other tactics.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You want to gather stories in addition to data.
- You need personal information to help support your cause.
- You want to spread the word about your ideas.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You don’t have a clear audience in mind.
- You are looking for raw facts.

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**Steps for Compiling Testimonials**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus your research. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).

- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Consider your audience.

- **Who?**
  - How many people will you interview?
  - What kinds of people (old/young, urban/rural)?
  - How will you find these people?
    - School
    - Parents
    - Canvas in a neighborhood

- **Tone**
  - How formal does the interview need to be?
    - If you’re interviewing a government official/professional, the questions should be formal.
    - If you’re interviewing other students, the questions can be more informal.
Step 3: Draft a set of questions

- What are you trying to find out?
  - Do you want a few vivid stories or many examples?
- Questions should be open-ended enough to allow for creative responses, but should be specific enough to keep responders on topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>Nonspecific</th>
<th>Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you think?</td>
<td>What were you feeling when you saw “x, y, z” take place?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did it happen?</td>
<td>Why were you feeling “a, b, c” during the event?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you become involved?</td>
<td>How did you become involved with “x, y, z”?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Questions should focus more on understanding the “why” and “how” than for “who”, “what”, “where.”
- Human interest elements can definitely help build a case – don’t discount these in favor of hard facts.
  - Human Interest – the part of the story that describes experiences and emotions of individuals.
Step 4: Conduct the interviews

- Make sure to record the interviews!
  - If possible, use a camera/audio recorder.
    - Obtain permission for film/audio recording.
      - This usually involves a consent form – ask your teachers for a copy/model.
    - If not, take REALLY good notes.
      - You want to make sure to not misrepresent information.
      - You also want to make sure not to forget critical details.
  - Be sure to introduce yourself before starting.
    - Tell the person your name and the purpose of the interview.
  - Bring your script with you, but have it mostly memorized.
  - Ask your questions, and don’t be afraid to ask follow-up questions if you come across a particularly interesting point.
  - Be polite at all times.
  - Be sure to thank the person for their time/for speaking to you.

Step 5: Compile/analyze the information

- What did you learn?
  - What new insights did you gain from talking to the person?
  - Did the interview change your perception of any particular issues/points? If so, which?

- What were the similarities and differences between different interviews or testimonials?

- Brainstorm the best possible ways to present the stories. For example, should you present them in a video, PowerPoint, or something else? Look through the Tactic Toolkit to find different ways for presenting information.
One great tool for information-gathering is a survey. The survey can be used to determine opinions about an issue or to assess effectiveness of a particular system. The survey can be used to demonstrate an inefficiency or inadequacy of a system.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You want to establish that your issue is in fact a problem.
- You want to conduct background research.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You don’t have specific ideas of the type of information you want.

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**Steps for Conducting a Survey**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus the summary. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).

- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Consider your audience.

- Who will you be surveying?

- What is the relevance of this community?
  - Are they directly impacted by your issue?
  - Do they have the power to enact change?
  - Are they influencers?
Step 3: Draft the survey questions

- For a survey, keep the questions pretty specific and straightforward.
  - Example: What is your position on the practice of bussing in public schools? Choose one of the following responses:
    - In support
    - Not in support
    - I don’t know/unsure

- Other Tips for Good Questions
  - Provide an unsure or n/a option when needed
  - Consider the way you word questions and the bias you are introducing
    - Example:
      - Why is voting a good thing? (this is a leading question assuming that voting is good)
      - Is voting a good thing? Why or why not? (this allows for someone to declare their own opinion and then explain it)

- What kind of data are you looking for?
  - Numeric (ratings, quantity of people in favor/opposed to an idea, etc.)
  - Scale (on a scale of 1 – 5; strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree)
  - Text (Descriptions of the situation, opinions, suggestions)

Step 4: Conduct the Survey

- Plan how you will conduct the survey. Keep in mind that the method you choose can affect the results of your survey. For example, if you choose a phone survey – some people do not have access to a phone and so wouldn’t be factored into your survey. This would be particularly important to consider if say, for example, you were hoping to get the opinions of the homeless. Or, with an internet survey – there is no way to know who is taking the survey, how many times did they take it, etc.
○ **Phone Survey**
  - Obtain a list of numbers to call.
  - Divide up the list between group members.
  - Be prepared for people not to answer or answer rudely.
  - Have a script and stick to the script.
    - Introduce yourself
    - Give an overview of the situation
    - Conduct the survey
    - Thank them for their time
  - Be polite, regardless of the responses.

○ **Internet Survey**
  - Obtain a list of email addresses.
  - Create the survey using a free online tool (Google Forms, etc).
  - Send the survey out to as many people as possible.

○ **In-Person Survey**
  - Print out surveys or bring a technological tool for taking the survey.
  - Walk around the area in groups of 2 to 3.
  - Administer the survey to the selected people.
    - Make sure to not be biased in your selections or in your delivery of the questions. Try not to lead the participant to a particular answer by the way you ask the questions. Think of your tone of voice, facial expressions, and/or body language that might demonstrate to the participant how you feel about the question – you want to remain neutral so the participant feels comfortable answering honestly.

**Step 5:** Compile/Analyze the Data

- Combine all of the data.
  - Be sure to be organized and include all of it.
- Look for trends and patterns.
  - Do people generally support/oppose an issue?
  - What did people think?
  - What are their suggestions?
How do you think the method you chose to conduct the survey may have affected the results?

- Example: What time did you conduct it?
- Example: Did you survey enough people to fully represent the community?

How might that have affected who could participate?

Were you able to target your intended audience?

Did anything take place that might have affected your results? If so, keep all of this in mind when reporting on your results.

- Brainstorm ways to use the results of the survey to support your work. Don’t feel like you have to use the results of each question from the survey. You can choose the questions/results that best serve your purpose. If a question was confusing to participants, don’t feel like you need to use that one in your work.
Now that you have conducted all of your research, it is time to present that research to the decision-makers and influencers. A video is a creative way of presenting your information, and can allow you to incorporate information gathered using various other tactics. If you have interviews and/or testimonials, they can be powerfully shown through a video.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You are looking for a creative way to present your information
- You have some people who know how to film/edit videos.
- You want to spread the word about your ideas

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t finished your research

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**Steps for Making a Video**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus the video. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).
- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Consider your audience.
- Who is the intended target for the information?
  - What abilities does this person/people have?
  - What actions do you want the audience to take?

**Step 3:** Plan the video
- Length
  - In general, the video should be no longer than 3-5 minutes
- Make an outline
  - Make a list of every scene for the video. For each, include:
    - Length
    - Actors (classmates or other people)
      - If you’re going to be talking, make sure to write a script!
    - Location
- Props
  - Evaluate Needs
    - What content do you already have?
      - Interviews/Testimonials
    - What content do you still need to create?

**Step 4:** Film the Video

- Be sure to allot plenty of time for this – filming inevitably takes longer than anticipated
- See if you can borrow a video camera from the school; if this isn’t possible, a phone camera will also work.
- Try to shoot scenes by location instead of the order in which they will appear in the actual video

**Step 5:** Revise/Edit

- Combine all of the clips into one video
- Use an editing tool on the computer (iMovie, MovieMaker, etc)
- Add in music/text as appropriate
- Add in transitions as appropriate
- Watch the video!
  - Is there anything missing?
  - Is there anything included that should not be?
  - Does it flow?
  - Does it convey your message?
  - If you answered yes to all of these questions, you’re finished! If not, revisit one of the earlier steps!
Example Storyboard

1. Wide shot of both Sarah and Callum illustrating where they are and what the film is about. Props: Megaphone, Camera, board.

2. Close up of Sarah speaking directly to camera.
   Script: Sarah
   One thing you must remember...

3. Low angle camera pointing up at Callum
   Props: Microphone, Paintbrush
   Script: Callum
   "Oops! Sarah is right..."

4. Close up of Sarah holding photograph.

5. Camera zooms out to a wide shot showing Sarah speaking about using photographs to plan your storyboard.

6. Over shoulder shot of Callum pointing to drawings of different shots that you could try filming.
A presentation can be a great way of communicating your research to your audience. Your presentation is your chance to convince someone to support your cause. Your presentation needs to have a clear audience, goal, and evidence. The presentation should be persuasive and convincing – the target audience should be motivated to take the intended action. Your presentation should include research that you have completed in previous steps. The presentation can also include elements from other tactics.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have conducted research and are now focused on convincing others to support your goals.
- You need to persuade others about your cause.
- You want to spread the word about your ideas.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t completed background research.
- You don’t have a clear audience in mind.

### Steps for Creating a Presentation

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus your research. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).
- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Consider your audience.
- **Who:** Who is the target of your presentation?
  - How many people?
  - Are the people decision-makers, influencers, or both?

**Step 3:** Choose a format.
- Choose the format that most effectively conveys your points.
  - Powerpoint
  - Prezi
  - Lecture
  - Workshop
• Be creative. Make sure the format allows you to incorporate images/media but do not make the media the entirety of your presentation.

**Step 4: Incorporate the research**

Before you started this tactic, you should have conducted thorough research/gathered information. If not, do that (please see the “Tactic Toolkit: Compile Research” handout for further instructions) and then return to this step.

• Examine your research:
  o What kind of evidence do you have? Is it mostly data, stories, images?

• Overview
  o Describe the situation – what is the issue and why is it important?

• Thesis
  o What is your main point/goal? What is the purpose of your presentation?

• Claims/Evidence
  o For every claim, have at least one piece of evidence to support it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Teachers in Brooklyn are underpaid as compared to other school districts.</td>
<td>Example: Teachers in Queens make, on average, at least $1,000-$2,000 more per year. (seethroughny.net)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Counterarguments
  o For every claim you make, consider what the opposing side would argue.
    ▪ How can you use your research to counter this claim?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Opposing Side Argument</th>
<th>Counter-Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Teachers in Brooklyn are underpaid as compared to other school districts.</td>
<td>Example: Salaries in all of the NYC boroughs are already much higher than the rest of the country. Plus, the differences are small between the boroughs.</td>
<td>Example: This is because the cost of living in NYC is much higher than other places in the country. With this in mind, teachers are underpaid in NYC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Call to Action
  o Go back to your goal: what are you trying to accomplish through this presentation?
  
  • How can you motivate someone to take action?
  • Don’t forget the “Ask”!!!!!!
• For more suggestions, look through the “Structuring an Argument” toolkits.
Step 5: Practice, practice, practice

- Rehearse your presentation.
- In this step, focus on delivery:
  - Speak clearly and articulately.
  - Use humor where appropriate.
- Ask for feedback:
  - Present to as many people as you can, and ask for feedback
    - DCs
    - Teachers
    - Other Classmates

Step 6: Present!

- Now that you have finished practicing, you’re ready to present!
- For the next steps, follow the tactics on holding meetings with decision-makers.
Example Presentation Outline

Note: This demonstrates the basics sections to consider having in your presentation. Images, media and photos can make this presentation more engaging and creative!
Now that you have conducted all of your research, it is time to present that research to the decision-makers and influencers. If you are unable to schedule a meeting or presentation with the intended targets, a short report, memo or executive summary can be a great way to concisely deliver the information.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You are not able to schedule a face-to-face presentation, or you want to prepare content to present at a face-to-face presentation.
- You have conducted and analyzed your research.
- You want to spread the word about your ideas.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t first tried to schedule a meeting with the decision-maker.
- You haven’t finished your research.

### Steps for Writing an Executive Summary

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus the summary. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).
- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Consider your audience.
- Who is the intended target for the information?
  - What abilities does this person/people have?
  - What actions do you want the audience to take?

**Step 3:** Identify key points and outline the summary
- Brainstorm an outline of your summary.
- Introduction: Introduce yourself, your school, and your issue.
- Body: The body is the bulk of your summary. It is where you explain the root causes, goals/solutions, and the methods used in conducting your research.
  - In the outline, pick the 3-5 most important points.
- Conclusion
  - Re-iterate your community issue, focus issue, root cause, and goal.
  - Identify what you are asking for.
Step 4: Draft the Summary

- If you made a good outline, this step should be fairly easy!
- Write, write, write.
  - Divide up the work by section/paragraph!
  - Be clear and concise – details are important, but do not overwhelm the reader with the nitty-gritty details.
  - During this step, it is more important to put your ideas on paper than to make sure every word is perfect (this will be the next step).

Step 5: Revise/Edit

- Combine all of the pieces of the summary into one cohesive document.
- Read the document quickly and identify any areas that do not flow.
  - If the piece does not flow, the reader might be confused by the ideas.
  - Make sure there are no contrasting ideas.
  - Make sure there is no unnecessary repetition.
- Edit thoroughly
  - Review the work for any spelling or grammar errors.
- Get feedback
  - Show the work to your democracy coach or teacher and ask them for their feedback.
  - Make sure the reviewers can identify the message.
    - Ask them to identify the goals of the project and give a brief description of the work the class completed.
    - If this matches with the message you intended to convey, then you are ready!
    - If not, ask them for more specifics on where any confusion happened.
      - As a group, discuss ways to remedy this confusion.
- Incorporate the feedback and repeat this step until you are satisfied!
EXAMPLE: LGBT Youth Homelessness in Boston

Intro: Homelessness in Boston is a complex, multifaceted issue that affects all of us. As students at XYZ high school participating in the Generation Citizen Program, we worked to develop a better understanding of the problem and to come up with goals and solutions to address it.

While our broader issue was homelessness in Boston, our research into the issue made it clear that a specific homeless population in Boston - LGBT youth - faces huge barriers to much-needed shelters and services. In this report, we will demonstrate how widespread discrimination and a lack of funding for specific services have led to a growing population of LGBT homeless youth. Finally, we will advocate for a solution: that Councilor X, the chair of the “Homelessness, Mental Health, and Recovery” committee, lobby Mayor Walsh to include specific provisions for LGBT youth in his 2018 budget.

Body: LGBT youth are disproportionately homeless - although only 10-20% of the population identifies as LGBT, 40% of homeless youth are LGBT. In Boston specifically, out of 750 homeless youth, 150-300 of them identify as LGBT. Why are such a large number of Boston’s homeless youth LGBT? Our evidence indicates that a disproportionate number of LGBT youth become, and stay, homeless due to stigma, discrimination, and a lack of specific services.

Rejection from families and a lack of school support force many LGBT youth to become homeless. Many LGBT youth become homeless when families reject them due to their sexual orientation. Further, due to harassment and violence at school, LGBT youth have high dropout rates. Without a place to live or the services and attention that schools can provide, LGBT youth have nowhere to turn.

When homeless, discrimination and a lack of LGBT-specific funding means that LGBT youth are more likely to remain homeless long term. LGBT youth have difficulty securing housing and services because they face discrimination from homeless services organizations. Government funding often goes to faith-based groups, which can be unwelcoming to LGBT youth. Particularly vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation when homeless, LGBT youth have a high need for intensive, high-quality services that recognize and value their identities. Without the opportunity to receive the housing and services necessary for safety and stabilization, LGBT youth remain homeless and the size of the population grows.

To address the reasons that LGBT youth remain homeless - discrimination and a lack of targeted services - we ask that Councillor X, the chair of the “Homelessness, Mental Health, and Recovery” committee, lobby Mayor Walsh to include specific provisions for LGBT youth in his 2018 budget. While we applaud the attention Mayor Walsh has given to the issue of homelessness, his “Action Plan to End Veteran and Chronic Homelessness,” has not, but must, contain funding for homeless LGBT youth to ensure that they are getting high-quality, specific services. We ask that Councilmember X uses her position as chair to advocate for the provision of LGBT youth specific funding and services.

Conclusion: As students at XYZ high school participating in the Generation Citizen Program, we began our project focusing on the broad issue of homelessness in Boston. However, after doing extensive research, we decided to focus our efforts on the issue of LGBT youth homelessness. While LGBT youth homelessness is caused by a number of factors ranging from family rejection to the lack of supportive school environments, we decided to focus on the reasons that LGBT youth remain homeless: discrimination and a lack of LGBT youth specific services. We ask that Councillor X uses her position as chair to advocate for homeless LGBT youth, and to lobby Mayor Walsh to include specific provisions for these youth in his 2018 budget.
Creating a visual or infographic is a great way to present and display your data. Visuals can clearly present vast quantities of data, and can attract the attention of your audience. Infographics can range from simple charts to complicate maps and images. Many free tools are available for creating infographics.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have conducted research and want to present it to decision-makers or influencers
- You have a lot of data, and want to present it in a clear, concise manner
- You need to persuade others about your cause

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t conducted research

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**Steps for Creating a Data Visual or Infographic**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus your infographic. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).
- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Decide on a visualizing tool to use!

There are many possible tools to create data visuals or infographics.
- **Microsoft Excel**
  - Excel is a great tool to create simple graphs/charts
- **Piktochart**
  - Provides more features than Excel
  - Has sample infographics
- **Visualize Free**
- **Tableau Public**
- **Infogr.am**
Step 3: Create the Visual

Microsoft Excel:
• Enter your data into Excel. Make sure that you have titles for each field of data
• Select the data you want to use for your chart
• Click Insert, and then click Chart. Or, click the Charts tab and select the type of chart you would like
  o Line graphs are great to show trends over time
  o Bar graphs are great to compare similar fields
  o Pie charts are great to show the proportions/components that makeup a larger set of data
• Modify your chart by clicking the Chart Layout tab
  o You can edit titles, axis titles, legend, and overall format
  o Feel free to play around with colors, shading, and format
• Make sure your chart clearly presents the data and is easy to understand
• Avoid being too flashy

Piktochart:
• Visit the website and create an account
  o Free and quick
• Decide what kind of infographic you want
  o There are several free templates
  o You can also create your own from scratch!
• Follow Instructions on the website to create your infographics

Other Sites:
• There are many other sites that allow you to create free infographics online
• Most sites require creating an account
• Most sites also have detailed instructions/guides
Examples

1. Excel Pie Chart

Violent Crime in the US 1994-2013

- 62% Aggravated assault
- 31% Robbery
- 6% Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter
- 1% Rape (legacy definition)

2. Excel Line Chart

Violent Crime in the US 1994-2013

- Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter
- Rape (legacy definition)
- Robbery
- Aggravated assault

Year

Instances of Crime


Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter
Rape (legacy definition)
Robbery
Aggravated assault
3. Sample Infographic

The Great Recession's Effects On
HOMELESSNESS

Total Population of Washington Heights
57,073

60%
Of the homeless population of New York city lives in Manhattan of that 60%,

4 in 5
homeless citizens are men

children account for
36%
Of the homeless population

Homelessness Throughout the Years

Homeless Living on Surface in Boroughs

Homeless Living in Subways

The number of homeless citizens is at the highest it has ever been, higher than it was during the Great Depression.
Holding a meeting with your decision-maker is the ideal opportunity to persuade him/her (lobby him/her) to take action and help you accomplish your goal. Having this face-to-face meeting offers you a unique chance to talk about your issues in a way that cannot be communicated through an email, call, or letter. It is a powerful tactic that creates an open dialogue or negotiation with your decision-maker and can help establish a relationship between you and the decision-maker. This provides a foundation for future communication.

Use this Tactic if:
- You are able to arrange an in-person meeting
- You have a clear ask and want your decision-maker to take action on your behalf
- You need to demonstrate that you care about an issue
- You want to follow-up on a call or email that didn’t have a positive result or to make sure that things are getting done

Do Not Use this Tactic if:
- You haven’t done the necessary preparations to gather the data, allies or arguments to make a meeting useful

Steps for Holding a Meeting with a Decision-Maker

Step 1: Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target. Keep in mind your target’s level of authority (state, city, local, school).
- Class Goal:
- Target for this Tactic:
- Ask:

Step 2: Structure an effective argument to present.

In order to design a persuasive argument, use the following structure:
- **Introduction:** Introduce yourselves and thank your decision-maker for meeting you.
- **Issue:** Introduce the topic to be discussed. Grab the decision-maker’s attention with a strong hook.
- **Position:** Take a stand and make your “ask” — what you want your decision maker to do and how they can do that.
- **Points:** Present your key points or messages to convince your decision-maker. Talk to him/her about why you care about this issue.
- **Counter-Points:** Address potential objections or disagreements the decision-maker might have.
- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and points. Identify your next steps.
Tip for Structuring an Effective Argument:
When designing an argument, you can use several different methods of persuasion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tell a story about a personal experience or reason why you care about the issue.</th>
<th>Create an argument around facts, statistics and logic.</th>
<th>Create an appeal based on emotion. This type of argument taps into shared feelings or values.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex: Having seen my best friend go through a pregnancy as a teenager, I understand the importance of having a health education class in schools.</td>
<td>Ex: This study shows that people who breathe in secondhand smoke are just as likely to develop health problems as smokers. That is why we need a ban on smoking in public parks.</td>
<td>Ex: Students in this city shouldn’t have to walk five miles to get to school everyday. Every child in America has a right to a free public education, and it isn’t right that students in the city don’t get a bus while students in rich neighborhoods do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3: Schedule and plan the meeting.
Use the following checklist to make sure you don’t forget anything.

Scheduling the Meeting:
- Contact the decision-maker with a professional call or email, briefly stating who you are, what you would like to discuss, how much time it will take, and times and locations at which you are available.
- One to two days before the scheduled meeting, call and confirm the time and place.

Planning the Meeting:
- Make sure you have a written plan for the meeting.
  - Make sure you have a clear goal. A goal identifies what you want from your audience by the end of the meeting (may or may not be your entire “ask”).
  - Write notes or an outline of your argument that will keep you on track during the meeting and make sure you cover all of your points.
• Identify your plan for follow up. For example: Let your decision-makers know you intend to check back with them within a week.

☐ Prepare responses to questions or points your decision-maker is likely to raise:
  • How would I (the decision-maker) accomplish your ask?
  • How many people does this issue bother?
  • Has anyone tried to fix it before?
  • I’m not sure I can do anything about this issue, try talking to someone else.

☐ Determine who will present which parts. Assign one person to begin the meeting and one person to end it.

☐ Practice delivering your argument and make edits as needed. When practicing, make sure to factor in timing.

☐ If you are using visual aids or handouts for your presentation, make sure they are ready 24 hours in advance of your presentation.

Step 4: Meet your decision-maker!

Before the Meeting:
• Arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your scheduled meeting and gather with your group. Review your talking points once more before you present to your decision-maker.
• Remember to dress professionally.

During the Meeting:
• Everyone should briefly introduce themselves at the start of the meeting. Shake hands and make eye-contact when introducing yourself.
• You may want to share a few unique personal details about yourselves to show that your group represents a variety of voices. This can include your school, age, neighborhood, or why you have chosen to work on this issue.
• Present your argument to the decision-maker. Provide real-life examples wherever possible.
• Make your “ask” of your decision maker. Ask for a commitment and listen carefully to the response.
  > Decision-makers often need some time to consider supporting or opposing a cause, and will likely have questions about the issue. Make sure you answer the questions you know, and write down questions you don’t have answers to so you can email your decision-maker after the meeting.
  > Don’t take their hesitancy or questions as rejection; many decision makers need proof that you are committed to the issue before they agree to take action.
• Remember to thank them before you leave.
• Get business cards from your decision-maker and anyone else you met during the meeting.

After the Meeting:
• Meet with your group outside the meeting location to compare your reactions and identify any follow-up work that needs to be done.

**Step 5: Follow up.**

• Send an email to the meeting’s participants thanking them for their time, restating your key messages, and reviewing identified next steps. These thank you notes help you build long-term relationships with these decision-makers.
• Make sure to follow up with the plans you stated during your presentation.
### Sample Meeting Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Hi Mr. Trimble. I am Maria Lopez. I am Michael Brown. I am Josh Goldman.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>We’re here to discuss public transportation for young people. Public school students in Providence use buses to get to school, go home, and travel around the city every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>We’re here with the Rhode Island Coalition for Transportation Change to ask you to support Senator O’Grady’s Bill funding RIPTA for the next five years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>Many of us do not have any other method of transportation to get us to school, and the school department doesn’t have the funding to give us private busses. Especially in the winter, we need RIPTA to get to school. If they continue to run a deficit, fewer children will be able to get free passes, and will have to walk 2-3 miles just to attend public school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-Points</td>
<td>We know that this bill sends a large amount of money to RIPTA, and that the state budget is being heavily debated right now. However, we ask you to consider all the students, children and families in Providence who depend on RIPTA to get to school, work or home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Please support this bill. By doing so you will be supporting the children of Providence. When can we expect a decision about your vote? How do you recommend we follow up with you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your time and attention.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft Your Own Meeting Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue, with Hook</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Points</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counter-Points</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hearing from constituents, or the people for whom they are responsible, helps decision-makers take a position on an issue and prioritize which issues they will spend their time and energy on. An effective way for you and your allies or coalition members to make your voices heard is to directly call your decision-maker.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have a simple ask
- You want to quickly get in touch with your decision-maker in advance of an important event (vote, meeting, debate, etc.)
- It is infeasible to arrange an in-person meeting with your decision-maker due to timing, transportation, or accessibility

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You have a complex issue to discuss or get feedback on
- You can easily get a face-to-face meeting

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**Steps for Making Calls to a Decision-Maker**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target. Keep in mind your target’s level of authority (state, city, local, school).
- Class Goal:
- Target for this Tactic:
- Ask:

**Step 2:** Develop your call script.

Create your script based on what you know about your decision-maker. (Ex: If you know your decision-maker sits on the Board of an Athletic Program at a different school and you want to create an athletic program in your school, it is important to make note of that fact and mention it in your call).

An effective script will include:
- **Greeting & Introduction:** You must state who you are and your purpose for calling.
- **Issue:** Explain the topic to be discussed.
- **Position:** Take a stand and make your “ask” – what you want your decision-maker to do and how they can do that.
  > Make sure your “ask” is specific. It is important to ask for a specific action. (Ex: “Please help us develop a mentorship program in our school by putting funding in next school year’s budget for a program.”)
- **Points:** Present your key points.
Don't argue every point that comes to mind. Instead identify two to three key arguments and discuss those.

Make sure your arguments are supported by honest and accurate evidence. Your decision maker will find it difficult to support you if your arguments seem exaggerated or false.

Be personal: Why does this issue matter to you?

**Conclusion:** Restate your position and thank the decision maker for his/her time.

- By restating the important part of your message, you will remind the decision-maker what you are asking.
- Request a response. It lets your decision-maker know that you are serious about your request and require an answer. Ask for an email address with which you can follow up if you don’t hear back.

**Step 3:** Prepare for and make the phone call.

**Before the Phone Call:**
- Practice your call script with a friend or teacher. Use their feedback to make edits.
- Prepare responses to questions or points your decision-maker is likely to raise:
  - How would I (the decision-maker) accomplish your ask?
  - How many people does this issue bother?
  - Has anyone tried to fix it before?
  - I'm not sure I can do anything about this issue, try talking to someone else.

**During the Phone Call:**
- When speaking, speak clearly, slowly, and loud enough that they can hear you. After a brief introduction, make it immediately clear what you are calling about. Decision-makers are often busy people and they might not be able to speak for long.
- Be polite, but let your decision maker know you’re serious about the issue.
- If you cannot reach your targeted decision-maker, do not give up.
  - If you must leave a voicemail, make sure you include a specific response request (how and when they can get in touch with you, what information you are seeking).
  - If you leave a message with a colleague, explain who you are, ask when a good time to call back would be or if there is someone else you could speak with. Try calling back at different times and always send a follow-up email to your message.

**After the Phone Call:**
- Record the decision-maker’s response so you won’t forget.
- Discuss how the call went with your project group and identify follow-up work.
**Follow up.**

- Send the person with whom you spoke a follow-up thank you email.
- Follow-up on any next steps you expressed in your call (for example, checking back in a week).

### Sample Call Script

**Getting in Touch**

Hello, I am Jameela Matheson, a constituent in Representative Robert’s district. I was calling to discuss House Bill 383 with the Representative. Could you connect me to Representative Roberts?

**Greeting & Introduction**

Hello Representative Roberts. I am Jameela Matheson, a constituent in your district.

**Issue**

I am calling to speak about early childhood programs in our district.

**Position**

I am calling to ask you to support House Bill 383 to create the Mississippi Foundation for Early Childhood Development to deliver quality early care and education experiences and parent education for families whose children are at risk of being unprepared for school.

**Points**

The birth-to-five years are the most important of a child’s development. Economists, business leaders, and researchers agree that high-quality early childhood services are among the smartest public investments we can make.

Early childhood programs provide the best and most cost-effective way to give at-risk children the chance to succeed in school and become more productive adults.

I grew up in a neighborhood where many of my peers would drop out of high school. I do not want this to continue. By having a program like this, we can prepare kids to feel ready to go to school. They will actually be excited to attend and less likely to drop out.

**Conclusion**

I ask that you vote in support of legislation that establishes the Mississippi Foundation for Early Childhood Development which would lead the way in creating and supporting methods to increase students’ preparedness for kindergarten. This foundation will greatly affect the lives of young children and families in our community.

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me today. What would be the best email address to reach you at? I look forward to following up with you about your decision.

### Draft Your Own Call Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting &amp; Introduction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position: Your “Ask”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hearing from constituents, or the people for whom they are responsible, helps decision-makers take a position on an issue and prioritize which issues they will spend their time and energy on. An effective way for you and your allies or coalition members to make your voices heard is to directly send emails to decision-makers.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You are asking the decision-maker for something clear and simple (their support for a bill, attendance at an event)
- You are requesting nonpublic information that the decision-maker has access to (data, records, etc.)

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- Your “ask” is complex and needs a lot of explanation or persuasion or you need to start a dialogue around a complicated change (funding, policy implementation, policy adoption, new organization, etc.) – those conversations should take place in person or over the phone

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**Steps for Sending Emails to a Decision-Maker**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target.
- Keep in mind your target’s level of authority (state, city, local, school).
- **Class Goal:**
- **Target for this Tactic:**
- **Ask:**

**Step 2:** Develop your email script. An effective and professional script will include:
- **Greeting:** Address your decision-maker with “Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Councilman,”
- **Issue:** Explain the topic to be discussed.
- **Position:** Take a stand and make your “ask” – what you want your decision-maker to do and how they can do that.
  - Make sure your “ask” is specific, like: “Would you meet with us on one of these dates?” or “Will you please attend this event?”
- **Points:** Present your key points, based on evidence.
  - Don’t argue every point that comes to mind. Instead identify two to three key arguments and discuss those.
  - Make sure your claims are supported by honest and accurate evidence. Your decision maker will find it difficult to support you if your claims seem exaggerated or false.
- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and thank the decision maker for his/her time.
By restating the important part of your message, you will remind the decision-maker to remember what you are asking.

Request a response. It lets your decision-maker know that you are serious about your request and require an answer.

Step 3: Go through the checklist to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything.

☐ Did you use a strong subject line in your email? Remember to reference the issue or legislation and point you are making (Ex: “Support” is less meaningful than “Support for Anti-Bullying Bill”)

☐ Did you personalize your email? If it reads like a SPAM message, it is not likely to be taken seriously.

☐ Are you brief and clear? Remember a short email is more likely to be read than a long one.

☐ Are you specific about what you’re concerned about and what you want done?

☐ After sincerely, have you included the following information?
  - Your Name
  - Your Street Address
  - Your City/State/Zip Code
  - Your Phone Number

  • If you did not check all of the boxes, make edits and go through the checklist again.

Step 4: Send your email to your decision-maker OR if you are mobilizing others to contact your decision-maker, launch a campaign!

• Determine where and when you can get access to your target audience (school lunch, community event, sports game, outside of a grocery store, coalition meeting, etc.).

• Set up the location, date and time you will be holding your letter-writing or email campaign.

• Recruit a small team of your supporters to join you.

• Bring (laptop) computers and your email template. Consider bringing signs to attract the attention of potential supporters walking by.

• Recruit others to send their own emails to the decision-maker, utilizing your template as a guide. However, all writers should personalize their emails slightly so that they have an individual voice. Your decision-maker will not be impressed by “spam” that others simply copied and sent. A personalized letter or email conveys that the writer put effort into it and cares about the issue.

• Thank all writers for their support. If possible, give them information about your action plan and collect their contact information in order to get in touch with them about future efforts.
Tactic Toolkit: Send an Email to a Decision-Maker

Step 5: Follow up.

- If you received a response, answer the email with a professional email (no one-line or one-word responses) or follow up with a handwritten thank you note.
- If you have not heard from your decision-maker within a week of your communication, send them another email, checking in and restating your ask in a simple way.

Sample Email Script

Subject
Background Checks for Private Gun Dealers

Greeting
Dear Senator Burks,

Issue
I am a constituent and a student at J.J. Williams High School in Lexington, Illinois. Though only 15 years old, I’ve already seen two friends die from senseless gun violence, and my classmates and I want more protection from our government. We need to take a harder look at our gun laws to effectively protect our citizens.

Position: Your “Ask”
I am writing to urge you to support background checks for guns purchased at a private dealer.

Points
The 1993 Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act requires background checks for all guns purchased from federal gun dealers and Illinois law also requires background checks for all firearm sales at gun shows. While these background checks are an important tool in helping protect the public, loopholes in the law allow criminals to access guns from private dealers.

By not requiring background checks for the private sale of guns, we allow criminals and other prohibited purchasers to access guns with no questions asked.

A statewide poll found that 80 percent of Illinois voters are in favor of background checks for private gun sales, including a majority support of Republicans, gun owners, and even NRA members.

Conclusion
I hope that you understand the seriousness of this issue in communities like mine, and support background checks for private dealers. Please support common sense gun policies.

Sincerely,
Brandon Ambrose
151 Prospect Ave, Lexington, IL 07381
(731) 456-8920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Subject)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position: Your “Ask”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tactic Toolkit: Write a Letter to a Decision-Maker

Hearing from constituents, or the people for whom they are responsible, helps decision-makers take a position on an issue and prioritize which issues they will spend their time and energy on. An effective way for you and your allies or coalition members to make your voices heard is to directly send letters to decision-makers.

Use this Tactic if:
• You want a large number of people to contact your decision-maker
• You want to inform or educate a decision-maker or influencer – a letter is better than an email if you have a lot to say, a lot of people want to say it or just want to share information, otherwise, you should be sending an email

Do Not Use this Tactic if:
• Time is an issue
• You need a response or are trying to schedule a meeting

Steps for Writing a Letter to a Decision-Maker

Step 1: Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target. Keep in mind your target’s level of authority (state, city, local, school).
• Class Goal:
• Target for this Tactic:
• Ask:

Step 2: Develop your letter script.
Create your script based on what you know about your decision-maker. (Ex: If you know your decision-maker sits on the Board of an Athletic Program at a different school and you want to create an athletic program in your school, it is important to make note of that fact and mention it in your letter)

An effective letter will include:
• Greeting: Address your decision-maker with “Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Councilman,”
• Issue: Explain the topic to be discussed.
• Position: Take a stand and make your “ask” – what you want your decision-maker to do and how they can do that.
> Make sure your “ask” is specific. It is important to ask for a specific action.  
(Ex: “Please help us develop a mentorship program in our school by putting funding in next school year’s budget for a program.”)

**Points:** Present your key points.
> Don’t argue every point that comes to mind. Instead identify two to three key arguments and discuss those. Remember a short letter is more likely to be read than a long one.
> Make sure your claims are accurate and honest. Your decision-maker will find it difficult to support you if your claims seem exaggerated or false.
> Be personal: Why does this issue matter to you?

**Conclusion:** Restate your position; thank the decision-maker for his/her time.
> By restating the important part of your message, you will remind the decision-maker what you are asking.
> Request a response. It lets your decision-maker know that you are serious about your request and require an answer.

### Step 3:
**Go through the checklist to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything.**

- Did you include a full heading at the top of your letter so you can be contacted?
  
  Your heading should include:
  
  - Your Name
  - Your Street Address
  - Your City/State/Zip Code
  - Your Email Address
  - Your Phone Number
  - Date

- Are you clearly stating your points?
- Are you specific about what you’re concerned about and what you want done?
- Are you polite? Be respectful – you want your decision-maker to be on your side.
- Did you personalize the letter? The more genuine or “real” it is, the more seriously it will be taken.

* If you did not check all of the boxes, make edits and go through the checklist again.

### Step 4:
**Create the final copy of your letter and mail it to your decision-maker OR if you are mobilizing others to contact your decision-maker, launch a campaign!**
• Determine where and when you can get access to your target audience (school lunch, community event, sports game, outside of a grocery store, coalition meeting, etc.).
• Set up the location, date and time you will be holding your letter-writing or email campaign.
• Recruit a small team of your supporters to join you.
• Bring blank paper, pens, and your letter template. Consider bringing signs to attract the attention of potential supporters walking by.
• Recruit others to write their own letters to the decision-maker, utilizing your template as a guide. **However, all writers should personalize their letters slightly** so that they have an individual voice. Your decision-maker will not be impressed by “spam” that others simply copied and sent. A personalized letter conveys that the writer put effort into it and cares about the issue.
• Thank all writers for their support. If possible, give them information about your action plan and collect their contact information in order to get in touch with them about future efforts.
• Arrange appropriate postage and mail letters.

**Step 5: Follow up.**

• If you received a response, follow up with a thank you note.
• If you have not heard from your decision-maker within a week of your communication, follow up with them by calling or emailing.
Sample Letter Script

Jameela Matheson
3515 Oak Drive
Jackson, MS 01342
j.matheson@live.com
(621) 453-2197

May 5, 2013

Dear Representative Roberts,

I am writing to you about the importance of early childhood programs in our community.

As a constituent in your district, I ask that you support House Bill 383 to create the Mississippi Foundation for Early Childhood Development to deliver quality early care and education experiences and parent education for families whose children are at risk of being unprepared for school.

Those children who participate in high-quality early learning programs have better language, math, and social skills than their peers who missed this opportunity. They are also more likely to graduate from high school, less likely to become involved in crime, and more likely to become positive, productive citizens as adults.

This issue matters to me because it is important for me to see my younger brother and sister have the opportunities I didn’t have. In my neighborhood, many students do not even finish high school and I don’t want that to happen to them. With a program like this, my brother and sister and many other kids will be excited to go to school. They will actually feel prepared.

The Mississippi Foundation for Early Childhood Development will be able identify methods to increase student preparedness for kindergarten and to provide funding and support for early childhood programs throughout the state. Please vote in support of House Bill 383 so that all the children in our community will be prepared to enter school ready to learn.

Thank you for your hard work.

Sincerely,

Jameela Matheson

Adapted from “Early Childhood Advocacy Toolkit,” Ounce of Prevention, accessed August 1, 2012,
http://www.ounceofprevention.org/advocacy/advocacy-tools.php
# Draft Your Own Letter

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Being able to **testify at a hearing** is an opportunity for everyday citizens to make short statements (usually 2 minutes or less) in front of people with the power, compelling them to take action on issues. “Decision-maker meetings” include meetings in which your decision-maker sits on the board of the body to which you’re presenting (for example: a school board, the school committee, neighborhood councils, the City Council, State Committees, etc.). These meetings are forums for citizens to express their opinions on various issues such as legislation, budgets, or other public policies. Speaking publicly about your issue lets your decision-maker know that the issue is important to you, and shows that you are willing to take action and speak about your solution.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You know that your root cause (policy, ordinance, decision) is being considered or discussed at the meeting
- An issue is being discussed and you do not agree with the proposed action (ex: they are building on land you want to be a park, or they are passing an anti-graffiti ordinance that doesn’t let young people make murals)

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- Your root cause (policy, ordinance, decision) is not being considered in any meeting
- The meeting does not include your decision-maker

---

**Steps for Testifying at a Decision-Maker Meeting**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target. Keep in mind your target’s level of authority (state, city, local, school).

- Class Goal:

- Target(s) for this Tactic:

- Ask:

**Step 2:** Conduct research on the board your decision-maker sits on.

You must:
- Understand why this is the board you are talking to.
- Know who else is on this board or committee and their opinions of your issue.
- Find the date and time of the committee’s meeting.
Check to make sure you can speak at the meeting: not all public meetings will be open to everyone to speak.

Verify how long presenters have to speak (typically one to two minutes).

Step 3: Develop your written testimony.

A complete testimony will include the following:

- **Introduction/Position:** Introduce yourself, state your “ask” or what you are there to support and why.
  
  > Make sure this statement is clearly and immediately delivered. This is the section that will be included in public minutes for/notes of the meeting.

- **Points:** Present your key points, based on your experience and evidence.
  
  > Explain why you do or do not support the board’s plans and why other people should join you.
  
  > Don’t argue every point that comes to mind. Instead identify two to three key arguments and discuss those.
  
  > Make sure you support your claims with evidence or personal experience. Your decision maker will find it difficult to support you if your claims seem exaggerated or false.

- **Counter-Points:** Address potential objections or disagreements the decision-maker might have.
  
  > As you develop your argument, you must think about what groups against your issue might say. You will be asked questions about your testimony, so you must be prepared to address the questions.

- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and thank the decision-maker for his/her time.
  
  > By restating the important part of your message, your decision-maker will remember what you are asking.

Step 4: Recruit allies.

- You will want your class to attend to represent the people for whom you are advocating and to demonstrate support.

- You will also want two or three people with different perspectives to present alongside you. You need to present the board or committee with multiple views to strengthen your case.

For example, if you are presenting to the school committee:

- Get friends, peers, and classmates to attend and identify themselves as students (signs, shirts, etc.) so that the school committee will know that all of those students agree with you.
Recruit a teacher, parent, and administrator to also testify in support of your argument; the committee will take you seriously knowing that these different people support your action.

**Step 5: Practice!**

- Practice your presentation and use feedback from your peers to improve your testimony. You may not exceed your time limit. This is why practice is critical.

**Step 6: Testify!**

**Before the Meeting:**
- For public meetings, a meeting agenda will be available prior to the meeting. They are usually posted a day in advance of the meeting. Verify the meeting time and location.
- Prepare an outline or script for your testimony. You will be given only one to two minutes to speak and must be clear and focused.
- Before giving your presentation, make copies of your statement to give to the decision-making body.
- Arrive early to the meeting. You will have to sign up to speak, and usually the sooner you sign up, the sooner you will be able to deliver your testimony. Arriving early also allows you to get a good seat and get familiar with your surroundings.
- Dress professionally. You cannot over-dress to this meeting.

**During the Meeting:**
- Take notes when you are not delivering your statements so you will remember what questions were asked and what arguments other groups made. If a lawmaker makes a point that supports your cause, you want to remember it for future reference.
- When you begin speaking, first address the chair/head and then the members of the group. State your name and the group you represent slowly and clearly.
- After the brief introduction, make your statement.
  > Remember, you will be cut off after one or two minutes. Use your prepared points.
  > Speak directly to the decision-making body. Make eye contact with those who are paying attention to what you are saying.
- Be prepared to answer questions and do so briefly and clearly.
  > When you are asked a question, respond by saying “Respectfully” and using the correct title of the decision-maker.
    - Ex: “Respectfully Representative Dun, the answer to your question is...”
  > If you are asked a tough question, stay calm. Do not fake an answer. Instead be honest and sincere. If you do not know the answer, let them know you are not sure and that you promise to get back to them with the information they want.
- Be very polite throughout your testimony.
Sample Testimony

**Introduction/Position**

My name is Angela, I come here as a representative for the students of Leadership Academy High School. I've come to oppose the MTA's plan to end free student MetroCards.

I come from a single parent home and my brother and I rely on our student MetroCards to get to school each and every day. We would not be able to afford to get to school if we had to pay for our MetroCards. I know that I am not the only one faced with this situation. There are many more of my peers in similar situations.

By taking away these MetroCards, it could lead some students to even break the law. Without any choice, some kids might begin to jump turnstiles. If they get caught doing this, it will only make matters worse.

Although this would cost money for the MTA, other cities are able to budget for school transportation, and the MTA should be able to do the same.

I understand the MTA is planning these service cuts in order to save money, but this is clearly not the way to do it. More than 500,000 students in the city rely on their MetroCards to be able to get an education.

I hope you will oppose the MTA's plan to end free student MetroCards in support of the students of Leadership Academy High School and all students in New York City public schools. Thank you so much for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions about my experience.

She states who she is, who she represents and it is clear what she is here to talk about.

She presents her personal connection to the issue.

She addresses the MTA's objections.

She restates her position and closes by thanking her audience.
## Draft Your Own Testimony

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<thead>
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<th>Introduction / Position</th>
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<td>Counter-Points</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
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Coalitions, or groups and individuals working together towards the same goal, can be a key element to successful action. Building a coalition of influencers demonstrates to decision-makers that there is widespread support for your issue from key individuals and groups. To build this coalition, convince like-minded influencers to join the cause. The best way to do this is through research and face-to-face meetings.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- Your decision maker needs to see a widespread base of support before they will take action
- You have a number of obvious supporters who need to be organized
- You have a big or difficult issue that needs a lot of people to work on it

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You cannot find good coalition members (you want to recruit people who bring something to the table, not just any person)
- Time is an issue

---

**Steps for Holding a Meeting with Influencers**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target.
- Class Goal:
- Target for this Tactic:
- Ask:

**Step 2:** Identify potential influencers to join your coalition.
- A good coalition partner is one whose goals align with yours. (Think about individuals, groups or organizations in school and/or in your community.)
  > For example, if you are working on creating a health class in your school to educate students about teen pregnancy, you want to align yourself with an organization that supports sex education, or is working on teen pregnancy.
- Who is able to influence your decision-maker?
  > Not all potential coalition partners will be able to influence your decision maker. You want to make sure that your coalition partner will have an impact on your decision-maker.
Research your influencer(s).

Before you can develop your presentation, you must first analyze your potential coalition partner. This will help you tailor your argument. Consider the following:

- What is their relationship to the decision-maker?
- What are their priorities?
- What is their history on this or related issues?
- What are they responsible for?
- How will their involvement in the coalition benefit them?
- Why might they hesitate to join?

Based on your research, develop an argument to convince influencers to support your cause.

In order to create a persuasive argument, use the following structure:

- **Issue:** Introduce the topic to be discussed, describing common ground between your interest and their organization.
- **Position:** Take a stand and make your “ask” — what you want your influencer to do and how they can do that.
- **Points:** Present your key points or messages to convince your influencer. You must emphasize how your goal aligns with your coalition partner’s goals.
- **Counter-Points:** Address potential objections the influencer might have.
- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and points.

Schedule and plan the meeting.

Use the following checklist to make sure you don’t forget anything.

**Scheduling the Meeting:**

- Contact your potential coalition partner with a professional call or email briefly stating who you are, what you would like to discuss, how much time it will take, and times and locations at which you are available.
- One to two days before the scheduled meeting, call and confirm the time and place.

**Planning the Meeting:**

- Make sure you have a written plan for the meeting.
  - Make sure you have a clear goal. A goal identifies what you want from your audience by the end of the meeting (may or may not be your entire “ask”).
  - Write notes or an outline of your argument that will keep you on track during the meeting and make sure you cover all of your points.
  - Identify your plan for follow up. For example: Let your decision-makers know you intend to check back with them within a week.
- Prepare responses to questions or points your influencer is likely to raise:
• How would I (coalition partner) accomplish your ask?
• What other action have you taken or do you plan to take to address this issue?
• Who else is involved?
• I’m not sure I can do anything about this issue, try talking to someone else.

☐ Determine who will present which parts. Assign one person to begin the meeting and one person to end it.

☐ Practice delivering your argument and make edits as needed. When practicing, make sure to factor in timing.

☐ If you are using visual aids or handouts for your presentation, make sure they are ready 24 hours in advance of your presentation.

Step 6: Meet!

Before the Meeting:
• Remember to dress professionally.
• Arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your scheduled meeting and gather with your group. Review your talking points and request again before you present to your influencers.

During the Meeting:
• Everyone should briefly introduce themselves at the start of the meeting. Shake hands and make eye-contact when introducing yourself.
• Distribute any handouts before beginning your presentation.
• You may want to share a few unique personal details about yourselves to show that your group represents a variety of voices. This can include your school, age, neighborhood, or why you have chosen to work on this issue.
• Present your argument. Provide real-life examples wherever possible.
• Make a clear “ask” of your influencers. Ask for a commitment, and listen carefully to the response.
  > Influencers often need some time to consider supporting or opposing a cause. They will however share important insight into their decision-making process.
  > Don’t take their hesitancy as rejection. They may need proof that you are committed to the issue before they agree to take action.
• Remember to thank them before you leave.
• Get business cards from anyone you met during the meeting.

After the Meeting:
• Meet with your group outside the meeting location to compare your reactions and identify any follow-up work that needs to be done.

Step 7: Follow up.
- Send an email to the meeting’s participants thanking them for their time, restating your key messages, and reviewing identified next steps. These thank you notes help you build long-term relationships with these influencers.

### Sample Influencer Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Goal</th>
<th>Extend the citywide curfew to encourage teen employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential Partner</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is their relationship to the decision-maker?</td>
<td>Businesses owners drive the local economy, which the council members are interested in and are responsible for promoting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are their priorities?</td>
<td>Business owners care about having affordable and available labor, low taxes, safe neighborhoods, and a steady customer base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is their history on this or related issues?</td>
<td>(From research) In 2008, business owners lobbied the city council to lower fines for working with undocumented workers; they care about cheap labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are they responsible for?</td>
<td>Selling their products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will their involvement in the coalition benefit them?</td>
<td>Supporting our cause will help them access a broader pool of available labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why might they hold back or hesitate from joining?</td>
<td>They might be nervous about other young people staying out late and loitering outside of their stores, thus scaring other potential customers away</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sample Meeting Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Welcome)</th>
<th>Thank you so much for meeting with us. We know you are busy and appreciate you fitting us into your schedule.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue</strong></td>
<td>Our 9th grade history class, through a program called Generation Citizen, is working to create and identify more jobs for teens in our community. We think that one way to accomplish this would be to extend the citywide curfew on weeknights. This would benefit students by giving them access to more work opportunities and would benefit employers like yourself by expanding your labor pool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td>We would like your help in passing a city ordinance extending the curfew from 10 pm to 11 pm. We would like for you to help us put pressure on the city council to pass this ordinance. We are scheduled to speak before the city council at their next meeting, November 14th, at 7 pm. If you could join us there and say a few words, we know it would strengthen our case before the council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Points</strong></td>
<td>After conducting a school-wide survey, we found that 70% of our peers work or have worked part-time. In addition, 60% say that they would like to work more if given the option. The current curfew keeps students from working a range of jobs, as after-school shifts often require helping to close stores and restaurants late at night, after the current curfew. If students can stay out later, they will be able to work more shifts. Businesses would benefit from having more applicants for their positions – wages can be competitive, given a bigger pool of applicants. Also, as young people stay out later, they will go frequent local shops and restaurants more, which will mean more business for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counter-Points</strong></td>
<td>Some opponents warn that a later curfew will promote delinquency among Baytown’s youth. However, if the curfew were extended, our research leads us to believe that more teens would be employed, and thus off the streets causing trouble. More jobs and more wages would also allow consumers, including students, to spend more money at local businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>We believe this ordinance will help to create jobs. Your support on November 14 would be hugely helpful in passing this ordinance. We know your support will go a long way with the city council. Will you be able to join us? Thank you for your time.</td>
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</table>

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*The students’ position is clear.*

*The students’ “ask” is specific.*

*The students forge a common bond with their audience by addressing how both groups would benefit from extending the curfew.*

*The students address the business owners’ potential hesitation.*
### Analyze your Influencer(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Partner</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What is their relationship to the decision-maker?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What are their priorities?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Why might they hold back or hesitate from joining?</strong></td>
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## Draft Your Own Meeting Script

<p>| | |</p>
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<tr>
<td>(Welcome)</td>
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<td>Issue</td>
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Circulating a petition is a good way to educate, gather, and demonstrate the support of community members. It is also an opportunity to collect contact information from supporters for outreach later in your campaign. After a petition is circulated and has enough signatures, it can be presented to a decision-maker in order to persuade them that your issue is important and your approach has support.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- Your decision-maker underestimates or is unaware of the number of people who support your plan

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You cannot reach a large number of people
- You do not have the time or mobility to circulate a petition

---

**Steps to Circulate a Petition**

**Step 1:**
Review your overall project goal(s) so that you keep in mind what you’re working toward.
- Class Goal:
- Target of this Tactic:
- Ask:

**Step 2:**
 Draft your petition.

Go through the following checklist to make sure it includes all of the necessary elements:

- A simple title referring to what you want the petition to accomplish
- A statement explaining the problem that the petition is addressing
- Your request. This should clearly state what you want the decision-maker to do when he or she receives the petition (your “ask” of the decision-maker)
- Your group’s name and contact information, so that your supporters will know how to reach you with any questions that they may have
- A place for supporters to leave their contact information. city and state issues, make sure to include space for your supporters’ addresses (this information is used to confirm your supporters by officials!)
- Numbered lines – this will make it easy for you to count how many signatures you have collected
- Repeat the title, statement, request, and contact information on each new page

*If you did not check all of the boxes, go through the checklist again and make sure you have completed everything.*
**Tactic Toolkit: Canvass with a Petition**

**Step 3:** Circulate your petition.

**Tips for Circulating a Petition:**
- Think about where your target audience spends time, and circulate the petition at these places during busy hours.
  - For example, if your target audience is made up of your fellow classmates, you can circulate the petition in the cafeteria during lunch.
  - Other possible sites include grocery stores, community events, and churches, mosques, or synagogues.
- Bring pens and clipboards so that it will be easier for people to sign your petition.
- Tell possible supporters about the petition quickly and clearly.
- Remember to be polite – people will be more receptive if you ask them to sign your petition with a smile.

**Sample Petition**

**Help Us Improve Public Lighting in Our Neighborhood!**

We, the undersigned, are concerned about the lack of streetlights in Oleton. We call upon our city councilmember to install more streetlights in Oleton Park and near bus stops.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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Students for Safe Streets
Contact: Joe Knight at (555) 555-5555 or jknight@studentsforsafestreets.org
**Draft Your Own Petition**

**Title:**

We, the undersigned, are concerned about ________________________________.

We call upon ______________________ to ________________________________.

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(Date)

(Group Name)

(Group Contact Information)
A letter-writing or email campaign gives you the opportunity to engage a large number of supporters in your work.

There are two options for how to involve a letter-writing or email campaign in your efforts, depending upon your purpose. You can either use a campaign to mobilize influencers to contact your decision-maker, reiterating your specific “ask,” or you can use a campaign to inform community members about an event, policy, or service to build attendance at, support for, or use of those resources.

To share information with a mass audience, create a letter or email template that states the needed information and send this out to your targets.

Use this Tactic if:
- You’re inviting people to attend an event
- You want to share information about an issue
- You want people (not decision-makers) to take action

Do Not Use this Tactic if:
- You only want to reach a small number of people
- You don’t have contact information for people to reach out to

---

**Steps for Using a Letter-Writing or Email Campaign**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to adjust your ask to your target.

- Class Goal:
- Target for this Tactic:
- Ask:

**Step 2:** Draft a letter/email template, for others to personalize.

An effective script will include:
- **Greeting:** Address your contact with “Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Councilman,” or “Dear Neighbor/Fellow Student,” (depending on purpose of campaign).
- **Issue:** Explain the topic to be discussed.
- **Position:** Make your “ask.”
  > If the template is directed toward a decision-maker, your “ask” is what specific action you want your decision-maker to take.
If the template is directed toward community members, your “ask” is what action you want them to do (ex: attend an event, be aware of this policy, utilize this system).

- **Points:** Present your key points.
  
  > Don’t argue every point that comes to mind. Instead identify two to three key arguments and discuss those.
  
  > Make sure your claims are supported by honest and accurate evidence. Your audience will find it difficult to support you if your arguments seem exaggerated or fabricated.
  
  > If sending a letter or email to community members, include details of the event/policy/system here.

- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and thank the person for his/her time.
  
  > By restating the important part of your message, it ensures your reader will remember what you are asking.

---

**Step 3:** Go through the following checklists to ensure you haven’t forgotten anything.

### Checklist for Letter Templates:

- If writing to a decision-maker, did you include space for a full heading at the top of your letter? Your heading should include:
  
  Your Name
  
  Your Street Address
  
  Your City/State/Zip Code
  
  Your Email Address
  
  Your Phone Number
  
  Date

- Are you clearly stating your points?
- Are you specific about why your issue is important and what you want done?
- Are you polite? You want your reader to be on your side, so be respectful.

### Checklist for Emails:

- Did you suggest a strong subject line for the email? Remember to reference the issue or legislation and point you are making (Ex: “Support” is less meaningful than “Support for Anti-Bullying Bill”).
- Are you brief and clear? A short email is more likely to be read than a long one.
- Are you specific about why your issue is important and what you want done?
- After “Sincerely,” have you included the following information?
  
  Your Name
  
  Your Street Address
  
  Your City/State/Zip Code
Your Phone Number

* If you did not check all of the boxes, make edits and go through the checklist again.

**Step 4: Launch your campaign.**

- Set up the location, date and time you will be holding your letter-writing or email campaign.
- Recruit a team of supporters to join you.
- Bring blank paper, pens, and your letter template, or (laptop) computers and your email template.
- Provide each helper with a contact list of the people to whom they are going to be reaching out.
- Assist as helpers write letters or send emails to every person on their lists.
- Thank all writers for their support.
- Arrange appropriate postage and mail letters, if applicable.
# Sample Script to a Community Member

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Dear Neighbor,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>I am writing you in regards to the vandalism problem that has recently received attention in our community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position: Your “Ask”</td>
<td>Though committed by a very small number of people, vandalism is ruining the image of our community and the hard work of so many homeowners, landlords, and business owners who attempt to take care of their property so that we have a clean, safe space to call home. There is, however, something that we can all do to help reduce the negative effects of vandalism – we can use a new app put out by the Department of Parks and Recreation called “Clean It Up.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>“Clean It Up” allows everyday people to report incidents of vandalism in their neighborhoods. By inputting the address and type of vandalism, watchful community members can alert the police to specific problems which otherwise might go unnoticed. The police will then supervise the repair of the vandalized materials and show greater attention to the specific area. To start using “Clean It Up,” simply download the app for free from the App Store on your iPhone or Android.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>We should not stop taking pride in our neighborhood. “Clean It Up” can allow us to reclaim what is rightfully ours – a safe, clean community. Together, we can send a message that vandalism is noticed and is not tolerated. Thank you for your support. Sincerely, Kyle Heller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The topic is clearly and immediately presented.

The “ask” is specific.

Additional information is presented about the event/policy/service.

The “ask” is repeated.
### Draft Your Own Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Your “Ask”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hearing from community members helps potential supporters take a position on an issue and decide which issues are most important to them. An effective way for you and your coalition members to make your voices heard by potential supporters is to organize phone-banking. Phone-banking is a good way to educate and engage with your target because you make a verbal connection between your potential supporter and your campaign.

Use this Tactic if:

- You want to mobilize large amounts of people to make a specific ask (vote for this bill, come to this event)
- You are volunteering to help a coalition member who already has a call list of people and their information

Do Not Use this Tactic if:

- You only want to reach a few people
- You do not have an “ask” for the people to do
- You do not have contact information to create a call list

---

**Steps for Phone-Banking**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) so that you keep in mind what you’re working toward.

- Class Goal:
  - Target of this Tactic:

- Ask:

**Step 2:** Develop your “call list.”

This is the list of people whom you’ll be calling.

- An effective call list depends on your ask. It can include classmates, community members, or legislators who are relevant to your cause.
- Hold a brainstorming session to figure out who you and your supporters will be calling.
- Why? What specifically will you ask these targets to do?
- Compile the names, phone numbers, and ideally the email addresses of your targets so that you can follow up with them after the call.
  > If you are reaching out to fellow students at your school, teachers or administrators can be a valuable resource, as they may have access to contact...
information for the student body. If your school is not able to release the information to you, request that they provide the information would be covering on the call to your call list on your behalf.

### Step 3: Develop your call script.
An effective script will include:

- **Introduction:** Briefly explain who you are.
- **Issue:** Explain why you are calling.
- **Position:** Make your “ask” – what you want the potential influencer to do - and provide educational information on how to get involved with the issue.
- **Points:** Present your key points, based on evidence.
- **Conclusion:** Restate your position and thank the target for his/her time.

### Tips for developing your script:
- Having the right information about whom you are calling is key. Develop your ask based on the information that you have about the target in order to increase the chances that you will get a positive response.
  > For example, if you know this supporter is a member of an organization with a similar focus, reference that in your ask. Sample Ask: “I saw that you are a member of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), since this drug abuse mentoring program has goals similar to SADD’s, I thought that you might be interested in supporting our cause.
- Have alternative scripts in place in case the person your calling is not available (see sample scripts below).

### Step 4: Plan the phone-banking event.
Go through the following checklist to make sure you have completed all of the necessary preparations:

- Find a location to host your phone bank. This location should have multiple phone lines and/or good cell phone reception. Consult your DC and teacher for suggestions.
- Recruit volunteers to phone bank with you. Reach out to your network of friends, family, and classmates. (Create an event page on Facebook; push it on social media, make announcements in classes or at meetings.)
- Prepare the necessary supplies, such as a sign-in sheet, call lists, and scripts.
- Have three scripts in place: one for if you are able to directly speak to the person you are calling, another to leave a message if someone else picks up and your target is not there, and a third script to leave a message on an answering machine.
- Prepare a list of Frequently Asked Questions and responses to each, so that callers can have answers to likely questions on-hand.
Plan who will be responsible for greeting phone-bankers, who will give directions and explain procedures, who will be responsible for bringing snacks (if anyone).

Plan the event so that it ends before 6:30 PM on a weekday because people generally don't like to receive calls after that time during the week. If you are reaching out to legislative offices, call them before 5 PM on a weekday, as that is when a legislator’s office usually closes.

Practice! Role-playing will help the phone bankers be more comfortable over the phone.

* If you did not check all of the boxes, go through the checklist again and make sure you have completed everything.

**Step 5:** Phone bank!

- Be polite, yet let target know you’re serious about the issue.
- Listen carefully to and record peoples’ responses (support, RSVP, etc.)
- If the person is not willing to follow through with your ask, be gracious and thank them for their time. Let them know that they can follow up with you at any time if they have questions or change their mind.

**Step 6:** Follow up.

- Send the people whom you spoke with follow-up thank you emails if it’s possible to get their emails through publically available information or if they provided it during the call.
- If you have emails for the people whom you didn’t connect with, send them follow-up emails reiterating the information that you would have shared during the call.
Sample Call Script

**Finding the Target**

Hi, is this John Smith? (Yes, it is.)

**Greeting and Intro.**

Great, my name is Mike, and I am a fellow student at Hope High School.

**Issue**

I am calling to speak about the peer-mentoring program that my classmates and I are hoping to launch. Do you have any time available to talk? I would love to discuss this program with you. (Sure!)

**Position**

Great, my classmates and I want to establish a mentoring program at school, and I am looking for students in other classes to offer their support in getting this program off the ground. All that we ask is that you attend a meeting next Wednesday at 3:15, where we will present the program to Principal Jones. If enough students attend the meeting, then we will have a better chance of getting approval for the program.

**Points**

This mentoring program would be really helpful for several reasons. The program would focus on educating students about prescription drug abuse. Prescription drug abuse is an issue that many of the students in my grade have identified as a problem in our community. Through this program, students would teach each other about the dangers of drug abuse and what they can do if a friend or family member is doing drugs.

**Conclusion**

Will you be able to attend the presentation next week? (Yes, I'll be there!)

Great, it will be held in the auditorium. If you have any questions or want more ways to get involved, please email me at mike@me.com. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me! Looking forward to seeing you on Wednesday!
### Sample Voicemail Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting and Intro.</th>
<th>Hi, my name is Mike, and I am calling for John Smith.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>My classmates and I in the Junior class are hoping to launch a peer-mentoring program at the high school that will address drug abuse problems in our community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>I am calling because I wanted to discuss this program with you in further detail, and I am also looking for students in other classes to offer their support in getting this program off the ground. All that we ask is that you attend a meeting next Wednesday at 3:15, where we will present the program to Principal Jones. If enough students attend the meeting, then we will have a better chance of getting approval for the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>This program would be a really great way to teach students about the dangers of drug abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Hoping to see you at the presentation next week! I will follow up with an email later today giving you more details about the meeting, which will be held in the auditorium. If you have any questions or are looking for more ways to get involved, please email me at <a href="mailto:mike@me.com">mike@me.com</a>. Thanks!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sample Message to Leave if Your Target Is Not Available

| Finding the Target | Hi, is John available? (Sorry, he’s not here right now.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okay, could I leave a message with you? (Sure.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting and Intro.</td>
<td>Great, my name is Mike and I’m a student at Hope High School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>I was calling because I wanted to speak with John about a mentoring program that my classmates and I are hoping to start at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>I was hoping to get John’s support for the program and also invite him to a meeting next Wednesday at 3:15 in the auditorium, where my group and I will present the idea to Principal Jones. If enough students attend the meeting, we will have a better chance of getting approval for the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>This program would be a really great way to teach students about the perils of drug abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Thank you so much for taking my message! I will also email John with more details about the meeting. Have a nice day!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Follow Up Email, after Talking

**Issue**
Hi John,
Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on the phone earlier about the peer-mentoring program at school.

**Position**
Here are the details about the meeting next week: it will take place in the auditorium at 3:15 on Wednesday afternoon. My group and I will be presenting the program to Principal Jones, and all we need you to do is show up!

**Points**
As I mentioned on the phone, this program would be a great way to help students learn about the dangers of drug abuse.

**Conclusion**
Thanks again for your support. Looking forward to seeing you next Wednesday,
Mike

Sample Follow Up Email, after Leaving a Message

**Issue**
Hi John,
I left a message (on your phone/at your house) earlier. My name is Mike, and I’m a student at Hope High School. I wanted to talk to you about a peer-mentoring program we’re hoping to develop at school.

**Position**
We are hosting a meeting next week at 3:15 on Wednesday afternoon in the auditorium. My group and I will be presenting the program to Principal Jones, and all we need you to do is show up!

**Points**
This program would be a great way to help students learn about the dangers of drug abuse.

**Conclusion**
I hope to see you next Wednesday. If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to reach out to me at mike@me.com or (555) 555-5555.
Thanks for your support,
Mike
## Draft Your Call Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding the Contact</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting and Intro.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
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<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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</table>
Writing an editorial allows you to publish your opinions about your issue and to share these opinions with a broad audience. Getting your thoughts in print also strengthens your reputation – you can share the published article with other influencers and decision-makers to demonstrate support for your cause.

There are several different formats for editorials. Two are outlined below: op-eds and letters to the editor. Each serves a different purpose but both can, if used wisely, help further your efforts and bring attention to your action.

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**Writing an Op-Ed**

“Op-ed” stands for “opposite the editorial page.” Newspaper editors share their opinions on the editorial page of the newspaper. On the opposite page, other readers are given space to submit their thoughts. Op-eds are opinion articles (“editorials”) written by members of the public. Newspapers often publish op-eds whose authors are experts in their field or authorities on their writing subject.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- Your cause is timely (interesting to others at the moment)
- Support from a general audience would help your efforts

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You want to respond to an article that was previously published in the publication
- Your target influencers are not likely to read the newspaper (ex. students in your school, students in another school)

---

**Steps for Writing an Op-Ed**

**Step 1:**
Review your overall project goal(s) so that you keep in mind what you’re working toward.
- Class Goal:
- Target of this Tactic:
- Ask:

**Step 2:**
Identify press in which you would like to publish your op-ed.
Identify your audience before writing your op-ed so that you can tailor your arguments with these readers in mind.
- Focus on local newspapers or magazines whose readers would be interested in your specific issue.
- Collect the contact information of reporters at these press outlets to whom you can submit your op-ed or other directions for submission.
Tactic Toolkit: Write an Editorial for a Newspaper

Step 3: Draft your op-ed.
A strong op-ed will include a:

- **Lead:** Draw the reader into caring about the issue with an interesting hook. Hooks can vary widely but common prompts are:
  - A human interest story
  - Shocking or powerful numbers/statistics
  - A focus on local and/or timely issues (how the problem affects your and the readers’ community)
  - Controversy
  - A situation which most readers can immediately relate to

- **Problem:** Explain the issue and why it is a problem; include statistics and other relevant evidence and research

- **Solution:** Describe what you feel should be done about the issue

- **Counter-Point(s):** Predict possible arguments that opponents of your issue might raise and explain and provide reasoning for your disagreement

- **Conclusion/Call to Action:** Reiterate how and why the reader should get involved

Step 4: Edit your op-ed.

- Ask peers to edit and give you feedback on your op-ed for:
  - Clarity: Is your argument clear? Does it make sense? Do you use any vocabulary that your audience might not know?
  - Brevity: Is it too long? Can you say something in a simpler way?
  - Grammatical or spelling mistakes

- Go through the checklist to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything:
  - Did you check the press outlet’s op-ed guidelines? Most op-eds are between 500 and 800 words.
  - Did you include a name, address, and daytime and evening phone number with your submission so that you can be contacted if it is chosen for publication?
  - Did you time the submission of your op-ed to coincide or directly follow with relevant news or events that touch on your message? By timing your submission with a current event or hot topic, you’ll have a better chance of getting published.
  - Are you submitting your op-ed to several news outlets?

*If you answered no to any of these questions, go back and make sure to make the necessary adjustments.

Step 5: Submit your op-ed.
Step 6: Follow up.

- Reach out to the outlet within a week after submitting your op-ed to confirm that they received it and to check its progress.
- Once you confirm that it will be published, reach out to other press outlets where you submitted the op-ed and let them know that it will be published elsewhere.
- Thank the person your contact at the press outlet where your op-ed was published.
- Share the published op-ed via other media (blog, Facebook, Twitter).
- Collect hard copies, if possible, to share with your decision-maker and influencers.

Sample Op-Ed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>If murder is wrong, why did 9 states execute 43 inmates in 2012?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Aside from the obvious ethical issues surrounding the death penalty, there are also commonsense issues. As humans, all of our actions are prone to error. Therefore, government and the judicial system are also capable of error. When a person’s life is at stake, error becomes deadly. A person could be killed for a crime that he or she was incorrectly found guilty of committing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>There are 36 states with the death penalty. These states need to abolish it on the grounds that it carries a dangerous risk of punishing the innocent. The U.S. must join its political allies – including Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, South Africa, and most of Latin America – that have abolished the death penalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-Point(s)</td>
<td>Some favor the death penalty as an effective deterrent of crime; however, it is proven that states with the death penalty actually have higher murder rates than those without. In 2006, the FBI Uniform Crime Report revealed that the area of the U.S. that was responsible for the most executions, the South, also had the highest murder rate, whereas the Northern areas that had the fewest executions had the lowest murder rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/ Call to Action</td>
<td>The capital punishment system is capable of error and is ineffective. We need to replace the death penalty with a life sentence without parole – a safer and less expensive option. The death penalty does not guarantee safety for innocent victims; it does not follow the goals and promises of our nation; and it does not effectively deter crime. It cannot continue to be accepted by a nation that claims to have liberty and justice for all. The death penalty is murder and it’s dead wrong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Draft Your Own Op-Ed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Call to Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attracting media attention can be a valuable tool to put pressure on decision-makers and to raise awareness about your cause. There are many different tactics for gaining press attention, including but not limited to emailing news outlets, utilizing your school news services, and finding a celebrity spokesperson.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have conducted your research and are looking to publicize your cause.
- You want to spread the word about your ideas.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t finished your research.
- You don’t have a coherent strategy for moving forward.

### Steps for Attracting Press Attention

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s). Keep in mind your project's level (national, state, local, school).

**Class Goal:**

**Sending Emails**

**Step 1:** Research your audience

- Who will you contact?
  - Think local – local news outlets will be more interested in covering your school’s project than national outlets will.
  - Utilize your connections
    - Oftentimes, classmates or teachers may know people who work at local news outlets.
    - Even if these people aren’t in positions of power, they may be able to connect you to the right person.
  - Research the news outlet and find the best contact.
    - The best contact will typically be a reporter from the field of your project.
  - Avoid sending blanket emails to the entire organization.
Step 2: Draft the Email

- **Tone**
  - Be professional and courteous. Keep in mind the fact that you are asking them for their time and attention.

- **Content**
  - Why should the press care?
    - Give 1 or 2 critical reasons as to why your story is important.
      - How is your work applicable not just to your school, but to the community in general?
      - Make it clear how covering your story will also benefit the press.
  - What are you asking for?
    - Be clear and reasonable.
    - Possible requests include a press conference, short segment on television, televised interview, an article in the newspaper, etc.
  - Be persistent!
    - If you don’t receive a response within a few days, politely follow-up or if you have a connection, ask them to follow-up to ensure that your request was received.

Step 3: Communicate your message

- Keep the message clear, concise, and focused on the goal you want to achieve.
- Take your time speaking, and pause if you aren’t sure what to say – remember, you are “on the record.”

Utilize School News Sources

Step 1: Find the Contacts

- Your school news is the easiest media outlet to connect with.
- Use your friends/teachers to find the reporters.
- If you yourself are on the staff, write a piece about the work your class is doing!

Step 2: Make the request

- What are you asking for?
  - Since this is directed at other students, this “ask” can be more casual.
- Ask in person, if possible!
  - Make it clear how this story will benefit them as well.

**Find a Spokesperson**

**Step 1:**
Research local leaders who are invested in your cause.

- Think extremely local – with your time constraints, it will probably be difficult to convince anyone from outside the area.
- See if you can find local advocacy organization leaders, politicians who champion this issue or celebrities who have been impacted by your focus issue.
- Be creative – oftentimes, local leaders can be people who are well known or have influence in the community.

**Step 2:**
Contact them!

- Be professional and friendly – contact can be done through a phone call or an email (see tactics and lessons pertaining to these).
- Be clear and concise in your request, and make sure that it’s evident how much you care about the issue.
- Possible requests could be speaking about the issue to a news source, speaking about the issue on social media, co-writing a newspaper article or attending an event.
Hosting an Assembly or Workshop or Panel is one way to advertise a project or initiative you are working on, to educate others about your issue, and to mobilize a large audience to support your cause.

An assembly is an event where a person or a group of people gives an informational presentation to an audience about a specific topic. A workshop is an event where people learn about an issue in an interactive way and are typically given the opportunity to practice new skills or share information themselves. For example, the people in attendance may be divided up into groups so that they can further discuss the topic. A panel is a discussion or debate between multiple experts on a specific issue, taking place in front of an audience.

Use this Tactic if:
- You need to inform a large group of potential supporters about your cause
- You have access to a group of people interested in learning more about the cause
- Your issue is already popular in or clearly relevant for your community and people would be interested in being engaged (for example: vandalism cleanup workshops)
- You have a clear “ask” or purpose for getting others involved

Do Not Use this Tactic if:
- Your potential supporters are already informed about your cause
- Your potential supporters are not likely to attend an event just to gather information (for example, if they do not already consider it a problem, they might not seek out more information)

Steps for Hosting an Assembly/Workshop/Panel

Step 1: Review your overall project goal(s) so that you keep in mind what you’re working toward.
- Class Goal:
- Target of this Tactic:
- Ask:

Step 2: Determine and plan your desired event.
- Set a vision for the event.
  - What is the goal of your event?
  - Which type of event (assembly, workshop, or panel) would best help you accomplish this goal?
  - Who is your target audience? What is the size of your target audience?
  - What guest speakers will help you accomplish this goal?
Tactic Toolkit: Hosting an Assembly/Workshop/Panel

• Plan a general outline of the event. Your outline should include the following parts as well as approximate timings for how long you’ll spend on each section:
  > Introduction: Who are you? Why are you hosting this event? Why should people care about this issue? Who else is present at the event?
  > Content:
    ▪ For an assembly, you will need to create an educational presentation.
    ▪ For a panel, you will need to prepare the panelists’ biographies to introduce them to the audience and develop questions to ask of the panelists.
    ▪ For a workshop, you will need to create activities to engage the audience in learning about your issue.
  > Question & Answer time
  > Closing: thank your audience for coming and any guests who participated in leading the event. Reiterate what you hoped the audience learned and any next steps they may take to stay engaged in your work and/or the issue.

Step 3: Arrange the event logistics.

• Identify places where you could potentially hold the event and determine dates and times when your target audience would be able to attend. If you are hoping to host the event at the school, figure out whose permission you will need.
• Reserve a location.
  > Possible sites include your school auditorium, cafeteria, or local community center.
  > Make sure that the event space is big enough to accommodate the number of people you are expecting.
  > Consult your teacher and school or site administrators to get permission to hold the event. If requesting space from someone with whom you are not familiar, be sure to introduce yourself, explain your issue and your proposed event, and give specific information about what you are asking.
• Identify event leaders/participants.
  > If holding an assembly or workshop, you need a presenter/facilitator or a group of presenters/facilitators who is comfortable speaking in front of an audience. Consult with your class to decide if a group or group member will give lead the event, or reach out to influencers or coalition partners to see if would be interested and available. Utilize presenters/facilitators with varying backgrounds so that your audience will learn about the issue from multiple viewpoints.
  > If holding a panel, talk with your group to determine who should be a part of the panel. Conduct research or speak with your Democracy Coach or teacher to find possible guest speakers who would offer differing perspectives on your issue or have engaged with the topic in different ways. Also determine who will moderate or host the panel (making introductions, asking questions, etc.).
Tactic Toolkit: Hosting an Assembly/Workshop/Panel

• Invite event leaders/participants, if they are not your classmates or peers, by email, via a phone call, or in-person. In your invitation, be sure to include:
  > An introduction: State who you are, what issue you are working on and why, and what your class’ goal is.
  > An explanation of the event: What is the purpose of the event? What is the agenda? When and where will the event be held? Who is the audience?
  > A clear “ask”: How do you want this person/group to be involved? Why? What will they need to do?
  > Next steps: Share your contact information. When do you need a response by? What additional planning is needed? Thank them for their consideration.

Step 4: Once you have confirmed who will speak at the event, invite your audience.

• Audience members can include classmates or other community members who can engage in a dialogue with your presenter(s).
• Utilize tools such as phone-banking and email campaigns to invite people to the event.
• Raise awareness about the event by posting flyers around your school, neighborhood, and/or city and by utilizing social media. Make a Facebook page for the event and invite friends, classmates, and coalition partners.
• Make sure to reference the topic, time, date, and location of the event on all publicity materials.

Step 5: Prepare for the assembly/workshop/panel.

Go through checklist to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything:

☐ Add details to your original event outline so that all timings are planned, needed materials are listed, and tasks assigned.
☐ One to two days before the event, call to confirm that the location is still available and reserved.
☐ One to two days before the event, confirm with your guest speakers to make sure that they will be able to attend, know the timing and place details, are aware of how they will participate, and are prepared.
  • Make sure that your goals for the event and clear and that your guest speakers understand and share this vision for what the audience will learn.
  • Create and share an event agenda for the speaker(s) which clearly communicates in what order participants will speak and what each will be talking about.
☐ Create pamphlets for the audience so that they have something to walk away from the event with. This pamphlet should include your contact information, relevant online or local resources to learn more, and ways for people to get/stay involved with your issue.
☐ Create a sign-in sheet so that people in the audience can write down their information if they want to be contacted in the future about your cause.

☐ Make an exit survey to poll the audience on their reaction to the event. Ask what people learning during the event, what questions they still have, and for feedback on if the event was well advertised and well organized.

*If you did not check all of the boxes, go through the checklist again and make sure you have completed everything.

**Step 6:** Host the event.

- Arrive early so that you can set up the event before the audience arrives.
- Greet audience members at the door, pass out any materials, direct them to your sign-in sheet, and tell guests where to go/what to do.
- Lead the event according to the outline you created.
  - Get the audience’s attention before beginning. Welcome them again and give a brief introduction to the event, stating its purpose and what you hope the audience will learn.
  - Be sure to introduce all guest speakers.
  - Have a timekeeper to make sure that all sections of the event are running according to plan.
  - At the end of the event, thank the audience for attending. Make sure you thank the speakers for coming and sharing their expertise. Share any next steps that were determined during the course of the event and reiterate resources available to the audience.
  - Distribute, administer, and collect exit surveys.

**Step 7:** Follow up.

- Send thank you notes to each of your speakers and presenters and to people who helped who reserve the space for the event.
- Follow up with people who wrote their information on the sign in sheet with any additional information and resources or upcoming events.
Sample Guest Speaker Invitation

Introduction
Dear Captain Russell,
My name is Robert, and I’m a junior at East Village High School. This semester, one of my classes has been working on a project to foster positive relationships between local community members and the police in the area. Over the past year, we’ve seen a series of unfortunate incidents damage the relationship between the two groups to the point where people don’t feel safe and police aren’t able to effectively do their jobs.

Event Details
We are planning to host a community forum to begin a productive dialogue between community members and police, as a first step in building trust and bolstering reputations. The forum will be held on Wednesday, October 23rd from 6-7pm at our school.

“Ask”
We expect between 60 and 75 community members to attend, including prominent clergy, school administrators, and city councilmen. My class would like to invite you or a colleague from the police department to participate in the forum by presenting current initiatives designed to strengthen relationships with the community, including the Police Athletic League. We think your participation would send a strong message to the community of mutual commitment and dedication to repairing relations.

Next Steps
Please feel free to reach out to me at (555) 555-5555 or robert@eastside.org with questions or thoughts. We are hoping to confirm our speakers’ participation by Friday, October 4th.
Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,
Robert and Ms. Kurzy’s 8th period Civics Class
Sample Event Outline

| Logistics | Community – Police Relations Forum  
| East Village High School  
| Wednesday, October 23rd, 6-7pm |
| (Materials Needed) | Sign-in sheets, pamphlets, surveys, pens, microphone, podium |
| Introduction 6:00-6:15 | (Marian and Jonathen pass out pamphlets at door.)  
| Welcome, Robert  
| Discussing the Problem, Shayna and Liza |
| Content 6:15-6:35 | Police Initiatives, Captain William Russell |
| Q&A, 6:35-6:50 | Moderated by Jessica |
| Closing 6:50-7:00 | Thank you and upcoming events, Omar  
| (Luke and Michelle pass out and collect surveys.) |

Draft Your Own Invitation

| Introduction |
| Event Details |
| “Ask” |
| Next Steps |
### Draft Your Own Event Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logistics</th>
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<td>(Materials Needed)</td>
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<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Content</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Now that you have conducted all of your research, it is time to convince the legislators to act upon your work. A Lobby Day can be a great way of spreading your ideas, mobilizing support, and putting pressure on legislators.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have the ability to travel to the legislators’ offices.
- You want to spread the word about your ideas.
- You have the ability to organize and mobilize a large group.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You haven’t finished your research.
- Your goal is not directly related to the legislators’ work.
- You don’t have enough time.

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**Steps for Organizing a Lobby Day**

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s). Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).
- **Class Goal:**

**Step 2:** Perform Background Research
- **Who**
  - What level of government are we lobbying? Where is this located?
  - Who are some critical legislators?
    - Who can we hope to sway?
    - Who has the power to convince other legislators to vote our way?
    - Who do we have relationships with? Which legislators represent our school’s area or district?
- **When**
  - What is the most ideal date?
    - Before planning logistics, check the legislative calendar and make sure the legislative body is in session! Most state legislatures are not year-round, and are in session for a few months at the start of the calendar year.
  - Are there any major votes coming up?
    - If there are, it is a good idea to hold the lobby day one or two days prior to the vote.
- Be sure to closely follow the status of the legislation!
Step 3: Mobilize support

• School
  o Your school is a great place to start for mobilizing support.
  o Talk to teachers and ask them if you can be excused to participate in a lobby day (field trip)!
  o Contact the PTA at your school and see if they would be willing to advertise the opportunity to the parents.
  o Ask teachers if they want to join and are available to chaperone.
• Coalition
  o See tactic toolkits on organizing a coalition!

Step 3: Plan Your Visit

▪ Schedule meetings with legislators
  o Conduct research to identify your legislators and the legislators that are important to your focus area.
  o Call their offices and ask to schedule a meeting during your lobby day - Ideally, call their office to schedule the meetings at least two or three weeks in advance. Legislators are busy and often have packed schedules!
  o Have several different people schedule meetings to convey the sense of unity on the issue.
  o See toolkits on scheduling meetings with decision-makers for more detailed information.
  o Create a meeting agenda or talking points each person should speak to in the meeting. See toolkit on Hosting a Meeting to learn more about this.
▪ Manage logistics
  o Transportation – How will you arrive at the location?
  o Timing – When will the meetings take place? Will it be during the school day or after?
    ▪ Be sure to put together a master schedule of times and locations of meeting with legislators. Keep in mind the time it will take to travel between and locate offices.
  o Permission – Make sure teachers and other students are aware of the plan and that you will be excused for missing class.
  o Food – Do you have funding to provide food for the group? Or will you be asking participants to bring snacks/lunch?
Communication is key!
- When organizing a large group, it is centrally important that all members have all the information. Individuals lacking important information may not show up, get logistical details wrong, or be unsure of how to convey a clear message.
- Make sure all the members have the information about logistics (timing, transportation, location) and message. You can share this information in-person, over the phone, or by email.
- Before Lobby Day, be sure to have confirmation (whether by email, phone, or in-person) from each participant that they have the necessary information and are planning to attend.
- Prior to Lobby Day, collect participants’ phone numbers so that you are able to get in touch with them quickly on the day of.

Step 5: Attract Media Attention
- See toolkit on how to attract media attention!
- Work with coalitions to utilize their media connections.
- This could be a great place to use a social media strategy (see toolkits).

Step 6: Lobby Day
- Make sure to be on time!
- Check-in with other supporters and make sure that they are prepared and on time.
- Have a clear message that you plan to articulate – stick to the message.
- Be positive throughout the entire process!
- Have fun!

Step 7: After Lobby Day
- Thank the participants!
- Send thank you emails or letters to legislators.
- Use your experience to attract some more media attention! Writing about the experience, sharing pictures, or doing a post-Lobby Day interview are ways to keep furthering your cause.
If used effectively, social media is an excellent way to spread your ideas and raise awareness about your issue. It can also be a great way to collaborate and team up with other advocacy organizations.

People often think the best way of utilizing social media is to create new/independent content; however, this is not usually the most effective way of disseminating information. Instead, you should use social media to partner with advocacy organizations or utilize their followings to promote work you’ve done.

**Use this Tactic if:**
- You have conducted research.
- You are looking to partner with other advocacy organizations.
- You are trying to raise awareness about an issue.

**Do Not Use this Tactic if:**
- You are not trying to publicize information.
- You have not conducted research.
- You are not comfortable with the media being used.

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### Steps for Using an Effective Social Media Strategy

**Step 1:** Review your overall project goal(s) to focus your strategy. Keep in mind your project’s level (national, state, local, school).
- Class Goal:

**Step 2:** Participate in an existing campaign
- Reach out to advocacy organizations to understand what kind of campaigns are being conducted.
  - Look for places where their goals align with yours.
  - Send them a message:
    - Explain who you are.
    - Express your interest to help with their campaign.
    - Ask them what you can do to help.
- If you want to create your own content, send them a message asking what sort of content would be the most effective.
  - Content can include interesting graphics, videos, photos, etc.
**Step 3:** Promote your content

- If you have already completed work, reach out to advocacy organizations and see if they can promote your content.
  - If you’re organizing a lobby day, tweet at the organization and see if they’ll retweet to pass the message on to their followers.
  - Ask if they will feature you on their Facebook pages.
  - If you have photos, ask if they will post one with a description of the work you did on their Instagram.

**Step 4:** Develop a partnership

Show your support for the work of the advocacy organizations!

- **Twitter**
  - Follow the organization on twitter.
  - Retweet when relevant.
    - Helping the organization gain followers can make them more likely to partner with you.
  - Tweet your support for their work.
- **Facebook**
  - Like their page on Facebook.
  - Invite your friends to like their pages.
- **Instagram**
  - Follow them.
  - Like their pictures.

Treat them as experts

- Most advocacy organizations will have their own existing social media strategies.
- Ask them for advice for how to develop your own strategy.
**Examples and Non-Examples**

**Example 1:**
Class has created content detailing their experiences working on a project. Class sends a local advocacy organization an email asking them if they could promote the content on their social media sites.

**Non-Example 1:**
Class is looking to promote their content on social media. Class creates a Twitter page and tweets from it. Twitter page has 20 followers (all members of the class).

**Example 2:**
Class is organizing a lobby day. Class tweets at various advocacy organizations about the lobby day – many of these organizations retweet to promote the event.

**Non-Example 2:**
Class is organizing a lobby day. Class creates a Twitter to promote it. Twitter has only 15 followers.

**Example 3 – Email to Partner with an Organization**

Dear Ms. Buddington,

Hi, I'm Elena, a teacher for Generation Citizen and a student a Brown University. Generation Citizen is a nonprofit that sends young adults into middle and high school classrooms to teach children about advocacy and democracy.

Each semester, the class chooses an action project that they would like to work on. This semester, my class of 6th graders has decided that their action project is to get bill 2356 passed in the Rhode Island Senate, which would improve discharge planning for individuals leaving hospitals after an overdose. The kids think, correctly, that drug abuse in RI is a really big issue, and this bill could potentially save lives.

The kids would like to show their support by creating some type of artistic content to promote the bill – this could be a video, pictures, a letter, etc. I was wondering if RICares would be interested in using our content to promote the issue during their 2016 Legislative Advocacy Day for Recovery on May 17th, or even just to post the content on their website? If so, what kind of content would you prefer?

Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best, Elena
Participating at an outside event can be a great way to connect with likeminded individuals and groups working toward a common goal and to generate attention for your issue. Protests and rallies are two common “outside” events hosted by groups or coalitions.

A protest is an event where an organization vocalizes that they are against an issue, policy, system, or organization. A rally is an event where a group expresses their support for an issue, policy, system, or organization.

Use this Tactic if:
• A coalition partner is planning to host a rally or protest

Do Not Use this Tactic if:
• Extra publicity may damage or negatively impact a relationship with targets

Steps for Participating in an Outside Event

Step 1:
Review your overall project goal(s) so that you keep in mind what you’re working toward.

• Class Goal:
• Target of this Tactic:
• Ask:

Step 2:
Identify an event.

• Find a relevant event by researching organizations whose goals are similar to your own or by staying on top of current events related to your issue. Discover what events other groups are organizing.
• Determine if your class and your action plan would benefit from participating in the event. Ask yourself these questions:
  > What are the goals of the event? Do these align with our own goals?
  > Who is the organization or coalition hosting the event? What is their reputation on this or other issues? Would we benefit from identifying with this group?
  > Who else is participating in the event? What are their reputations on this or other issues? Would we benefit from identifying with these groups?
  > When and where is the event? Is it possible for us to attend?
• If you find an event that supports your goals, strengthens or doesn’t damage your reputation, and is logistically possible for you to attend, move forward.
Step 3: Confirm your participation in the event.

- Communicate with the organization(s) planning the event to verify that your goals are aligned and to figure out how you and your supporters can and should be involved.
- Make any logistical arrangements necessary for you and your supporters to attend the event. For example, you might need to secure permission from parents or school administrators.

Step 4: Gather your supporters. Raise awareness about the event!

- Set up a Facebook page and invite targets to join you at the event.
- Post flyers in your school or around your community.
- Make announcements at meetings and wherever your supporters congregate.
- Use phone-banking, email campaigns and other communication to get your own supporters to the event.
- Make sure to include the purpose, time, date, and location of the event in all communication.

Step 5: Attend the event.

- Stay on message! Make sure you're there to represent your position and do not get distracted by other issues.
- Collect the business cards of representatives of other organizations whose work supports your goals.
- You will be at the event as a representative of your school and of your cause – make sure you act respectfully and responsibly. You can still make your voices heard while adhering to peaceful protesting laws and regulations.

Step 6: Follow up.

- Send a letter or email to thank the organizers of the event.
- Send an email to any potential coalition partners whose information you collected at the event. Determine if you could work together on a future event or if you are looking for additional information about your issue.
- Share pictures, videos, and stories with supporters to sustain enthusiasm for your cause.