

**United States Government Research Assignment**  
***Contemporary Public Issues: An exploration and plan of action***  
**70 Points**

**Goal:** Demonstrate accomplished research and writing skills developed over the course of four years and the level of preparedness necessary for success in college level writing.

**Objectives:**

- demonstrate a clear and well-developed thesis statement
- conduct quality research, expanding on the number and types of resources
- improve and expand on notes and recording sources
- skillfully organize a longer paper and outline
- demonstrate advanced editing and revision skills while building on paragraph length and writing sophistication
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of MLA format and works cited pages
- reflect on the research process

**Assignment:**

**Choose one of the following issues or suggest an alternative (approved by the teacher). Research and explore the background and various positions on the issue with a focus on how the issue has been or is being handled by government, the media, and, if applicable, special interest groups. Explain why it has been treated in such fashion. And, as part of your thesis and paper, propose a plan for addressing the issue or solving the problem that you believe is consistent with Constitutional and/or democratic principles you have learned about in this course. Make sure to state clearly why your solution is better than the alternatives (this requires you to acknowledge and discuss/distinguish other approaches to the issue).**

American flag burning: constitutional amendment

Balanced budget: constitutional amendment

Further limits on presidential campaign spending

Federal government “bailout” of the financial industry

Term limits for members of Congress

Constitutional Amendments defining marriage

Deny automatic citizenship to children of illegal immigrants: constitutional amendment

Ban all abortions

Censor hate speech

Censor pornography of the Internet

Marijuana legalization

Mandatory day care provisions sponsored by the government or by the employer

Legalize assisted suicide for the terminally ill

Mandatory AIDS testing with application for a marriage license

Minority preference for college admission or job placement

Death penalty prohibition amendment

Privacy rights and drug testing of high school athletes

Require prisoners to perform hard labor and limit access to amenities like cable television, exercise facilities and the Internet  
Nationally sponsored health care program  
Ban all gun ownership  
Adoption by same sex couples  
Homosexuals in the armed forces  
Sealed adoption records regardless off the wishes or needs of the child  
U.S. economic embargo against Cuba  
U.S. plan to reduce global warming  
Trade barriers to protect American jobs  
Revoke China's "most favored nation" trade status

**Questions to ask yourself:**

- Why is the issue a matter of public concern?
- How are the needs of society involved?
- How are individual rights involved?
- Is this issue surrounded by much controversy? Why or why not?
- What is the background/history of this issue?
- When has it been of greatest interest to society and why?
- What, if any, are the moral or ethical ramifications of this issue?
- What interest groups have taken sides on the issue?
- What are their arguments?
- What are the consequences of implementing each side's position?
- How has the government – National or States – responded to the issue in terms of policy? Which branches have been most active and why?
- How have the courts dealt with the issue (dates, cases, decisions)?
- What elected officials have taken a position on the issue? What is it? Why?

**Essay requirements:**

- 8 page minimum, *excluding* the title page and works cited page
- Body paragraphs must demonstrate sufficient development and exploration of their topic
- double-spaced, 12 pt. font, standard margins
- MLA format, including parenthetical citations
- Final draft will be turned in with all pre-writing materials, including notes, outline, and drafts
- Minimum of fifteen cited sources
  - 8 database articles, minimum, including three newspaper articles
  - 5 book sources, minimum
  - 2 web sources, minimum
  - included in the work cited must be at least 2 primary source documents

**Deadlines:**

- Notecards reflecting required sources with correct MLA citations (10 pts.): \_\_\_\_\_

- Outline including refined thesis statement, topic sentences, concrete details and commentary. Does not require full sentences. (10 pts.): \_\_\_\_\_
- Rough draft of complete paper (15 pts.): \_\_\_\_\_
- Final draft reflecting all corrections (35 pts.): \_\_\_\_\_

*10 points will be deducted from your final grade if all work is not turned in with the final draft (notecards, outline, rough drafts).*

*Late work is not accepted. If you miss a deadline, you lose the corresponding points.*

*The rubric by which your paper will be graded is included in this packet. It is in your best interest to review this.*