

## EXPLORING KEY ISSUES

**Objectives/Goals for Students:** Students will understand and appreciate the different issues facing our country and the World as a whole. Students will read and analyze information, conduct further research, and explore additional information they can discuss, write about, or share. This activity can be modified for different age levels and courses.

**Standard(s) Covered:** Suggested alignment for different grades and courses

<http://www.generationnation.org/index.php/learn/entry/election-2016-resources#tips>

**Teacher: Thomas Bogucki**

### Resources Used

Your own issue chart (attached)

Issues information (attached)

Candidate guide and Rate the Candidates sheets

<http://www.generationnation.org/index.php/learn/entry/election-2016-resources#debates>

### Anticipatory Set

When the students enter the classroom I will have a list of key issues on the board. I will then ask the students to pick three of these issues that matter most to them. They will write down the three and also why they matter. The students can also pick issues not on the list as well. After the students have picked their top three, they will then turn to a partner and they will share what they have written.

Suggested issues:

Civil Rights

Economy and jobs

Education

Environment and Energy

Firearms/2nd Amendment

Foreign relations

Immigration

National security

Social Issues

Taxes

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## Procedures

This lesson can be connected to the election or any time of the year.

### Election

- Have students read about/discuss issues in general. You can assign the whole list or one issue per student or group.
- Have the students fill out the candidate issue chart. They will choose the issues and write where the candidates stand on their issues.
- Students may use GenerationNation's student candidate guide identify the candidate's stance on the issues and find resources for further research.
- The students can then create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast their own views on issues with that of the candidates.

### Non-election

- If you wish to keep it broad and not focus on the election, you can have the students complete the research on their top three issues or even their most important issue.
- They will fill out the issue chart as a way to collect information.
- Have the students find information on the issue(s), using the chart, and write an essay explaining the importance of their top issues as well as solutions some people have created or their even the students own solutions.
- The students can also present their solutions to the class as well.

## For further research/closure

Assign students the task of finding at least one of the following related to an issue

- News article
- Editorial/opinion piece
- Historic or global event that connects to it
- Candidate or official speaking about it (video from speech, debate, interview, etc.)
- Level of government working on it
- Legislation or policy related to issue

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## WHERE DO YOU STAND ON THE ISSUES?

Issues	Where do you stand on the issue?	How issue impacts young people

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# KEY ISSUES IN ELECTION 2016



## Key issues in Election 2016 include

- Civil Rights
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Firearms/2nd Amendment
- Foreign Relations
- Immigration
- National Security
- Social Issues
- Taxes

## LEARNING ABOUT THE KEY ISSUES

**CIVIL RIGHTS** provide citizens the right to political and social freedom and equality. Different levels of government create, regulate, and enforce policies and laws related to civil rights. These range from national laws protecting individual rights related to voting, housing, education, and employment to local agencies, such as police departments, who must fairly carry out laws at the local level. Race relations, criminal justice, equality, and opportunity are connected to civil rights.

The **ECONOMY** is the wealth and resources of a country or region including the production and consumption of goods and services. The economy is a top issue in most elections. Officials at different levels of government work to build, carefully manage, and strengthen the economy and increase the numbers of jobs available to citizens. Citizens help the economy in many ways including producing and buying goods and services and creating, operating, expanding or working for businesses.

# KEY ISSUES IN ELECTION 2016



**EDUCATION** is the process of receiving or giving instruction through educational systems, such as universities and community colleges for young (or older) adults and public, charter, religious, independent, and home schools for K-12 students. Officials at different levels of government are responsible for building, funding, and overseeing schools. Education issues include what and how core subjects are taught, collecting and using data on school performance, ensuring equal access to education, and providing every student with access to higher education.

The **ENVIRONMENT** includes the air, water, soil, trees, plants, animals, weather, and natural resources. Issues related to the environment include how natural resources are protected and preserved, for example through parks and wildlife preserves, and used, such as cutting trees to clear land for homes or to make paper. Governments make and regulate laws and policies related to how environmental resources are protected and used. This can create political conflict.

The right to own **FIREARMS**, or guns, is protected by the **Second Amendment** of the United States Constitution. "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Different levels of government make laws and policies related to gun ownership and use. A local government may issue and maintain gun permits. State laws regulate where a citizen may carry or his or her gun. Federal laws protect the rights of citizens to use and buy guns. Gun ownership and gun control are frequent political issues.

**FOREIGN RELATIONS** is the management of relationships and dealings between two countries. Any results of foreign policy dealings and decisions can be considered foreign relations. Countries use diplomacy to work together to solve problems, help people, fight enemies, build economies, produce and sell goods or services, make scientific discoveries, address natural disasters such as earthquakes, find and utilize energy sources, and in other ways. Some foreign relationships may be strong, some may be weak, some may be centuries-old, and some may be new. Changes in global issues impact foreign relations.

# KEY ISSUES IN ELECTION 2016



**IMMIGRATION** means the act of coming to live permanently in a foreign country. Immigration policies determine how people may enter a country, who may do so, and what a person needs to do to legally live and work there. Federal officials create and enforce most immigration policies. Officials at state and local levels are impacted by federal laws and sometimes enact their own immigration policies. An example of this is a state university policy for children of immigrants.

The **NATIONAL SECURITY** of a country means it is free from danger or threat including national crisis or disaster, war, or terrorism. National security policies and efforts ensure that the nation is in control of its own government, people, and future. The military builds strength to uses armed forces to protect the people and interests of a country against enemies. Enemies include foreign countries as well as terrorists who use violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims.

Different topics are included in **SOCIAL ISSUES**, and impact people who live in a society. Social issues include problems and solutions related to people in need due to homelessness, health care, drug use, poverty, discrimination, unemployment, and other challenges or are special populations such as senior citizens, veterans, children, minorities, and LGBT. Different levels of government create laws and policies to address social issues.

**TAXES** are required payments to the government based on income, property, or the cost of certain goods and services. Government is funded through taxes paid by citizens. When governments wish to add or expand services for the people, officials must decide to either increase taxes to collect more money or use the same amount of money by reducing funding from one service to add to another one.