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YOUTH LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Phase II: Research for National E-Congress
Research Guide

As you work online, use this guide to navigate the pages of the Research Phase of e-Congress. This Research Guide is designed to help you keep track of all of the information you gather as you prepare to write your bill. Ask your teacher whether you will be required to turn in your Research Guide.

SECTION 1 – TOPIC RESEARCH

1) Which topic from the list on Page 2 most interests you? Why?

2) Click on this topic to pull up a *Topic Resource Guide* that will help you research your topic. Read the political cartoons and select one to analyze.

    a) List two symbols used by the cartoonist. Explain what each symbol means.

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       *

    b) Would you describe the cartoonist's political ideology as liberal or conservative? Why?

    c) What point is the cartoonist trying to make?

3) Next, look over the list of websites listed in the *Topic Resource Guide*. Select at least three websites that seem interesting to you. For each of the three sites, complete the information below. Notes from additional sites can go on a separate sheet of paper.

Website 1

    a) name and address of site

    b) notes and useful information from this site

    c) ideology of site (liberal, conservative, unbiased)

Website 2

   a) name and address of site

   b) notes and useful information from this site

   c) ideology of site (liberal, conservative, unbiased)

Website 3

   a) name and address of site

   b) notes and useful information from this site

   c) ideology of site (liberal, conservative, unbiased)

SECTION 2 – POLITICAL PARTY RESEARCH

1) When considering what type of bill you will write, remember that it is important to consider your own political ideology. Use the links on your *Topic Resource Guide* to read how each party approaches your topic. Fill in the information below.

Republican Party

   a) This party's positions on my topic include:

   b) I agree/disagree with this party's position on my topic because:

Democratic Party

   a) This party's positions on my topic include:

   b) I agree/disagree with this party's position on my topic because:

Green Party
      a) This party's positions on my topic include:

      b) I agree/disagree with this party's position on my topic because:

Libertarian Party
      a) This party's positions on my topic include:

      b) I agree/disagree with this party's position on my topic because:

SECTION 3 - IDENTIFYING CURRENT LEGISLATION

1) On Page 4, you are asked to review legislation currently under consideration by Members of Congress in the House of Representatives and in the Senate.

2) Use Thomas (www.thomas.loc.gov) to identify two recent bills on your topic. Fill in the information about each below.

Bill 1
      a) bill title

      b) sponsors (authors)

      c) this bill proposes:

Bill 2
      a) bill title

      b) sponsors (authors)

      c) this bill proposes:

SECTION 4 – LEGISLATION AND THE CONSTITUTION

1) Click the "Constitutional Issues" link on Page 5 to view a list of web resources that will help you identify any potential conflicts between a bill you might write and the Constitution. Select at least two websites for your research. For each of the two sites, complete the information below.

Website 1
       a) name and address of site

       b) important Supreme Court cases involving my topic

       c) sections of the Constitution relating to my topic

       d) I think that my bill would (or would not) conflict with the Constitution because:

Website 2
       a) name and address of site

       b) important Supreme Court cases involving my topic

       c) sections of the Constitution relating to my topic

       d) I think that my bill would (or would not) conflict with the Constitution because:

Section 5- REFINING IDEAS FOR LEGISLATION

1) Now that you have had a chance to take an in-depth look at an issue that interests you, complete each of the statements below to help you decide what type of bill you will write:

       a) I <u>agree</u> with the federal government's current approach to the issue that interests me because:

       b) I <u>disagree</u> with the federal government's current approach to the issue that interests me because:

       c) What I would like to better understand about this issue is:

       d) My ideas for a bill are different from what the government is currently doing because:

2) Use the space below to list your ideas for a bill you might write for e-Congress. What might be two positive consequences of each idea? Two negative consequences?

Idea #1:

Positive Consequences:

Negative Consequences:

Idea #2:

Positive Consequences:

Negative Consequences:

Idea #3:

Positive Consequences:

Negative Consequences:

3) Which of the ideas above is most appealing to you? Explain why you like this idea and how you might be able to eliminate the negative consequences of a bill like this.

SECTION 6 – CONTACTING A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

On Page 6 you will find suggestions for how to write to a Member of Congress. Ask your teacher whether you and your classmates will be writing letters or emails, or whether the decision is yours to make.

SECTION 7 – UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Refer to pages 7-10 to help you answer the questions below.

1) Page 8 of the Research Phase says, "to create a new program, the government normally gets the money either by cutting funds to an existing program OR by raising taxes." How will you pay for your bill?

2) After reviewing Page 9, explain whether your bill's spending will be *discretionary* or *mandatory.*

3) Does your bill fit into a currently funded project or would it require cutting current spending?

4) To implement a bill, the government usually needs to buy equipment and materials (computers, automobiles, office supplies) and pay for services (workers' salaries). What are four examples of equipment, materials, and/or services that would be necessary for your bill?

Item   **How Item Will Be Used**
a)

b)

c)

d)

5) The equipment, materials, and labor you described above cost money. For each item, brainstorm ideas for how you might determine its cost. What websites could you use? What organizations inside or outside the government might be able to help you?

Item   **Where to Look to Determine Cost of Item**
a)

b)

c)

d)