

The Justice Project



The Rationale (the “why”):
What is the point in learning all about injustice if we never do anything to address the wrongs in this world? You should be able to stand up and use your voice and your actions to make your community a safer, healthier, and happier place. This project will help you practice just that. Imagine the possibilities!

Think of an issue that matters to you. Imagine that you could create your own non-profit organization to address this problem. You have a fundraising team, a group of workers, people who work on publicity and outreach, etc. What would you do to address your chosen issue?

- What we’ll do together to prepare you for this big work:**
- 1. Explore applying real-world solutions to the social problems we’ve encountered in our writing.
 - 2. Learn about the most effective ways to research sources online.
 - 3. Practice writing a solid argumentative paper, including a counterclaim.
 - 4. Translate your arguments and research into a presentation for your classmates.

Culminating Activity
Present your ideas in a creative, engaging way to your classmates.

Steps and Check-in Dates

Check-Ins.....	Due Dates
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization Draft.....	Mon., Feb. 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Counterclaim Practice.....	Fri., Feb. 7
<input type="checkbox"/> Sources: MLA Works Cited.....	Fri., Feb. 14
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft One.....	Fri., Feb. 21
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Conference & Feedback.....	Mon./Tues., Feb. 24.-25
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Aid Workshop--Materials Check-In.....	Wed./Thurs., Feb. 26-27
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Two.....	Mon./Tues., Mar. 2-3
<input type="checkbox"/> Peer Reflections.....	Wed./Thurs., Mar. 4-5
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentations.....	Wed./Thurs., Mar. 4-5

Draft your non-profit organization. Create your non-profit on paper.

- Pick a name and create a logo.
- Make a mission statement.

Write a six-paragraph paper.

1. **Pick an issue.** Make sure it's school-appropriate and suits your ethics and values.
2. **Choose your problem, and then study it in depth.** This will become the background of your introduction. You will need three reliable sources, including at least one other non-profit organization's website
3. **Overall, how could you solve this problem?** This will be your thesis/claim.
4. **What are three specific actions you could take to improve this issue?** You'll write a body paragraph for each. These need to be actions, not ideas.
5. **What would those who disagreed with you argue?** Give them a counterclaim and then explain why they are wrong. Follow the format you will learn in class.

Present your work.

- **Create a visual aid that best reflects your chosen issue.** For example, if you are creating an organization that encourages children's literacy, make a children's book to read to the class. If you're creating a food bank, make a menu of items that might be served in your kitchen along with their nutrition facts. BE CREATIVE.

Some of these are issues you might want to consider.

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| ● Hunger | ● Homelessness | ● Prenatal care |
| ● Literacy | ● Refugee rights | ● Animal rights |
| ● Incarceration | ● Education | ● Underemployment |
| ● Nutrition | ● Women's rights | ● Arts education |
| ● Medical care | ● Racial equality | ● Children's services |
| ● Transportation | ● Gender equality | ● Interfaith outreach |
| ● Environmental issues | ● Eating disorders | ● Or be creative! |

Non-Profit Organization Draft.....Mon., Feb. 3

Did you...

- ☐ Think hard about what you want to write and research?
- ☐ Look at the example page to help guide your writing?
- ☐ Look at other non-profit websites to help guide your writing?
- ☐ Use your OWN WORDS? Copying and pasting is plagiarism.
- ☐ Complete the worksheet in the packet?
- ☐ Follow the prompts in the mission statement section of the worksheet?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Counterclaim Practice.....Fri., Feb. 7

Did you...

- ☐ Take notes on how to write a counterclaim during the whole group lesson?
- ☐ Request a small group lesson if you needed support writing?
- ☐ Complete the practice worksheet passed out in class?
- ☐ Correct anything the teacher or your classmates pointed out as needing revision?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Sources: MLA Works Cited.....Fri., Feb. 14

Did you...

- ☐ Find at least three reliable sources for your paper?
- ☐ Read through your sources thoroughly to make sure they will help you write your paper?
- ☐ Use at least one non-profit website that has a mission similar to your non-profit's?
- ☐ Type the sources up in MLA format on a Works Cited page?
- ☐ Organize the sources alphabetically?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Draft One.....Fri., Feb. 21

Did you...

- ☐ Complete an introduction, including a background describing the problem and a thesis/claim +3?
- ☐ Write three body paragraphs agreeing with your thesis?
- ☐ Write one counterclaim before the conclusion?
- ☐ Quote your sources at least once in each body paragraph?
- ☐ Introduce your sources?
- ☐ Include transitions?
- ☐ Write a solid conclusion?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Teacher Conference & Feedback.....Mon./Tues., Mar. 24.-25

Did you...

- ☐ Type your paper in MLA format, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced?
- ☐ Include your name, teacher, class, and due date on the upper left-hand side of your paper?
- ☐ Center your title?
- ☐ Revise your work to score well on the AIR test rubric: grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization?
- ☐ Revise your work to include appropriate academic tone?
- ☐ Include the Works Cited sheet on the last page of the paper?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Visual Aid Workshop--Materials Check-In.....Wed./Thurs., Mar. 26-27

Did you...

- ☐ Consider your chosen topic and select a visual aid/presentation tool that reflects your topic?
- ☐ Consider the following ideas: a short film, a children's book, a newsletter, a mural, a comic book, a presentation board, an in-character acting monologue, etc.?
- ☐ Come to class prepared with materials?
- ☐ Work diligently during the entire class period dedicated to workshop time?
- ☐ Contribute to a productive working environment?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Draft Two.....Mon./Tues., Mar. 2-3

Did you...

- ☐ Meet with the teacher to discuss your writing?
- ☐ Ask questions about any uncertainties you might have in your writing?
- ☐ Ask for examples when you need them?
- ☐ Plan ahead so that you will complete your writing on time with the support you will need?
- ☐ Reflect upon your writing goals, your strengths, and your targeted areas of improvement?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Peer Reflections.....Wed./Thurs., Mar. 4-5

Did you...

- ☐ Pay respectful attention to the work of classmates?
- ☐ Offer support to classmates and create a positive environment where peers feel comfortable presenting work? Help classmates when possible?
- ☐ Reflect thoughtfully on the work of specific classmates?
- ☐ Write reflections that reveal depth and effort?

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Presentations.....Wed./Thurs., Mar. 4-5

Did you...

- ☐ Come to class prepared and on time with your work and your materials?
- ☐ Set up and take down quickly according to the guidelines set in class?
- ☐ Speak clearly and respectfully when presenting to your classmates?
- ☐ Meet the time requirement of five minutes in presenting?
- ☐ Present at least three times?
- ☐ Present something engaging and thoughtful? "Sell" your ideas to your classmates?
- ☐ Present a finished, neat, thoughtful visual aid/presentation tool that reflects sincere effort.

Teacher initials: _____ **Teacher date:** _____

Purpose, Focus, & Organization		Evidence and Explanation		Conventions of Standard English	
Focused essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong thesis + 3 • Organized structure • Transitions used • A clear introduction and conclusion • A clear counterclaim • Appropriate tone • Logical progression of ideas 	4	Thorough and convincing support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced evidence • Precise references to sources • Variety of explanations • Clear ideas • Specific, good, high school vocabulary • Varied sentence structure 	4	Command of basic English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling 	2
Mostly focused essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A controlled idea/thesis statement • Some loosely related material • Adequate use of transitional strategies • Clear progression of ideas • A clear introduction and conclusion • Mostly clear counterclaim 	3	Mostly convincing support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally introduced evidence from sources • References may be general or not precise • Adequate use of explanation. • A mix of precise and general language • Appropriate vocabulary • Some varied sentence structure 	3	Partial command of basic English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling 	1
Somewhat focused essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focused idea/thesis statement but it becomes lost or unclear in the essay • Inconsistent use of transitionals • Ideas do not flow • Basic introduction or conclusion • Fuzzy or incomplete counterclaim 	2	Uneven, brief support/evidence for the thesis and partial use of sources, facts, and details. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakly introduced evidence • Missing or poorly completed citations • Repetitive analysis of quotes • Some childish vocabulary with simple sentences 	2	Lack of command of basic English: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent and severe errors • Meaning is difficult to understand. 	0
Limited focus in the essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusing ideas • Few transitional strategies • Frequent random ideas that hurt understanding • Much too short to show focus or organization • Missing counterclaim 	1	Poor support/evidence for thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal, incorrect, or random evidence or citations • Unclear, confusing ideas • Limited or inappropriate language or vocabulary • Simple sentences 	1		
Unacceptable work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank, show a written refusal to answer, or consist of random keystroke characters 	0	No support/evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only direct copy of part of the reading selection • No citations from the source 	0		

- Include only bullet points
- Include no transitional strategies

- No relevant vocabulary
- No evidence from the support material(s)

Name: _____ Block: _____ **Non-Profit Organization Draft**

EXAMPLE

Mission Statement	Organization Name
<p>The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.</p> <p>Founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer and best-selling author of <i>Just Mercy</i>, EJI is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We work with communities that have been marginalized by poverty and discouraged by unequal treatment, and we are committed to changing the narrative about race in America.</p> <p>EJI is dedicated to helping the poor, the incarcerated, and the condemned. We provide legal assistance to innocent death row prisoners, confront abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aid children prosecuted as adults.</p> <p>EJI is actively engaged in a campaign to recognize the victims of lynching by collecting soil from lynching sites, erecting historical markers, and creating</p>	Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
	Logo
	

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_____Block:_____Non-Profit Organization Draft

Mission Statement	Organization Name
<p>_____ is committed to</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ is also dedicated to</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>The organization was founded in _____</p> <p>by _____, who is a</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>We provide _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<div></div> <div>Logo</div> <div></div>

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Name:_____Block:_____

How to Write a Counterclaim

Other Side (They say....)	Counterclaim topic sentence: <i>Some say that/critics argue that/others disagree and claim that...</i>	
	Introduce Source of Other Side (author, title, date, etc.):	
	Evidence of Other Side (quote source of the other side):	Page Number (if available) ().
	Explain What Other Side Thinks (whatever the other side thinks):	
Your Side (Back to the Thesis/Claim)	Turn (back to your argument and explain why the arguments of the other side are wrong: <i>However...</i>	
	Introduce Source (author, title, date, etc.):	
	Evidence (quote source of the other side):	Page Number (if available) ().
	Explain:	

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Name: _____ Block: _____ Peer Reflection

Directions: Choose two classmates from each presentation session. Reflect on their work.

Presenter's Name	What do you admire about the presenter's work? Be very specific?	What productive suggestions do you have for improvement?
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