

**Birmingham City Schools
National Issues Forums in the Classroom**

Lesson Plans

Introduction

The first step in preparing for a National Issues Forum is to teach the NIF Guidelines for conducting a public forum. A discussion of the NIF Guidelines is important to set the tone for a deliberation which is not a debate. Teachers may design creative ways to review the guidelines, i.e. ask students to list important rules for a public discussion, and then compare their rules with the NIF Guidelines; or, ask students in small groups to explain why each NIF guideline is important in a public discussion. Before beginning this process, the teacher should read the entire NIF Binder to develop a clear picture of the deliberation process and the main focus for the lesson.

Secondly, students should choose an issue for deliberation. They may use an issue featured in a NIF issue book, or your class may decide on its own forum issue. Creating your own issue does require experience with the NIF deliberation process. Please know, whichever route your class takes, the strength of the forum is in the deliberation itself – the issue you choose is secondary. Choosing an issue that is of interest to your students is important to motivating student engagement in the process.

LESSON PLAN
Illegal Drugs: What Should We Do Now?

Teacher: Givan, Linda

School: Jackson-Olin High School

Date: TBA

Grade: 10th

Subject: United States History

Period:

Standards: (Alabama Course of Study) Describe the political system of the United States based on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

AHSGE (Alabama High School Graduation Exam) Standards: Identify and evaluate the impact of American social and political reform and the emergence of a distinct culture.

National Standards:

- I - Culture
- II - Time, Continuity, Change
- III - People, Places, and Environments
- V - Individuals, Groups & Institutions
- VI - Power, Authority, Governance
- VII - Production, Distribution, & Consumption
- IX - Global Connections

Objective: Students will identify the impact of illegal drugs in the United States

Big Picture Question: How can the attitudes about illegal drugs be engaged on the National, State, and Local level?

Materials: National Issues Forums Book, NIF Posters, Pre-Forum Questionnaires, Post-Forum Questionnaires, charts and graphs listed throughout NIF Issue Book, James Brown (song/lyrics) 'King Heroin', time line (A Century of Drug Use and Drug Policy) political cartoon (Policing the drug trade) art supplies (i.e. butcher paper, markers, tape, etc.,) LCD Projector, Overhead Transparencies or ELMO, Newspaper articles relating to illegal drugs.

Preparing for the Forum: (Introduction/Motivation) (Day 1) (1) Students will listen to James Brown song 'King Heroin', after the song is over students will write a brief summary of what they think the song's intentions are for the listener. Students will discuss in large group the consequences of using Heroin. **(2) Introduction: Illegal Drugs-What Should We Do Now?** Teacher will use a framework for discussion to promote the following statement: "One in two Americans have a drug problem or knows someone who does. And now, after declining for years, teenage drug use – mostly of marijuana – has doubled since 1992". Increasing frustration with the illegal drug problem is fueling public discussions about the effectiveness of the nation's anti-drug efforts. **(3)** This introduction will give students a better prior knowledge about the effects of illegal drugs on the national, state, and local level.

Introduce Issue: Provide Context/Guidelines/Student Roles/Pre-Forum Questionnaire) (Day 2)
(1) Students will be given **Pre-Forum Questionnaires** to fill out about their thoughts and feelings on the issue of illegal drugs. **(2)** after completing the ballots students will gather in Cooperative Groups based upon Multiple Intelligences design to read and analyze each of the following

summaries. **Choice 1: Step up Enforcement to finish the job. Choice 2: Change Attitudes about Illegal Drugs. Choice 3: Treat Substance Abuse as an illness.** (3) Every student in each group will be given a copy of the time line entitled 'A Century of Drug Use and Drug Policy' to reference within the group and it will be a useful tool to use with homework. (4) The teacher will guide the students within each group about established guidelines of NIF and the student roles in the deliberation process. (5) The group leader can be chosen by other group members or by the teacher, the group leader will also determine the recorder for each group. (6) the group leader will lead the group through the process of **In Support/In Opposition** of choices 1-3. These handouts allow the students to become more in-depth with each of the three choices, students will understand their own biases or in favorite of among the three choices. The teacher will guide the discussion within each group to reflect already established classroom rules, and NIF Guidelines.

Deliberating the Choices: (Forum) (Day 3-4) (1) The day of deliberation is finally here! The class will take only five minutes to agree upon a moderator, and a recorder for the deliberation. (2) The moderator will start by stating the following: The issue book presents three general approaches to revising the nation's drug policies. Each approach has its cadre of advocates and architects claiming their approach to address the nation's drug problem more effectively. Each approach would certainly generate predictable and unpredictable costs, tradeoffs, and risks. In comparing the three approaches, it may help to consider the following discussion points:

- **How do the choices define the drug problem?**
- **What can be done?**
- **What role should the government play?**
- **What's an important risk posed by each choice?**
- **What are some likely tradeoffs?**
- **Could we combine elements of the three choices?**

(3) There is the understanding that all students are abreast of the three summary choices before the deliberation begins. Each group's leader will act as recorder, listing key points covered during the deliberation, and making sure everyone is given a chance to speak. The teacher must remain objective throughout the deliberations process. For homework students will identify three questions from **Where Do We Go from Here!**

Content Identifiers: (ID's / Vocabularies): deliberation; forum; illegal drugs; confront; perspectives;

Priority; trafficking; experiment; destructive; socially; epidemic; reforms; government; estimate;

Summary and Reflection: (what have you learned? /Post-Forum Questionnaire): (Day 5)

students will refer back to their time line **A Century of Drug Use and Drug Policy** as a quick review of the last two days of deliberation. After finishing the time line, students will discuss as a large group the three questions in which Americans confronts some tough questions about Illegal Drugs- Where do we go from here! Hopefully students will come to understand that NIF Forums can be used with any class, any subject and any issue. Therefore students should leave with an enduring understanding that every individual is entitled to his/her opinions and every individual will have different perspectives, choices, or concerns about various issues that can be deliberated in a NIF forums format.

Extension Activities: (What do you plan to do, i.e. PTA presentations, deliberate with other classes, etc. /After the forum): Students will request the presence of the Principal to participate in a classroom NIF forum on issues such as: Cafeteria lunches; dress code; pep rally; etc., **In Support/In Opposition** of issues listed above.

Assessment Strategies: **(1)** The teacher will inform students that they will complete the **Post-Forum Questionnaires**. The Post- Forum Questionnaires will indicate whether the students' opinions on the issue have changed from their Pre-Forum response. **(2)** Students will create a rubric to evaluate the performance and participation of the moderator, recorder, themselves, peers, and the forum. Students performance

will also be assessed using homework, class-work assignments that is listed throughout NIF Issue Book. Additionally, students will also be evaluated by how well they analyzed each choice, provide support for each choice, and identified the tradeoffs and other implications of the choice.

Rubric: <http://edtech.kennesaw.edu/intech/rubrics.htm>