



## Questioning Societal and Governmental Priorities

**Age:** Secondary

**Level:** B1-B2

**Global Knowledge or Global Attitudes and Action:** Global Attitudes and Action

**Standard for Learning Outcome:** Student is encouraged to actively question societal or governmental priorities, whether national or global, in the context of global issues and challenges and the need to address these.

**Learning Outcome:** S.D2.S6.LO1 Question societal or governmental priorities and articulate personal viewpoint

**Standard for Global Skill:** Student acquires the skills to be a questioning citizen.

**Global Skill:** S.D3.S4.LO4 Evaluate decisions critically

**Sustainable Development Goals:** 4: Quality Education, 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

### Part 1 (15 mins)

Before starting task, pre-teach the words *commemorate* (to remember and celebrate a particular event or person from the past), *budget* (the amount of money a person or an organization has to spend on something), and *offensive* (unpleasant or insulting, and likely to make people upset or embarrassed).

Elicit celebrations that happen during the year in your town, city, or country. Ask students how important they think it is to celebrate these days. Then ask how they feel if the city or town council spends a lot of money from the annual budget on these celebrations. Are they for or against this idea?

- A.** Ask students to read the instructions and the quotes. Have them circle FOR if the person is for the plan or AGAINST if the person is against the plan. Check answers with the class.

**Answer Key: 1. AGAINST 2. FOR 3. FOR 4. FOR 5. AGAINST 6. AGAINST**

- B.** Divide the class in pairs. Have students discuss other reasons for or against the city council's plans and add them to the chart. Monitor, helping with ideas and vocabulary where necessary. Elicit your students' ideas.

#### Answer Key: Possible answers

**FOR:** It's good to remember events, especially historical ones, so that we learn about the past.

It's important to remember people who have made a difference to our country's history.

Events like this are fun. Most people enjoy getting together to celebrate.

Special events give people something to look forward to throughout the year and are a change from the everyday routine.

**AGAINST:** It's important to celebrate events from other countries and cultures too, especially in areas with diverse populations.

The money for such events could be spent on other, more important, things such as health and education that affect everyone.

Some people don't want to be reminded of events from the past because they have painful memories of them.

- C.** Elicit popular celebrations in your city, town, or country. Elicit the kinds of things the city or town council spends money on for the celebration (e.g. fireworks, food stalls, a parade). Have students work in pairs. Student A will be for the celebration. Student B will be against it. Give students a few minutes to discuss their positions and reasons. Point out that they can use the reasons in activities A and B or their own ideas.

Elicit some of the ideas they discussed. Ask students if they are generally for or against spending money on local celebrations.

### Part 2 (20 mins)

- A.** Explain to students that they will now look at how governments make decisions about how to spend money. Tell them that they will read an email memo with information about how a city government plans to spend its education budget. Give students a few minutes to read the memo and check comprehension of any unfamiliar words. Then give them a few minutes to check the things they agree with in the checkboxes. Ask if, in general, they agree with the government's plans.



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- B.** Divide the class into pairs. Have them order the items in the list based on what they think is important. Make sure students give reasons for their decisions. Monitor closely, checking that students are listening to each other and working together.
- C.** Ask pairs to form a group of four with another pair. Have them decide on the top five priorities as a group. When they have finished, elicit their ideas.

**Part 3 (15 mins)**

- A.** Ask students if they know what a *manned mission to Mars* is (a group of people traveling to Mars to study it). Ask if they can estimate when NASA plans to do this (at some point in the 2030s). Give students a few minutes to read the article. Explain any unfamiliar vocabulary. Elicit whether they would like to travel to Mars and give reasons.
- B.** Divide the class into pairs. Have students talk about whether the government should spend 80–100 billion dollars on a manned mission to Mars. Make sure students give reasons and write them down. Elicit ideas from the class.

**Extension**

- A.** Put students in groups of four and have them read the instructions. Explain that two of them will play the roles of students from their school who are against the mission, and two of them are NASA scientists who are for the mission. Point out that they may have to argue from a point of view that they don't agree with. Have students prepare short presentations giving reasons to support the point of view. Encourage them to anticipate arguments that the other pair might have and prepare counter-arguments. Give them time to research ideas online or review the ideas in this worksheet.

- B.** Have students role-play their 10-minute meeting. Explain that each pair will have the following times to present their ideas:

- Step 1: Students A and B present their arguments. (3 minutes)
- Step 2: Students C and D present their arguments. (3 minutes)
- Step 3: Students A and B present their counter-arguments. (2 minutes)
- Step 3: Students C and D present their counter-arguments. (2 minutes)

Monitor their discussions, making sure they are following the instructions.

- C.** Have students tell the class what they discussed and what they learned from the discussion. Provide the following questions as prompts:

1. Did you have to argue from a point of view that you didn't agree with? Was it easy or difficult?
2. Was each pair understanding of the other pair's ideas or arguments?
3. Did either pair change their opinions? If so, why?

Tell students to write a short summary of what they have learned and share it to the class.