



Secondary

## Questioning Societal and Governmental Priorities

### Part 1

**A. The city council has decided to hold a special celebration to commemorate an important event in your country's history. It will cost a lot of money. Read six people's opinions of the city council's decision. Are they for or against the plans? Circle *FOR* or *AGAINST*.**

1. "A lot of people my age aren't really interested in remembering events from the past. It's much better to look to the future."

FOR / AGAINST

2. "It's essential that we celebrate our history. Our history is what makes us who we are today."

FOR / AGAINST

3. "I can't wait. I like any excuse to get together and have fun!"

FOR / AGAINST

4. "Events like these remind us that we're part of a wider community. They connect us."

FOR / AGAINST

5. "It's important to remember that not everyone shares the same history or culture. I find it quite offensive, actually."

FOR / AGAINST

6. "It's a complete waste of time, effort, and money, in my opinion. Aren't there more important things to spend our limited budget on?"

FOR / AGAINST



**B. In pairs, discuss other possible reasons *FOR* or *AGAINST* the plans. Add them to the chart.**


FOR	AGAINST

**C. Work in pairs. Think of a popular celebration in your city, town, or country. Student A, is for the celebration. Student B, is against the celebration. Discuss your opinion of the celebration and give reasons. You can use the ideas from activities A and B.**



Part 2

A. The email memo below lists possible ways for a city government to spend its education budget. Read the list. Check (✓) the ways you agree with.



From: The City Council 

To: The Education Budget Council

Subject: Budget

### Plans and priorities for the next year

- \_\_\_\_\_ higher pay for teachers
- \_\_\_\_\_ a **program** to supply laptops to **students** during the school year if their parents can't afford them
- \_\_\_\_\_ repairs for the school building or an air conditioning system
- \_\_\_\_\_ more teachers so students can have smaller class sizes
- \_\_\_\_\_ more virtual learning at home
- \_\_\_\_\_ free textbooks
- \_\_\_\_\_ increased security at school
- \_\_\_\_\_ different after-school clubs every **semester**
- \_\_\_\_\_ more classes in the arts
- \_\_\_\_\_ more after-school care programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ more and better lunches
- \_\_\_\_\_ private tutoring for students who need extra help

	
program student semester	programme pupil term

B. Work in pairs. Compare the things you checked in activity A. Order the items on the list. The most important plan is number 1.

C. Join another pair. Compare your ideas from activity B. As a group, choose the five most important ways for the city government to spend its budget.



**Part 3**

**A. Read the article. Would you like to go on a manned mission to Mars? Why or why not?**

Although it might seem like the plot of a science fiction novel, the idea of a manned mission to Mars is nothing new. Ever since the Apollo missions of the 1960s and 70s, when scientists developed spaceships, vehicles that could leave the Earth's atmosphere, humans have dreamed of being able to travel to the red planet. In fact, robot explorers have been studying the surface of Mars for over 40 years. NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is currently developing the technology needed to send humans to Mars. Their goal is to send humans to an asteroid (small rocky bodies that move around the Sun) by the year 2025 and to Mars in the 2030s. The ISS (International Space Station) may be essential for human travel to Mars. The astronauts living and working there are developing the communication systems needed to send humans into deep space. No one is able to give an accurate figure for the cost of such a mission, but NASA has estimated it will cost between 80 and 100 billion dollars for the 20-year-project.



**B. In pairs, discuss whether you agree that the government should spend 80–100 billion dollars on a manned mission to Mars. Give reasons and write them down.**

**A:** *I think a manned mission to Mars is a waste of money. Why should we send humans when robots can explore the planet?*

**B:** *I disagree. I think that scientists will learn a lot from a manned mission. We might be able to live on Mars one day.*

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**Extension**

**A. Work in groups of four. Imagine that two students from your school will have a 10-minute meeting with two NASA scientists. Follow these instructions:**

Students A and B: You are the two NASA scientists. Prepare a short presentation explaining why you think a manned mission to Mars is more important than other global problems. Give reasons.

Students C and D: You are the two students. Prepare a short presentation explaining which projects are more important than a manned mission to Mars. Give reasons.

**B. In groups, have your 10-minute meeting. Take turns presenting your opinions and reasons.**

**C. Write a short summary of what you learned from the meeting. Share it with the class.**

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