

Taking a Position

Evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues regarding judicial protection and individual rights.

There are many controversial issues affecting Americans today. They range from abortion to capital punishment, from gay rights to banning gay marriage, from school vouchers to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Many times the American court system is asked to settle these debates and always they rely on a study of the past and an understanding of the present. Your task is to select one of the current issues facing our school, town, state, or nation today. The issue you select should be one that has two opposing sides and deals with interpretation of our Constitutional rights as granted each of us under the Bill of Rights. Once you have decided on your issue you must then evaluate both sides of the issue, take a position yourself, and then defend the side you choose by citing legal, social and historic precedents. To meet the standard you may defend your position either in writing or orally, the choice is yours. Note: If you decide to present this orally it will be video taped for purposes of scoring.

In order to exceed the standard you must take this issue out into the community. You may choose to impact school policy, get members of the community to sign a petition supporting a change to our current law, and in short become an active citizen in our democratic system.

Taking a Position Scoring Guide

Standard: Students will understand the constitutional principles and the democratic foundations of the political institutions of the United States.

Performance Indicator	1 Doesn't Meet	2 Partially Meets	3 Meets	4 Exceeds
Civics and Government C.6 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues regarding judicial protection and individual rights.	The student's response contains two or fewer of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected a current issue regarding judicial protection and individual rights. • Evaluated key points from both sides of the issue. • Took a position • Defended the position using legal, social, and historic precedents 	The student's response contains three of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected a current issue regarding judicial protection and individual rights. • Evaluated key points from both sides of the issue. • Took a position • Defended the position using legal, social, and historic precedents 	The student's response contains all of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected a current issue regarding judicial protection and individual rights. • Evaluated key points from both sides of the issue. • Took a position • Defended the position using legal, social, and historic precedents 	The student's response contains all of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected a current issue regarding judicial protection and individual rights. • Evaluated key points from both sides of the issue. • Took a position • Defended the position using legal, social, and historic precedents <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> Took his/her views beyond the classroom setting to impacted stakeholders (i.e. school board, community, state representatives, town leaders, etc.) This could include presenting your issue to the school board, writing a letter to the editor presenting your position, or obtaining signatures on a petition to be presented to relevant stakeholders.