

Grade 12 Global Issues Inquiry Projects

What is inquiry learning?

Inquiry is a complex process. It begins with the selection of a topic and the design of powerful questions that guide you as you select resources, gather and interpret information, build relevant knowledge and understanding, and share your findings and conclusions. Inquiry relies upon critical and divergent thinking. You will be given the opportunity to generate your own questions, to set your own learning goals, to acquire and share enduring understandings, and to develop the decision-making skills that are part of active citizenship. During the inquiry process, my role as a teacher shifts from covering content (sage on a stage) to becoming a guide and facilitator.

3 Key Points to the Development of Inquiry-Based Learning

Purpose: There must be a reason to do this

- Further your own knowledge and ability
- Solve a problem

Autonomy

- The right to direct one's own learning

Mastery

- The time and ability to gain a level of expertise beyond basic appreciation.

It all starts with a good question!

Thin Questions:

Questions that don't make you think much and have a quick answer. They deal with specific content or words. Think "Could I just Google this?" Thin questions can be used to develop thick questions

Thick Questions:

Thick questions make you think and do not have a quick answer. They are involved, complex and open ended. Examples of thick questions can be found in the handouts on the areas of inquiry, which will be provided to you.

Areas of Inquiry:

Media	Oppression and Genocide
Consumerism	Health and Biotechnology
Environment	Gender Politics
Poverty, Wealth, and Power	Social Justice and Human Rights
Indigenous Peoples	Peace and Conflict

Your responsibility will be to conduct inquiry into 2 of these different areas in the next few months.

Directions:

In general, inquiry will follow a 3-week process. First, it will be your responsibility to fill out an initial inquiry proposal. Once that has been approved by me, you will then continue with a 2-week work period used to investigate your inquiry. The third week will be used for presentations.

In general, you may use any method of presentation you wish. However, if you are using Power Point, Prezi, or other presentation software, remember that we can all read what's up on your slides, therefore, make sure to write a script to go along with your presentation.

Although I will not force you to use it, I would strongly recommend you take a look at a presentation style called Pecha Kucha. In this style, you would use Power Point to create a 20 slide presentation with a 20 second limit per slide (automatic transitions). The presentation will equal a total of 6 minutes and 40 seconds. The emphasis here is to use images on your slides while you present from a script. Also, this style forces you to rehearse your presentation.

You may conduct your inquiry with a partner.

Attached, you will find the assessment for the inquiries as well as directions on where your inquiry should go.

The bottom line:

Inquiry learning is meant to allow you to own your learning! Choose something you are interested and passionate about or something you want to know more about. The opportunities are endless but be sure to choose something that you will be ready to conduct vigorous inquiry into.

SUGGESTED GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORING AN ISSUE

SIGNIFICANCE and SCOPE

- Why does this issue matter? To whom?
- Who/what is affected by the issue? Who benefits? Who is harmed?
- When/where/how did this issue begin?

EVIDENCE

- Have I used a variety of sources, including primary sources?
- How reliable are my sources?
- How do the media treat this issue?

PERSPECTIVE

- How do perspectives differ on this issue? (e.g., environmental, economic, political, social...)
- Which perspectives are most defensible and why? Whose voices are not heard?
- What role do media play creating/perpetuating this issue?

IMPACT- ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC

- What is happening at the local, national, and global level?
- What actions are being taken by citizens, governments, businesses, and other groups?
- What might be some of the short and long term consequences of these actions?

CONNECTIONS

- How has this issue changed over time? What might be future concerns?
- How is this issue connected to other environmental, social or economic concerns?
- Is this issue part of a larger trend or problem?
- How does this issue effect the environment? Economy? Society? Quality of life?
- Why does this issue continue to be a problem and for whom?

REFLECTION

- How do you feel about the issue now that you know more about it?
- How might this issue have been prevented? What could have been done differently?
- What questions do you still have?

ACTION/PRACTICE

- Who needs to do what? What can and should we do?
- What are the challenges/ barriers/risks to action?
- What do I have to offer? How can I take action?
- How can I get others involved?

A rigorous inquiry should address questions in each of these areas. Students may select some or all of the suggested guiding questions in each category, or they may generate new questions as appropriate for their topic.

Enduring Understandings:

Our ecological footprint is exceeding Earth's capacity to sustain biodiversity and human life.

Our decisions and actions matter; they have social, environmental, economic, and political consequences.

Individuals, groups, governments, and corporations have the power to effect change and the responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future.

The media do not provide neutral reflections of reality; they affect our decisions and actions.

A global economic system that depends upon and perpetuates unrestrained consumerism is unsustainable.

Economic and technological development has contributed greatly to society, but often with harmful human and environmental consequences.

Indigenous knowledge and world views offer alternatives to prevailing assumptions about how to live with one another within the environment.

Political systems distribute power, privilege, and wealth in different ways, some more justly than others.

A just society respects human diversity and recognizes universal, equal, and inalienable human rights.

There is no them or over there: we all belong to the human species, our concerns are interdependent, and we are part of the natural world.

Evaluation:

Evaluation of the inquiry projects is achieved using a pass-fail model. In their presentation, students should use the guide to inquiry as the standard to which to aspire. Students should also clearly identify which of the enduring understandings their project has engaged with. After the presentation of the inquiry project, you will receive feedback from me as to how well you have engaged with your inquiry. Once you have received this feedback, you are required to provide a self-reflection that addresses any concerns brought up in the teacher evaluation, assesses how well you have met the guidelines to inquiry and to what level you have engaged with the enduring understandings identified in your presentation.

Please note that the completion of two inquiry projects throughout the term is non-negotiable, meaning that if they are not completed you will not receive your credit in the course.

The Inquiry Process



