

EduTrend Contents

W4C · CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP · HIGH SCHOOL

Policy Lab

Analyse a public policy and write a policy brief

Ages 15–18	Level: Advanced	75 minutes	Teams of 3	Activity 05

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 05 · AT A GLANCE

Policy Lab

Teams take a real policy question, such as lowering the voting age or reducing youth unemployment. They define the problem, compare three options against criteria such as effectiveness, cost, fairness and feasibility, consider stakeholders and evidence, and write a one-page policy brief.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- define a public policy problem clearly and neutrally;
- compare policy options against explicit criteria;
- evaluate evidence and stakeholder interests;
- write a concise, balanced policy brief with a justified recommendation.

KEY WORDS

public policy · problem definition · option · criteria · trade-off · stakeholder · evidence · policy brief

CURRICULUM LINKS

Politics and citizenship: policy making and government.
Economics: costs and trade-offs.
C3 Framework, Dimensions 2 and 4.

1	2	3	4	5	6
NOTICE	**LEARN**	**LISTEN**	**DISCUSS**	**DECIDE**	**ACT**
What is the issue?	Rights and rules	Hear every view	Weigh the evidence	Vote or agree	Make a difference

Materials (per team)

- Policy question card with a short background briefing
- Evidence pack: statistics, research summaries, stakeholder statements
- Options appraisal matrix
- Policy brief template
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Choose two or three policy questions relevant to young people.
- Prepare a balanced evidence pack from official statistics and reputable research.
- Include stakeholder statements from different perspectives.
- Prepare a model policy brief.

SAFETY

Policy topics can be politically sensitive. Present multiple perspectives fairly and keep discussion focused on evidence and criteria.

ACTIVITY 05 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Insist on separating analysis from recommendation: options should be described fairly before one is chosen.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Frame	Introduce the policy cycle and show a model brief.	*"What makes a policy good?"*
10–25 min Define	Teams write a neutral problem statement and identify causes.	*"Is your definition fair to all sides?"*
25–45 min Appraise	Teams score three options against criteria using the evidence pack.	*"What is the trade-off?"*
45–65 min Write	Teams write the policy brief.	*"Would a busy minister understand this in two minutes?"*
65–75 min Review	Teams swap briefs and critique using the checklist.	*"Is the recommendation supported by the analysis?"*

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Write a one-page policy brief that defines a problem, compares three options against criteria and makes a justified recommendation.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The citizenship in brief

Public policy is what governments choose to do, or not do, about public problems. The policy cycle includes agenda setting, problem definition, option appraisal, decision, implementation and evaluation. Options are usually compared against criteria such as effectiveness, cost, equity, feasibility and public acceptability.

Most policy choices involve trade-offs: an effective option may be expensive or unpopular. Good analysis states assumptions, uses reliable evidence and recognises uncertainty. Stakeholders differ in interests and power, which affects which options are politically feasible.

Common ideas to listen for

- "There is always one right policy." Choices depend on values, evidence and trade-offs.
- "More spending always solves problems." Design and implementation matter as much as money.
- "A policy brief should persuade at all costs." It should inform fairly, then recommend.

Adapting the activity

Support

Provide a partly completed options matrix and a paragraph frame for the brief.

Stretch

Add an implementation and evaluation plan with indicators and a timeline.

WORKSHEET 1

Problem definition

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Define the problem neutrally.

Problem statement

Causes and evidence

Cause	Evidence	Source

WORKSHEET 2

Options appraisal

Score each option from 1 (poor) to 5 (strong).

Matrix

Criterion	Option A	Option B	Option C
Effectiveness			
Cost			
Fairness			
Feasibility			
Public support			
Total			

Key trade-off

WORKSHEET 3

Policy brief

One page, clear headings.

Summary and recommendation

The problem

Options considered

Risks and how to manage them

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Defines the problem neutrally	Appraises options with evidence	Writes a justified, balanced brief

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Policy Lab is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Civics & Citizenship programme (high school, level: advanced). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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