



Smithsonian

NK360° Framework for Taking Informed Action

Name: _____

Introduction

Democratic citizens often engage as civic actors. They participate in the census, pay taxes, and even volunteer for civic service. In representative government, citizens have a responsibility to stay informed and hold government accountable to the people it represents. Systems of government and societies are not perfect; it is the duty of citizens to challenge civic, political, social, and cultural institutions to move towards a more perfect union. Taking informed action requires first learning about an issue, then assessing what options will best address that issue, and, finally, employing strategic steps that create change. Being informed about issues in your community, region, and nation is critical to making meaningful change.

Part A: Issue and Perspectives

Directions: In the space below, summarize and explain the issue that you believe requires informed action.

Your Perspective on the Issue	Opposing Perspectives on the Issue
<p align="center">Identify points of agreement or opportunities to find common ground.</p>	



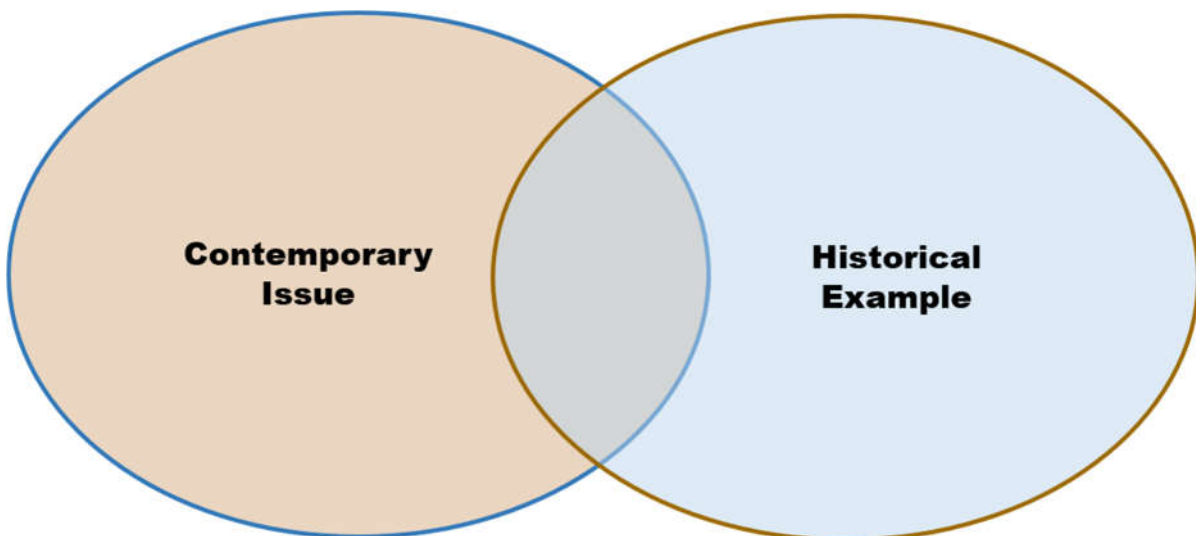
Part B: Collecting Information

Directions: In order to take action you must become informed. What sources will you cite in defense of your position? Consider how these sources can also help to refute potential claims asserted by an opposing perspective.

Source and Summary	Source Notes: Support Your Argument

Part C: History Repeats Itself

Directions: History often repeats itself. Can you find any historical connections to this issue? How can you use lessons learned from the past to inform and persuade others to support your perspective?





Part D: Planning Action

Directions: Taking informed action usually requires many smaller actions as part of the planning and organizing process. In the graphic organizer below, list and categorize the actions necessary to effect change. For example, if a group decides to gather signatures for a petition, they would inform their community about the issue and get individuals to join their cause. This might involve using social media or circulating flyers. Then they would find a way to collect signatures. They might choose to use Change.org to do that. Use the examples below to help you determine and categorize actions.

Inform	Advocate	Serve	Give	Take Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Tweet.</i> ✓ <i>Have a conversation about the facts.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Put a sign in your window.</i> ✓ <i>Write to an elected official.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Join a coalition.</i> ✓ <i>Volunteer.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Start a "Go Fund Me" for charity.</i> ✓ <i>Donate nonperishables.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Organize and/or attend a march about the issue.</i> ✓ <i>Get signatures on a petition.</i>



Part E: Identifying Barriers

Directions: Citizens organizing to take action often encounter barriers. Make inferences about the possible barriers you might encounter and think through possible solutions to these barriers. An example from the 1965 March on Selma is provided in the graphic organizer below.

Barriers	Solutions
<p><i>Example:</i> Governor Wallace refused to protect the marchers. Judge Frank Minis Johnson issued a restraining order prohibiting the march.</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Voting-rights coalitions attempted to get a court order to allow a peaceful protest march. The order was delayed. As an expression of resolve to conduct the march, Dr. King led a group who marched to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, kneeled in prayer, and then turned around. After pressure from the public, President Johnson had no choice but to permit the march. Judge Johnson then passed an order to allow the march to proceed with protection.</p>