



Turning Young People Toward the Political Process

AP Government Political Participation Project

Course: AP U.S. Government & Politics

Unit Fit: Political Participation / Public Opinion / Civic Engagement

Grade Level: 11–12

Project Type: Group Media Project (2–3 students, solo optional)

Final Product: Short Public Service Video (PSA)



LESSON OVERVIEW (ScholarForge Description)

Young people consistently vote and participate in politics at lower rates than older Americans. In this project, students analyze issues that matter most to **their generation**, support those issues with **credible data**, and create a short **public service video** encouraging peers to engage in the political process.

Students move beyond learning *about* political participation to actively practicing **civic communication, issue framing, and persuasion**, all core skills of AP Government.



TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS & FACILITATION GUIDE



Instructional Purpose

This project is designed to help students:

- Understand why political participation among young people is low
- Analyze issues that disproportionately affect younger citizens
- Practice evidence-based political argumentation
- Communicate civic messages ethically and persuasively

This is **not** an advocacy assignment for a specific party or candidate.

It is an exploration of **participation, issue awareness, and civic responsibility**.

Project Structure (Teacher Overview)

Phase 1: Issue Identification & Research

Students identify **2–4 political issues** that are especially relevant to young people (e.g., education costs, wages, climate, mental health, student debt, voting access).

Each issue must be:

- Clearly defined
- Supported by **credible data**
- Connected to government policy or political participation

Phase 2: Issue Selection

Groups select **one issue** to emphasize in their final video.

Phase 3: Public Service Video (PSA)

Students produce a short PSA encouraging:

- Awareness of the issue
- Political engagement related to that issue (voting, advocacy, contacting representatives, staying informed)

Teacher Framing (Important)

Before students begin, emphasize:

- This project is **nonpartisan**
- The focus is on **participation**, not persuasion toward a party
- Multiple viewpoints may exist on any issue
- Data quality matters more than emotional appeal

Suggested Time Frame

Day

Activity

Day 1 Introduction + brainstorming youth issues

Day 2 Research & data collection

Day 3 Script writing & planning

Day 4 Filming

Day 5 Viewing, reflection, discussion



Assessment Suggestions (Teacher-Flexible)

Recommended criteria:

- Quality and credibility of research
- Clear connection between issue and political participation
- Effectiveness of message
- Thoughtful collaboration
- Completion and effort

(Point values optional.)



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AP Government Civic Engagement Project



Your Task

You will work **alone or in a group of 2–3** to explore political issues that matter to **young people** and create a short **public service video** encouraging students to engage in the political process.



Step 1: Identify Youth-Relevant Issues

As a group, identify **2–4 political issues** that you believe are especially important to young people today.

Examples might include:

- Cost of college or student debt
- Climate change
- Minimum wage or job opportunities
- Mental health access
- Voting access or civic participation
- Gun policy
- Housing affordability

Your issues must:

- Be connected to government policy or politics
 - Affect young people directly or disproportionately
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Step 2: Research & Evidence

For **each issue**, find **credible data** to support why it matters.

Acceptable sources include:

- Government reports (Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, etc.)
- Nonpartisan research organizations
- Reputable news organizations
- Academic or policy studies

You must be able to answer:

- Why does this issue matter to young people?
 - What evidence supports this claim?
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Step 3: Public Service Video (PSA)

Choose **one issue** to highlight in your video.

Your PSA should:

- Be short (30–90 seconds)
- Clearly explain the issue
- Explain **why political participation matters** for this issue
- Encourage students to engage (vote, stay informed, advocate, participate)

This is not a campaign ad.

It is a **civic engagement message**.

Video Guidelines

Your video should:

- Be appropriate for a school audience
 - Be respectful and nonpartisan
 - Use clear visuals and audio
 - Be engaging and understandable to peers
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Reflection (Optional but Strongly Recommended)

After completing the project, reflect on:

- Why young people participate less in politics
- Whether awareness alone increases participation
- What motivates people to become politically active