

Constitutional Issues and Environmental Justice

Classroom Based Assessment (CBA)
Middle School Bridging Document



**Integrated Environmental Health Middle School Project
University of Washington**

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For the Washington State middle school level **Constitutional Issues Classroom Based Assessment (CBA)**, students are asked to make an informed decision on a public issue after researching and discussing different perspectives.

Does everyone have an equal right to a healthy environment? **Environmental Justice** is a social movement that advocates for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regarding the development and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Some community members are exposed to more environmental pollution than others, and may suffer higher rates of health problems. Low income communities and communities of color are often the most impacted. These groups often have less economic or political power and less access to information when decisions are made.

You can engage your students in the Constitutional Issues CBA by using free resources from the **Integrated Environmental Health Middle School Project (IEHMSP)**. The following steps will help you get started.

1. First make sure to visit our CBA website for an explanation of how our materials can help you teach the Constitutional Issues CBA. The information below will help you and your students understand how our curriculum meets the requirements of the CBA. You will find suggested topics and resources at this site.
<http://www.iehmsp.com/online/sscba/sscba.php>
2. The *Student Introduction: Environmental Health* provides students with the background knowledge and vocabulary they need about environmental health and environmental justice before proceeding with further research about their chosen environmental justice issue. The *Student Introduction* and an accompanying PowerPoint presentation are available for free to download from our website.
http://www.iehmsp.com/online/teachers/teacher_intro.php
3. Introduce students to the concepts of environmental health and environmental justice in Washington State by presenting the social studies lesson “The Geography of Childhood Lead Exposure”. This free lesson is found on pages 37-40 of our curriculum, *Environmental Health Fact File: LEAD*, which can be downloaded from our website.
http://www.iehmsp.com/online/teachers/EH_fact_files.php
4. Students can explore the process of investigating an environmental health issue through the interactive *Quicksilver Question Web Module*. In the module, students explore a fictional Washington State town with a history of gold mining to investigate a potential mercury contamination problem. Along the way, students interview community members, research the issue, and bring about community change. The web module and accompanying extension activities can be accessed for free from our website.
<http://www.iehmsp.com/online/webModules/qsIntro.php>
5. Engage students in choosing an environmental justice issue and embarking on a research project by using the *Health & Environment Activities Research Tool*, which can be downloaded from our website. The manual will walk you and your students through the process of researching an environmental justice issue. The manual offers worksheets and activities that help students to:
 - Identify and describe their focus community.
 - Identify their environmental justice issue, develop their focus question, and identify community resources.
 - Collect research and analyze data.
 - Consider stakeholders’ viewpoints, and possible solutions.
 - Create and deliver a presentation.

<http://www.iehmsp.com/online/teachers/heartpage.php>

For Teachers: Step-by-Step Alignment

CBA criteria	Using IEHMSP curricula, your students can meet the requirements of the Constitutional Issues CBA.
<p>Make references to the Constitution and explain the position of groups involved in this issue. (Civics 1.1.2b)</p>	<p>The <i>Health & Environment Activities Research Tool</i> provides Research Project Guidelines to help students through the process of researching their chosen issue. In particular, “Research Project Guidelines #5: Collecting and Analyzing Information” (pages 51-53) engages students in considering stakeholders’ viewpoints, analyzing risks and benefits, and proposing solutions. By exploring the <i>Quicksilver Question Web Module</i>, students are also introduced to the process of investigating a community issue and considering multiple perspectives.</p>
<p>State a position that attempts to balance individual rights and the common good. (Civics 4.1.2a)</p>	<p>As students research their issue, you can encourage them to consider how the issue impacts individual rights and the common good. In particular, “Research Project Guidelines #5: Collecting and Analyzing Information” (pages 51-53) asks students to propose possible solutions that protect individuals who are at risk, and to consider the costs and benefits of these solutions. You can encourage students to examine costs and benefits both to affected individuals and to society at large.</p>
<p>Explain how the issue connects with democratic ideals and/or constitutional principles. (Civics 1.2.2a)</p>	<p>As students research their environmental justice issue and take a stance on the issue, you can encourage them to consider how the issue relates to democratic ideals and/or constitutional principles, protections and responsibilities. Some possible questions for students to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your stance on the issue show a continuing influence of democratic ideals and/or constitutional principles? • What laws, court decisions, government policies, treaties, and historical cases relate to your stance on the issue? • How do the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights and/or other foundational documents support your stance on the issue?
<p>Make reference to a variety of sources. (Social Studies Skills 3.1.3a)</p>	<p>Each lesson plan from IEHMSP curricula is supported by a variety of primary and secondary sources that are listed in the Resources for the Librarian section of each curricula. In addition, you will find environmental health resources and web site links listed on the IEHMSP web site available at http://www.iehmosp.com/online/teachers/librarian.php.</p>



For Students: Checklist of CBA Components

CBA Components:	IEHMSP curricula can help you meet the requirements of the Constitutional Issues CBA.
Key Concepts and Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the document “Student Introduction: Environmental Health.” Answer the Check Your Understanding Questions.
Introduction to Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By participating in the lesson, “The Geography of Childhood Lead Exposure,” you will gain a general understanding of environmental justice issues.
Introduction to the Research Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the <i>Quicksilver Question Web Module</i> will introduce you to the process of researching a community issue and bringing about positive change.
Select a Public Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by defining your community and identifying potential environmental justice issues. “Research Project Guidelines #1: The Student Research Project” and Research Project Guidelines #2: Defining Your Community” will guide you through this process. • “Research Project Guidelines #4: Sharpening Your Focus” will help you select an environmental justice issue to research. The issue must relate to democratic ideals and/or constitutional principles and involve people with a variety of perspectives on the issue.
Inquiry & Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research background, policies, and multiple stakeholders’ perspectives related to the issue, including at least one primary source, several secondary sources and one reference from a foundational document. • You can find environmental health resources and web site links listed on the IEHMSP web site available at http://www.iehmsp.com/online/teachers/librarian.php. • “Research Project Guidelines #5: Collecting and Analyzing Information” will help you to analyze human health affects, consider stakeholders and their viewpoints, and propose solutions.
Analyze Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you research your issue, it is important to examine sources to ensure they are valid, reliable and credible. “Research Project Guidelines #3: EH Website Evaluation Activity” will help you to critically evaluate websites. • Organize the information from research into an annotated bibliography documenting each source.
Group Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a group discussion from various perspectives. • Take notes on peer’s presentations.
Synthesis and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize information from notes of peers’ presentations, as well as data and other evidence in the “Constitutional Issues: Graphic Organizer.”
Choose a Guiding Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a Guiding Question to direct writing. You may want to revisit the Focus Question that you developed as part of Research Project Guidelines #4: Sharpening Your Focus.”
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a draft of persuasive paper. • Revise and edit work. • Use APA or MLA style for references to any readings or sources used.
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a presentation using “Research Project Guidelines #6: Communication and Action” and “Research Project Guidelines #7: Final Presentation Checklist.” • Present the project in an authentic setting.

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Resources



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MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: Suggested Topics

What have been the various perspectives on an environmental justice movement in your local community? How is this issue related to our democratic ideals and how does it involve our rights and responsibilities?

The following environmental health issues have an environmental justice component. Your students may find that some of these issues affect their local community.

- Agricultural chemicals and human health
- Air pollution
- Animal waste and water pollution
- Animal-borne disease (West Nile Virus, bird flu, mad cow)
- Asthma
- Bioaccumulation of heavy metals in seafood
- Biodiesel and air quality
- Birth defects
- Cancer/cancer clusters
- Children's environmental health issues
- Diesel pollution from school buses and other vehicles
- Electromagnetic fields (power lines, cell phones)
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Fish and bioaccumulation of heavy metals
- Food contaminants
- Historical uses of heavy metals (lead, mercury, etc.)
- Household hazardous chemicals
- Indoor air quality
- Lead exposure in children
- Local hazardous waste sites
- Noise Pollution
- Nuclear radiation
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Pesticide residues on former agricultural sites
- Seafood contamination
- Soil pollution
- Superfund sites
- Tobacco use and human health
- Toxic chemicals in the food chain
- Waste incineration
- Water quality in a local stream, lake, river, or pond and human health effects



CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: Curricular Resources

IEHMSP curricula provide a variety of lesson plans that bring up issues of individual rights and the common good through both contemporary and historic environmental justice issues.

The *Environmental Health Fact Files: LEAD and ASTHMA* can be downloaded for free from the IEHMSP web site at http://www.iehmosp.com/online/teachers/teacher_intro.php.

The *Quicksilver Question Web Module* can be accessed at:
<http://www.iehmosp.com/online/webModules/qsIntro.php>.

- **The Geography of Childhood Lead Exposure:** Analyze the geography of childhood lead exposure across Washington State. (*EH Fact File: LEAD, beginning on page 35*)
- **Toxic Candies and Dangerous Cures:** Uncover the dangers of folk remedies and candies from around the world that commonly contain high levels of lead. (*EH Fact File: LEAD, beginning on page 43*)
- **Childhood Blood Lead Levels:** Interpret data on the links between childhood lead poisoning, race, and income level. (*EH Fact File: LEAD, beginning on page 109*)
- **A Time Travel Vacation to the Roman Empire:** Investigate the many ways that ancient Romans came in contact with lead. (*EH Fact File: LEAD, beginning on page 23*)
- **Eighteen Pence a Day:** Discover the working conditions of London's white lead mills in the mid-1800s through the writings of Jack London and Charles Dickens. (*EH Fact File: LEAD, beginning on page 81*)
- **Asthma Bill of Rights:** Research and write a position paper on school policies and state laws prohibiting students from carrying and self-administering asthma medications at school. (*EH Fact File: ASTHMA, beginning on page 119*)
- **Geography of Asthma:** Read a description of asthma rates in the United States and create a map based on data. (*EH Fact File: ASTHMA, beginning on page 33*)
- **Fire and Smoke:** Explore outdoor air pollution problems that can trigger asthma episodes, including wood smoke, agricultural field burning, and wildland fires. (*EH Fact File: ASTHMA, beginning on page 65*)
- **Athletes with Asthma:** Research the lives of professional athletes who have asthma and design a biography box featuring the athlete. (*EH Fact File: ASTHMA, beginning on page 77*)
- **The Cost of Childhood Asthma:** Interpret from a data chart and statistics about the cost to society from asthma and other childhood diseases. (*EH Fact File: ASTHMA, beginning on page 95*)
- **Gold Mining in South America:** Investigate mercury poisoning in the Amazon basin and other areas of South America due to small-scale gold mining operations. (*Quicksilver Question Web Module*)
- **Toxic Tales:** Read two stories about large-scale mercury poisoning in Iraq and Japan. (*Quicksilver Question Web Module*)

Health & Environment Activities Research Tool (HEART)

A resource manual for engaging students in interdisciplinary, project-based research of environmental health issues in their own communities. Some of the research activities probe community environmental health problems as issues of environmental justice. The manual can be downloaded for free from the IEHMSP web site at:

http://www.iehmosp.com/online/teachers/teacher_intro.php.

EH Headlines weekly news dispatches

A weekly electronic news service of environmental health stories in the news. To sign up for this weekly service, email Kristen Bergsman at crowtalk@u.washington.edu

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: Environmental Justice Resources

EH Headlines Database

A list of current environmental health news stories, organized by topic, including “environmental justice.”

http://www.iehmsp.com/online/resources/EHheadlines_updated.php

IEHMSP environmental justice links

A list of environmental justice related websites, organizations, and news stories.

<http://www.iehmsp.com/online/resources/justice.php>

Community Coalition For Environmental Justice (CCEJ)

This local organization provides community education, speakers, activism opportunities, and an EJ library.

<http://www.ccej.org/>

Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECSS)

This group provides education and other resources on environmental health issues in south Seattle.

<http://www.ecoss.org>

Clear Corps

A community organization working to protect children from lead poisoning. They recently toured an excellent play with local student actors called "Jimmy's getting better".

<http://www.clearcorps.org/seattle.htm>

West Harlem Environmental ACTION (WEACT)

WEACT is a non-profit working to improve environmental policy, public health, and quality of life in communities of color. WEACT advances its mission through research, public education, advocacy, organizing, government accountability, litigation, legislative affairs and sustainable economic development. WEACT works for environmental and social justice on issues of land use, waterfront development, brownfields redevelopment, transportation and air pollution, open space, and environmental health.

<http://www.weact.org/>

Indigenous Environmental Network

Native American EJ issues webpage.

<http://www.ienearth.org/>

Environmental Justice Resource Center

Environmental Justice Resource Center of Clark Atlanta University. Great resource for reports, news, books, other resources.

<http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/>

Environmental Justice in Waste

EPA's Environmental Justice in Waste program. Good source for laws, regulations, programs, and resources.

<http://www.epa.gov/oswer/ej/index.html>

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ)

Resource center for community groups working on EJ.

<http://www.ccaej.org/>

The Environmental Justice and Health Union (EJHU)

The report, “Environmental Exposure and Racial Disparities,” is an analysis of racial exposure to environmental chemicals, which documents how people of different races living in the United States are exposed to different chemicals in the workplace and the home. See summary article at www.rachel.org (July 31, 2003 issue) <http://www.ejhu.org/disparities.html>

Institute for Children’s Environmental Health (ICEH)

A national organization that organizes collaborative projects, often involving affected communities, to promote children’s environmental health.

<http://www.iceh.org/>

Scorecard

Go to this site and type in your zip code for detailed information on who is polluting in your area, cancer risks, and environmental justice data (e.g. how people are affected by toxins – sorted by ethnicity, income, education, etc.).

<http://www.scorecard.org>

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism in Chester, PA. This website provides excellent information about a city that suffers the effects of environmental racism. The website provides background about EJ, articles, and many resources. There is also a downloadable curriculum based on this situation (“Homesick? The Case of Chester, PA”). The curriculum is available at:

<http://www.ejnet.org/chester/>



For information on obtaining IEHMSMP curriculum materials, please contact Katie Frevert, IEHMSMP Program Manager, at 206-685-5378 or kfrevert@u.washington.edu. Visit <http://www.iehsmp.com>.