

## Political Lobbying



"When a man takes no interest in public affairs, we think of him not as a man who minds his own business, but as one who is good for nothing." - *Athenian Philosopher Pericles, 4th Century B.C.*

Imagine if everyone took the attitude that government would take care of itself and no one saw it as their responsibility to make a difference!

### **"It's Not My Job"**

Fortunately, the above example is an exception and people generally do take additional steps to "make a difference". In a democracy, citizens make a difference by taking actions to participate in the democratic process. There are times in life when we believe strongly enough in issues, that we want to go beyond the stage of just talking about it. If, for example, we are enrolled at a school in which a particularly unpopular decision has been made that affects students, there are democratic actions we may consider taking to change the decision. It is important to first identify the person(s) we must influence. It may be a principal or staff members. We may use tactics such as organizing a petition or forming a committee to address the issue. We may ask the school principal or staff members to meet with us, consider our requests, and together examine alternative courses of action to resolve the issue. In any case, we have:

- identified the issue we are concerned about
- identified the decision maker(s)
- decided what actions to follow

In the larger society beyond your school, an interest group is a number of people who come together because they have common political goals. For example, farmers may come together because they have a common interest in agriculture. Another interest group may be environmentalists who have concerns about protecting the environment.

Interest groups put pressure on governments to develop policies and pass laws that will be favourable to their group or cause.

Interest groups use a number of strategies. They may have publicity campaigns to obtain support from the public. They develop contacts within the government and in the media. They will advertise their cause and may take part in demonstrations, protests, and rallies.

## **Assignment**

There are many ways for students to create change in today's society. The purpose of this assignment is to help you understand some of the current issues that young people can become involved with and the ways in which youth are contributing.

A) Visit a website that depicts youth activists and the activities that they are participating in. There are several examples of sites listed below:

- [Youth Action Net](http://www.youthactionnet.org/) (http://www.youthactionnet.org/)
- [Advocates for Youth](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/) (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/)
- [Youth Action Network](http://www.youthactionnetwork.org/) (http://www.youthactionnetwork.org/)
- [Mix It Up](http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up) (http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up)
- [Global Kids](http://www.globalkids.org/) (http://www.globalkids.org/)

B) From the above list, identify and profile one youth activist project that particularity interests you. Identify the name of the project (i.e. prevention of A.I.D.S., ending homelessness, etc.) Once you have chosen a topic, write a report, consisting of the following sections:

- What caused this person/group to get involved in this project?
- What is the goal or purpose of this project? How can this group/agency contribute to the betterment of society?
- What specifically is being done to help create change?
- Outline ways in which contacting political representatives can bring about change.
- What have been some successes of the project? Try to include specific names, events, and locations when discussing the activity / activities.
- Include graphic images to enhance your report.
- Try and find a newspaper article that outlines the achievements of the group (use *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Star*, *National Post*, or any other newspaper website)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Categories	Level 1 (50 - 59%)	Level 2 (60 - 69%)	Level 3 (70 - 79%)	Level 4 (80 - 100%)
<b>Knowledge and Understanding:</b> Knowledge of the youth activist project /10	- demonstrates limited knowledge of the project	- demonstrates some knowledge of the project	- demonstrates considerable knowledge of the project	- demonstrates thorough knowledge of the project
<b>Thinking:</b> Use of critical/creative thinking processes in reporting on the youth activist project /5	- uses critical/creative thinking processes in reporting on the youth activist project with limited effectiveness	- uses critical/creative thinking processes in reporting on the youth activist project with some effectiveness	- uses critical/creative thinking processes in reporting on the youth activist project with considerable effectiveness	- uses critical/creative thinking processes in reporting on the youth activist project with a high degree of effectiveness
<b>Application:</b> Making connections between the relationship between the work put forth by interest groups and (how that work influences) the political process /5	- makes connections between the relationship between the work put forth by interest groups and (how that work influences) the political process with limited effectiveness	- makes connections between the relationship between the work put forth by interest groups and (how that work influences) the political process with some effectiveness	- makes connections between the relationship between the work put forth by interest groups and (how that work influences) the political process with considerable effectiveness	- makes connections between the relationship between the work put forth by interest groups and (how that work influences) the political process with a high degree of effectiveness
<b>Communication:</b> Expression and organization of ideas and information in visual and written forms /5	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with limited effectiveness	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with some effectiveness	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with considerable effectiveness	- expresses and organizes ideas and information with a high degree of effectiveness

\_\_\_\_/25

COMMENTS