

LEARNING THROUGH
COMMUNITY
ACTION
PROGRAM

RESEARCH OPTION

LEARNING THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION

Research Project

The Learning Through Community Action project's overall goal is to involve the students in their communities so they learn how their communities function and so each student can make a meaningful contribution to them.

Our communities face many issues each day. These issues may be political, economic and/or social. Each issue in turn contains many questions which need to be answered through research so that reasonable, objective, and appropriate decisions can be made.

The research option of LCAP, therefore, allows the students to (a) select an issue relevant to his or her community; (b) gather information on the issue through interviews and background reading; (c) reach a conclusion; (d) write a formal document defining and describing the research gathered; and (e) give an oral presentation to the class.

Deadlines: A calendar with the specific requirements and deadlines is posted in each classroom. It is the responsibility of the student to know and meet these deadlines.

Issue Selection: A list of suggested topics is in this packet. However, a student may, with approval of his teacher, select his/her own issue. Whatever topic is chosen, **the topic must be approved by the teacher.**

Interviews: All research projects involve interviewing **appropriate experts** on their issue. Good interviewing techniques are very important to the writing of a reliable report. Information on interviewing techniques will be available for students and can be found later in this packet.

The research option included the following steps:

- a. Doing some serious thinking about a community related problem in which you are interested. Each problem has two competing sides so your research should clearly define the problem and then identify the competing points of view.

This research is not like the U.S. History term paper where you could make use of already printed material and established interpretations. Here you have to research the topic, determine the experts you will want to interview, create appropriate and probing interview questions, interview the experts and put all your efforts into a written format.

- b. Select a topic and write a thesis statement typed both must be approved by your teacher. The idea for your research may come from the suggested topics included in this booklet or from your own interests in your community.
- c. Develop your expertise on the topic through extensive background readings from the local and metropolitan newspapers and magazines, books, etc. If you use the internet, document your sources and search engines.
- d. Establish the questions you want to ask the experts from your background readings.
- e. Identify a MINIMUM of four (4) interviews with experts on the topic. An expert is NOT your friend who has an opinion on something, but a person with knowledge in depth on the topic. Your teacher can help you select people to interview. Always call in advance to make an appointment.
- f. **THE PAPER MUST BE DOUBLE SPACED AND TYPED.** All the correct forms for a research paper **MUST** be followed. Include bibliography and footnotes or internal citations and a cover page. The paper must be a minimum of 8 pages.

Interviewing Techniques – Read carefully before your interview.

1. Be certain you know enough about the issue that you understand why a particular person is considered an expert on the issue.
2. Ask yourself before the interview: “What do I want to learn? What questions do I need to ask in order to get the information I need?”
3. Find out as much as you can about the person you are going to interview before the interview takes place.
4. Set up an appointment for the interview. An ideal interview is about 45-50 minutes. Set up the interview for a time when you are not in any rush to leave. This way, interruptions during the interview will not disturb you.
5. Find out when setting up the interview if you may use a tape recorder. Ask the expert. Try out the tape recorder beforehand. Feel comfortable using it. Be sure you know how to run it so you do get a useable recording.
6. HAVE specific questions in mind for the interview. You may want to use note cards – one per question. Also, as the interviewee is answering one question, LISTEN attentively for he will probably say things you had not thought of or that you will want to come back to in the interview.
7. Encourage the interviewee to reveal himself as much as possible: “Could you tell me more about such and such...?” “That’s an interesting point you made about...” Also show your enthusiasm about the topic, for this will show the interviewee you are really interested in his or her answers.
8. Ask **ONLY ONE** question at a time and be precise.
9. Be patient in waiting for an answer. Don’t be frightened by silence.
10. Once the interviewee “warms up” to his subject, let him talk, interjecting questions only to keep the interview on direction.
11. Don’t give up on the interview too soon if it seems to be unproductive.
12. At the end of the interview, ask if you might call if there are more questions that you find you want to ask. It is not uncommon for you to find you do want to follow up on some information.
13. Leave graciously and without hurry. Thank the interviewee for his/her time.
14. Make a point of writing out the answers from the interview when the information is still fresh in your mind.

SAMPLE

Name _____

Research Paper

Thesis Statement

TOPIC _____

My thesis statement is: _____

Comments: _____

SAMPLE

To: All Students Who Selected the Research Option
Re: Interviews

Name: _____

Research Topic: _____

As you are aware, four (4) interviews with appropriate experts on the topic of your choice are required. You should read and use the Interview techniques description in the research handbook.

Complete following information and sign the statement below. List the 4 people you interviewed for this paper.

<u>Name of Person Interviewed</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Interviewed</u>	<u>Phone number of Person</u>
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____

I, _____ do hereby affirm that I did in fact interview the above
(your name)

Four individuals and that the above information is true and correct.

Student Signature

LCAP RESEARCH TOPICS SUGGESTIONS

Humane Societies/Animals

Who regulates animal shelters and should there be more or different regulations?

Clinics/Halfway Houses

Should facilities such as abortion clinics or drug rehab homes be located in residential neighborhoods?

What facilities are available in our area to deal with teenage pregnancy?

Cook County

What kinds of goals and programs do the Cook County Forest Preserve District have? Who sets these goals and programs? How are they financed?

What are the advantages and disadvantages for a homebuyer purchasing a home in an UNINCORPORATED area?

Day Care Centers

Should municipalities regulate private day care centers in private residences?

Why is there such a need for day care centers in our community? What services do they provide?

Developments and Donations

Should municipalities demand specific items from developers such as sidewalks, lot size, landscaping, cash for parks and schools, etc? Impact Fees?

Should a development be able to “pay for itself” in the public services it will need before a village accepts the development?

Should the average citizen depend on local, regional or state government for schools, parks and public services OR on his/her own private resources?
i.e. Who should be responsible for/pay for garbage pickup?

Education

Should District 211 have a separate comprehensive vocational high school?

Should students be separated by ability for their academic class work (tracking)?

How has the expanding role of high school sports affected the primary goal of education?

Should the State of Illinois assume full control and the total cost of public education?

What impact has all of the “testing” had on the teaching of curriculum in the schools? i.e. IGAP, LOGAP, PRAIRIE STATE, ETC

Education topics cont.

What types of educational opportunities must a school provide because of state mandates and laws?

Should there be sex education offered or required in the public schools?

Should voluntary prayer be allowed in the public schools?

Should a voucher system be instituted? Explain the system and its effect on public education.

What are the state mandated programs for special education?

What are charter schools? Pros and Cons.

What programs in District 211 would be influenced by a state tax cut/increase for education?

Housing

For what purposes do Homeowners Associations exist? What do they cost?

Do they truly benefit the homeowner? Include a discussion of the by-laws and covenants.

Should local communities provide shelters for the homeless?

What obligations do local municipalities have when it comes to providing low- income housing? Section 8?

Environment and ecology

What is a "balefill" and what impact could it have on the environment?

Should Illinois pass a "bottle bill"? (requires a deposit on glass bottles)

What are the air and noise pollution issues surrounding the possible expansion of O'Hare Airport?

Local Government

Should our villages continue to use the council-manager form of government? What other options are there?

What are home rule powers and how should municipalities use them? Taxes, censorship, etc?

Should political parties endorse local candidates for local elections?

Should a village adopt and use a "comprehensive land use plan" or should a village let nature take its course? How does a village control or not control growth?

Local Govt. cont.

What are "zoning" classifications and what is their purpose and effect?

What methods are available to a municipality to use to attract commercial and industrial development?

Should a village with a tax creator such as a shopping center or sports complex within its borders have to share some of the tax revenue with other towns adjacent to the village and affected, i.e. roads, police, etc.

For what purposes is there an inter-governmental agreement/cooperation between Hoffman Estates and Schaumburg?

For what purpose does the Northwest Municipal Conference exist? What is NIPC? Why are these important to our area?

What is a TOWNSHIP government and do we really need it? Pros and cons.

Public Officials

Should the State of Illinois have a collective bargaining law for public employees?

What policy for public employees like teachers, police, etc. should be adopted regarding strikes?

Should candidates for all public offices be made to disclose all sources of income before they can run for office? This includes stocks, property, etc.

Recreation

What recreational needs has your village/park district determined are important to plan for and provide? What kinds of problems have occurred in trying to implement these plans?

Taxation

Should religious and/or non-profit organizations be exempt from paying property taxes and income taxes?

Transportation

Should motor fuel taxes be used only for roads and highways?

Should there be a full 4-way interchange at either or both or neither Barrington Road or Roselle Road and the Northwest Tollway?

Should the tollway system in Illinois be abolished? Why was it begun in the first place, etc?