

# THE POOL OF ISSUE TOPICS

1. A nation should require all of its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college. (consequences)
2. A nation should require all of its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college. (challenge)
3. A nation should require all of its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college. (considerations)
4. A nation should require all of its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college. (circumstances)
5. All college and university students would benefit from spending at least one semester studying in a foreign country. (considerations)
6. All parents should be required to volunteer time to their children's schools. (challenge)
7. All parents should be required to volunteer time to their children's schools. (circumstances)
8. Although innovations such as video, computers, and the Internet seem to offer schools improved methods for instructing students, these technologies all too often distract from real learning. (considerations)
9. Any leader who is quickly and easily influenced by shifts in popular opinion will accomplish little. (considerations)
10. As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate. (considerations)
11. As we acquire more knowledge, things do not become more comprehensible, but more complex and mysterious. (considerations)
12. **Claim:** Any piece of information referred to as a fact should be mistrusted, since it may well be proven false in the future.  
**Reason:** Much of the information that people assume is factual actually turns out to be inaccurate. (based)
13. **Claim:** Colleges and universities should specify all required courses and eliminate elective courses in order to provide clear guidance for students.  
**Reason:** College students—like people in general—prefer to follow directions rather than make their own decisions. (based)
14. **Claim:** Governments must ensure that their major cities receive the financial support they need in order to thrive.  
**Reason:** It is primarily in cities that a nation's cultural traditions are preserved and generated. (based)
15. **Claim:** Imagination is a more valuable asset than experience.  
**Reason:** People who lack experience are free to imagine what is possible without the constraints of established habits and attitudes. (based)
16. **Claim:** In any field—business, politics, education, government—those in power should step down after five years.  
**Reason:** The surest path to success for any enterprise is revitalization through new leadership. (based)

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17. **Claim:** It is no longer possible for a society to regard any living man or woman as a hero.  
**Reason:** The reputation of anyone who is subjected to media scrutiny will eventually be diminished. (based)
18. **Claim:** Knowing about the past cannot help people to make important decisions today.  
**Reason:** The world today is significantly more complex than it was even in the relatively recent past. (based)
19. **Claim:** Knowing about the past cannot help people to make important decisions today.  
**Reason:** We are not able to make connections between current events and past events until we have some distance from both. (based)
20. **Claim:** Major policy decisions should always be left to politicians and other government experts.  
**Reason:** Politicians and other government experts are more informed and thus have better judgment and perspective than do members of the general public. (based)
21. **Claim:** Many problems of modern society cannot be solved by laws and the legal system.  
**Reason:** Laws cannot change what is in people's hearts or minds. (based)
22. **Claim:** Nations should suspend government funding for the arts when significant numbers of their citizens are hungry or unemployed.  
**Reason:** It is inappropriate—and, perhaps, even cruel—to use public resources to fund the arts when people's basic needs are not being met. (based)
23. **Claim:** Researchers should not limit their investigations to only those areas in which they expect to discover something that has an immediate, practical application.  
**Reason:** It is impossible to predict the outcome of a line of research with any certainty. (based)
24. **Claim:** The best test of an argument is its ability to convince someone with an opposing viewpoint.  
**Reason:** Only by being forced to defend an idea against the doubts and contrasting views of others does one really discover the value of that idea. (based)
25. **Claim:** The best way to understand the character of a society is to examine the character of the men and women that the society chooses as its heroes or its role models.  
**Reason:** Heroes and role models reveal a society's highest ideals. (based)
26. **Claim:** The surest indicator of a great nation is not the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists.  
**Reason:** The surest indicator of a great nation is actually the welfare of all its people. (based)
27. **Claim:** The surest indicator of a great nation must be the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists.  
**Reason:** Great achievements by a nation's rulers, artists, or scientists will ensure a good life for the majority of that nation's people. (based)

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28. **Claim:** Universities should require every student to take a variety of courses outside the student's major field of study.  
**Reason:** Acquiring knowledge of various academic disciplines is the best way to become truly educated. (based)
29. **Claim:** We can usually learn much more from people whose views we share than from those whose views contradict our own.  
**Reason:** Disagreement can cause stress and inhibit learning. (based)
30. **Claim:** When planning courses, educators should take into account the interests and suggestions of their students.  
**Reason:** Students are more motivated to learn when they are interested in what they are studying. (based)
31. College students should base their choice of a field of study on the availability of jobs in that field. (challenge)
32. College students should base their choice of a field of study on the availability of jobs in that field. (circumstances)
33. College students should be encouraged to pursue subjects that interest them rather than the courses that seem most likely to lead to jobs. (circumstances)
34. Colleges and universities should require all faculty to spend time working outside the academic world in professions relevant to the courses they teach. (consequences)
35. Colleges and universities should require their students to spend at least one semester studying in a foreign country. (consequences)
36. Colleges and universities should require their students to spend at least one semester studying in a foreign country. (challenge)
37. Colleges and universities should require their students to spend at least one semester studying in a foreign country. (circumstances)
38. Competition for high grades seriously limits the quality of learning at all levels of education. (considerations)
39. Critical judgment of work in any given field has little value unless it comes from someone who is an expert in that field. (challenge)
40. Critical judgment of work in any given field has little value unless it comes from someone who is an expert in that field. (considerations)
41. Educational institutions have a responsibility to dissuade students from pursuing fields of study in which they are unlikely to succeed. (challenge)
42. Educational institutions have a responsibility to dissuade students from pursuing fields of study in which they are unlikely to succeed. (considerations)
43. Educational institutions should actively encourage their students to choose fields of study in which jobs are plentiful. (consequences)

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44. Educational institutions should actively encourage their students to choose fields of study in which jobs are plentiful. (challenge)
45. Educational institutions should actively encourage their students to choose fields of study that will prepare them for lucrative careers. (consequences)
46. Educational institutions should actively encourage their students to choose fields of study that will prepare them for lucrative careers. (challenge)
47. Educational institutions should dissuade students from pursuing fields of study in which they are unlikely to succeed. (consequences)
48. Educators should base their assessment of students' learning not on students' grasp of facts but on the ability to explain the ideas, trends, and concepts that those facts illustrate. (circumstances)
49. Educators should find out what students want included in the curriculum and then offer it to them. (circumstances)
50. Educators should take students' interests into account when planning the content of the courses they teach. (circumstances)
51. Educators should teach facts only after their students have studied the ideas, trends, and concepts that help explain those facts. (circumstances)
52. Every individual in a society has a responsibility to obey just laws and to disobey and resist unjust laws. (challenge)
53. Formal education tends to restrain our minds and spirits rather than set them free. (considerations)
54. Government officials should rely on their own judgment rather than unquestioningly carry out the will of the people they serve. (circumstances)
55. Government officials should rely on their own judgment rather than unquestioningly carry out the will of the people whom they serve. (considerations)
56. Governments should focus on solving the immediate problems of today rather than on trying to solve the anticipated problems of the future. (circumstances)
57. Governments should not fund any scientific research whose consequences are unclear. (consequences)
58. Governments should not fund any scientific research whose consequences are unclear. (circumstances)
59. Governments should offer a free university education to any student who has been admitted to a university but who cannot afford the tuition. (consequences)
60. Governments should offer college and university education free of charge to all students. (circumstances)
61. Governments should place few, if any, restrictions on scientific research and development. (circumstances)
62. If a goal is worthy, then any means taken to attain it are justifiable. (considerations)

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63. In any field of endeavor, it is impossible to make a significant contribution without first being strongly influenced by past achievements within that field. (considerations)
64. In any field of inquiry, the beginner is more likely than the expert to make important contributions. (considerations)
65. In any field—business, politics, education, government—those in power should be required to step down after five years. (consequences)
66. In any profession—business, politics, education, government—those in power should step down after five years. (challenge)
67. In any situation, progress requires discussion among people who have contrasting points of view. (considerations)
68. In most professions and academic fields, imagination is more important than knowledge. (challenge)
69. In most professions and academic fields, imagination is more important than knowledge. (considerations)
70. In order for any work of art—for example, a film, a novel, a poem, or a song—to have merit, it must be understandable to most people. (considerations)
71. In order to become well-rounded individuals, all college students should be required to take courses in which they read poetry, novels, mythology, and other types of imaginative literature. (circumstances)
72. In this age of intensive media coverage, it is no longer possible for a society to regard any living man or woman as a hero. (considerations)
73. It is more harmful to compromise one's own beliefs than to adhere to them. (considerations)
74. It is no longer possible for a society to regard any living man or woman as a hero. (challenge)
75. It is primarily in cities that a nation's cultural traditions are generated and preserved. (considerations)
76. It is primarily through our identification with social groups that we define ourselves. (considerations)
77. Knowing about the past cannot help people to make important decisions today. (considerations)
78. Laws should be flexible enough to take account of various circumstances, times, and places. (considerations)
79. Leaders are created by the demands that are placed on them. (considerations)
80. Learning is primarily a matter of personal discipline; students cannot be motivated by school or college alone. (considerations)
81. Many important discoveries or creations are accidental: it is usually while seeking the answer to one question that we come across the answer to another. (considerations)
82. Nations should pass laws to preserve any remaining wilderness areas in their natural state, even if these areas could be developed for economic gain. (consequences)

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83. Nations should pass laws to preserve any remaining wilderness areas in their natural state. (challenge)
84. Nations should suspend government funding for the arts when significant numbers of their citizens are hungry or unemployed. (circumstances)
85. No field of study can advance significantly unless it incorporates knowledge and experience from outside that field. (considerations)
86. People should undertake risky action only after they have carefully considered its consequences. (circumstances)
87. People who are the most deeply committed to an idea or policy are also the most critical of it. (considerations)
88. People's attitudes are determined more by their immediate situation or surroundings than by society as a whole. (considerations)
89. People's behavior is largely determined by forces not of their own making. (challenge)
90. People's behavior is largely determined by forces not of their own making. (considerations)
91. Politicians should pursue common ground and reasonable consensus rather than elusive ideals. (circumstances)
92. Requiring university students to take a variety of courses outside their major fields of study is the best way to ensure that students become truly educated. (considerations)
93. Scandals are useful because they focus our attention on problems in ways that no speaker or reformer ever could. (challenge)
94. Scientists and other researchers should focus their research on areas that are likely to benefit the greatest number of people. (circumstances)
95. Society should identify those children who have special talents and provide training for them at an early age to develop their talents. (circumstances)
96. Society should make efforts to save endangered species only if the potential extinction of those species is the result of human activities. (consequences)
97. Some people argue that successful leaders in government, industry, or other fields must be highly competitive. Other people claim that in order to be successful, a leader must be willing and able to cooperate with others. (both)
98. Some people believe it is often necessary, even desirable, for political leaders to withhold information from the public. Others believe that the public has a right to be fully informed. (both)
99. Some people believe that college students should consider only their own talents and interests when choosing a field of study. Others believe that college students should base their choice of a field of study on the availability of jobs in that field. (both)

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100. Some people believe that competition for high grades motivates students to excel in the classroom. Others believe that such competition seriously limits the quality of real learning. (both)
101. Some people believe that corporations have a responsibility to promote the well-being of the societies and environments in which they operate. Others believe that the only responsibility of corporations, provided they operate within the law, is to make as much money as possible. (both)
102. Some people believe that government funding of the arts is necessary to ensure that the arts can flourish and be available to all people. Others believe that government funding of the arts threatens the integrity of the arts. (both)
103. Some people believe that government officials must carry out the will of the people they serve. Others believe that officials should base their decisions on their own judgment. (both)
104. Some people believe that in order to be effective, political leaders must yield to public opinion and abandon principle for the sake of compromise. Others believe that the most essential quality of an effective leader is the ability to remain consistently committed to particular principles and objectives. (both)
105. Some people believe that in order to thrive, a society must put its own overall success before the well-being of its individual citizens. Others believe that the well-being of a society can only be measured by the general welfare of all its people. (both)
106. Some people believe that our ever-increasing use of technology significantly reduces our opportunities for human interaction. Other people believe that technology provides us with new and better ways to communicate and connect with one another. (both)
107. Some people believe that scientific discoveries have given us a much better understanding of the world around us. Others believe that science has revealed to us that the world is infinitely more complex than we ever realized. (both)
108. Some people believe that society should try to save every plant and animal species, despite the expense to humans in effort, time, and financial well-being. Others believe that society need not make extraordinary efforts, especially at a great cost in money and jobs, to save endangered species. (both)
109. Some people believe that the purpose of education is to free the mind and the spirit. Others believe that formal education tends to restrain our minds and spirits rather than set them free. (both)
110. Some people believe that universities should require every student to take a variety of courses outside the student's field of study. Others believe that universities should not force students to take any courses other than those that will help prepare them for jobs in their chosen fields. (both)
111. Some people claim that a nation's government should preserve its wilderness areas in their natural state. Others argue that these areas should be developed for potential economic gain. (both)

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112. Some people claim that you can tell whether a nation is great by looking at the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists. Others argue that the surest indicator of a great nation is, in fact, the general welfare of all its people. (both)
113. Students should always question what they are taught instead of accepting it passively. (considerations)
114. Teachers' salaries should be based on the academic performance of their students. (circumstances)
115. Teachers' salaries should be based on their students' academic performance. (challenge)
116. The best ideas arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things. (considerations)
117. The best test of an argument is the argument's ability to convince someone with an opposing viewpoint. (considerations)
118. The best way for a society to prepare its young people for leadership in government, industry, or other fields is by instilling in them a sense of cooperation, not competition. (challenge)
119. The best way to teach is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones. (considerations)
120. The best way to teach is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones. (circumstances)
121. The best way to teach—whether as an educator, employer, or parent—is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones. (challenge)
122. The best way to understand the character of a society is to examine the character of the men and women that the society chooses as its heroes or its role models. (challenge)
123. The effectiveness of a country's leaders is best measured by examining the well-being of that country's citizens. (challenge)
124. The effectiveness of a country's leaders is best measured by examining the well-being of that country's citizens. (considerations)
125. The general welfare of a nation's people is a better indication of that nation's greatness than are the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists. (challenge)
126. The greatness of individuals can be decided only by those who live after them, not by their contemporaries. (considerations)
127. The human mind will always be superior to machines because machines are only tools of human minds. (considerations)
128. The increasingly rapid pace of life today causes more problems than it solves. (considerations)
129. The luxuries and conveniences of contemporary life prevent people from developing into truly strong and independent individuals. (considerations)
130. The main benefit of the study of history is to dispel the illusion that people living now are significantly different from people who lived in earlier times. (considerations)

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131. The most effective way to understand contemporary culture is to analyze the trends of its youth. (considerations)
132. The primary goal of technological advancement should be to increase people's efficiency so that they have more leisure time. (considerations)
133. The surest indicator of a great nation is not the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists, but the general well-being of all its people. (challenge)
134. The surest indicator of a great nation is represented not by the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists, but by the general welfare of its people. (considerations)
135. The well-being of a society is enhanced when many of its people question authority. (considerations)
136. There is little justification for society to make extraordinary efforts—especially at a great cost in money and jobs—to save endangered animal or plant species. (considerations)
137. To be an effective leader, a public official must maintain the highest ethical and moral standards. (challenge)
138. To be an effective leader, a public official must maintain the highest ethical and moral standards. (considerations)
139. To understand the most important characteristics of a society, one must study its major cities. (considerations)
140. True success can be measured primarily in terms of the goals one sets for oneself. (considerations)
141. Unfortunately, in contemporary society, creating an appealing image has become more important than the reality or truth behind that image. (considerations)
142. Universities should require every student to take a variety of courses outside the student's field of study. (consequences)
143. Universities should require every student to take a variety of courses outside the student's field of study. (challenge)
144. Universities should require every student to take a variety of courses outside the student's field of study. (circumstances)
145. We can learn much more from people whose views we share than from people whose views contradict our own. (considerations)
146. We can usually learn much more from people whose views we share than from people whose views contradict our own. (considerations)
147. When old buildings stand on ground that modern planners feel could be better used for modern purposes, modern development should be given precedence over the preservation of historic buildings. (considerations)
148. Young people should be encouraged to pursue long-term, realistic goals rather than seek immediate fame and recognition. (considerations)
149. Young people should be encouraged to pursue long-term, realistic goals rather than seek immediate fame and recognition. (circumstances)
- 150.