

## Contemporary Canadian-American Issues

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### **Description:**

Students will explore the various sides of a current issue of conflict between Canada and the United States. The lesson will be presented to the students through a short lecture and reading assignment on an issue showing international conflict and cooperation. (There are multiple examples in the Middle East, where a myriad of peace talks have not ended continued tension and the work of many U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State, etc.). The students will then be given class time to research their own conflict and determine, in groups of two, the pro and con sides. The topic will need to be fairly current, but must be unresolved as they will be writing a letter to a leader of each side of the issue explaining who they are, what they think and how they foresee a solution to the situation. They need to request a reply letter and it will be shared with the class upon receipt.

### **Duration:**

2 weeks

### **Objectives:**

- See the importance of engaged citizenship
- Do peer-editing/self-editing and team building
- Find relevance in how international issues (may) have local affects
- See the importance of being informed

### **Standards:**

This project will help fulfill the state requirements of:

- Problem-solving
- Enhancing research skills
- Team building
- Writing (business and paper)
- Public speaking
- Citizen awareness

### **Materials:**

Students will need to access the library and computer lab both research (internet and newsmagazines/books), and document creation (the paper, the letter and any other addition they want to add to the oral presentation such as a power point slide show).

### **Procedures:**

The project has four steps: first, teams of two students will research an issue of international (USA and Canada) importance, selecting their issue with the help of the teacher. These teams will use statistical information to write a five-page paper from both the pro and con sides of the issue. Second, a letter shall be written to the leader of each side of their issue, whether that person is an American or a Canadian government official or representative of an organization. The letter must be perfect before it goes out in the mail. The letter must state the issue, provide the students' perspective, and provide a possible solution to the situation. It must also request a reply. Both the paper and the letter will be subject to peer review, prior to teacher sign-off. Thirdly, a presentation of the paper/issue will be given to the rest of the class. They may enhance their presentation with a non-mandatory power point presentation to show supporting data, statistics, etc. Finally, should they get a return letter in a timely manner, it will be presented to the class with a brief review of the issues (pro's and con's) involved.

### **Assessment:**

There will be a set number of points for each section of the project that can be determined at a later date as each teacher will have a different emphasis they want to put on this particular project. I have the sections broken down as follows, which certainly could be added to or subtracted from.

- a) Selection of topic/situation with a thesis for each argument
- b) Rough draft of paper with accompanying peer comments post review
- c) Final copy of paper
- d) Rough draft of issue letter with accompanying peer comments post review
- e) Final formal letter
- f) Bibliography
- g) Presentation/debate (could turn into this between members of a team as each will present a different angle to the same international situation – in my class I would probably propose this as a means of presenting the issue to the class)
- h) Peer evaluation of presentation