

UNSDG 6 Assignment #1: Communicating with Your Community on a Water Issue

Introduction

You are a part of a global effort to increase access to education and empower students through “open pedagogy.” Open pedagogy is a “free access” educational practice that places you – the student – at the center of your own learning process in a more engaging, collaborative learning environment. The ultimate purpose of this effort is to achieve greater social justice in our community in which the work can be freely shared with the broader community. This is a renewable assignment that is designed to enable you to become an agent of change in your community through the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this work, you will integrate the disciplines of chemistry and political science.

Project

For this assignment, you are to write an editorial for a newspaper, or a letter to an elected official, on a current regional water issue. You will then send it to a media organization or official in your community. For instance, you can write an opinion piece and send it to one of the newspapers in your town for publication. Or you can write a letter to your state or national representative or senator and tell them about your views on the subject. Alternatively, you may instead choose to write to a member of the city council and let them know of your views on the subject. You may also choose to write to a different influential person, but please run your idea by your instructor first.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this assignment, students will be able to:

- Identify, curate information, and describe a current water issue in a community to which you are connected.
- Use critical thinking skills to analyze the water issue and propose solutions to it.
- Write a persuasive article or letter on a current water issue.
- Compose a formal letter or publishable article to inform and influence a policy-maker or the general public.
- Demonstrate participation in civic conversation and contribution to the democratic process

Possible Topics

You may choose any water-related issue in a community that means something to you. This could be a place where you grew up, a place that you’ve visited, a place where you now live, or even a place where you’d like to live but have never been. Although you’re free to choose a water issue occurring anywhere in the country or world, below are some examples of water issues affecting Tucson and Southern Arizona for your consideration.

1. Effects of climate change on the amount of water available to Tucson from the Colorado River.
2. How to accommodate the increased usage of water by Tucson’s growing population and economy with a finite supply of groundwater and a shrinking supply of Colorado River water.

3. Environmental justice issues surrounding improper chemical disposal of Trichlorethylene (TCE) and contamination of South Tucson's water supply and the cancers people have developed as a result of it.
4. Increasing conflicts between agricultural and urban water usage.
5. Impacts on water from foreign investment in Arizona's agricultural land.
6. Proposal to use desalinated water from the Sea of Cortez for Southern Arizona's water needs.
7. Measures being taken in the Southwest to decrease water usage.

Format

This assignment will consist of two parts:

1. Short paper describing the problem and your proposed solution(s) to it. This should be at least 1250 words, double-spaced, and 12-point font. It should contain, on a separate "Works Cited" page, at least five references to reputable sources. The paper will be due on October 21.
2. You will use this short paper as the basis for writing your opinion piece or letter to an official. You will then submit your letter or opinion piece to the media organization or influential person or you have identified. Instructions for the two are described below.

a. If you choose to write an opinion piece, you can find instructions for doing so on the newspaper's website. For instance, in Tucson, you can find these instructions for the Arizona Daily Star at <https://speedway.tucson.com/letters/?action=opinion>. You can also read opinion pieces at <https://tucson.com/opinion/> to get a sense of what a good opinion piece looks like.

b. If you choose to write a letter to a public official, it should be formatted with the proper address and title of the official, as well as your name, address, and email. Your letter should consist of an introductory paragraph stating briefly who you are, your relation to the subject (are you a constituent of the area the representative serves, are you a concerned citizen?), and the specific topic you are writing about.

The next paragraph should consist of a description of the problem and why you are concerned about it. Your final paragraph should include a solution to the problem and a statement of thanks to the official. An example of how to format a letter written to an elected official can be found here:

https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aboutaasl/aaslcommunity/quicklinks/el/Sample_Letter_to_Elected_Officials.pdf

The final article or letter will be due at the latest by December 9, 2021. Note: Feel free to submit or send your final article or letter before the deadline.

Due Dates

1. The short paper will be due on **October 12, 2021**.
2. The article or letter will be due on **December 9, 2021**.

Sources

The sources you use should be from reputable websites, such as from the government, universities, think tanks, and major newspapers and magazines.

Submission

When you email or submit your letter via a website, send me a copy of the acknowledgement of your submission to D2L. Also, submit to D2L a copy of the letter/opinion piece you wrote.

Find and contact your senators and representatives at:

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/AZ>

Find and contact Tucson city council members here:

<https://www.tucsonaz.gov/contact>

Publications you can submit opinions pieces to include, but are not limited to:

Arizona Daily Star--Tucson's main daily newspaper

<https://tucson.com/news/opinion/>

Tucson Weekly--Tucson's main weekly alternative newspaper

www.tucsonweekly.com

Pima Post--Pima Community College's newspaper

<https://www.pimapost.com/category/opinion/>

Arizona Daily Wildcat--UA's daily newspaper

<https://www.wildcat.arizona.edu/section/opinions>

Rubric

To be applied to the final article or letter to be submitted in December.

Item	5	4	3	2	1
Deadlines met and opinion piece or letter shared	2 deadlines met and acknowledgement or proof of submission submitted	2 deadlines met	1 deadline met and acknowledgement or proof of submission submitted		No deadlines met
Grammar & Format	All words are spelled correctly, proper punctuation is used, and sentences are full and understandable	Minor spelling and punctuation errors, sentences are basically understandable	Some spelling and punctuation errors, sentences are somewhat understandable	Significant errors in grammar and punctuation, sentences are fragments or run-ons	Many errors in grammar, sentences are confusing
Content	Shows solid knowledge of subject matter, expresses issue in a clear and persuasive way. Demonstrates appropriate information has been collected and assessed.	Mostly correct knowledge of subject, argument fairly persuasive. Demonstrates appropriate information has been collected and assessed.	Basic knowledge of subject, argument satisfactory. Demonstrates appropriate information has been collected and assessed.	Flaws in facts, reasoning, unclear or contradictory argument. Demonstrates some information has been collected and assessed.	Explanation not in own words. Inadequate information has been collected and assessed.
Citation	Full citation of approved sources with working link to source	One citation component missing or link not working	Two citation components missing	Three component citations missing	Citation components missing or improper format, no link