

Analyzing Issues—Science, Technology, Society, and the Environment

Goal • To help you organize your team, and record points of view on issues.

Introduction

People respond to complex issues with many different points of view. The way you approach a complex issue—whether to present one or respond to one—is much the same as it is for a less complex issue. You need to approach such issues systematically, calmly, and with data or observations.

What to Do

- Practise responding to controversial issues by answering the questions below.

Questions

1. Read the views on the following issue: “Should the Canadian government invest in space research?”
After reading each statement, decide how someone who believed this would answer the above question, and explain why you think they would answer that way.

- a. Canadian scientists and technologists have a good reputation in the field.

- b. There are many needs for government spending, and money is very tight.

- c. Other kinds of research may have a greater need for financial support.

- d. If Canada does not support its experts, they will go elsewhere to do research.

2. List two other points of view on this issue.

3. Suggest an argument that each of the following people might make.

- a. a technologist working in space research

- b. a government official recommending research spending to Cabinet

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c. a medical researcher at a university

d. a scientific adviser to the genetically engineered food industry

4. a. Find and read an article that discusses various sides of a controversial issue such as genetically engineered food, nuclear generated power, or Internet use.

b. Use a chart similar to the one below to help you identify the various points of view.

Point of View	Supporting Evidence

c. Review the various points of view and decide whether or not there is one that you support. If there is, explain why you support that point of view. If there is not, explain why you have not yet developed a point of view on this particular issue.

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When working with issues for which there are different responses or approaches, it can be helpful to record the various points of view. Such a review may help you decide, while you research an issue, whether you support one point of view or none at all.

What to Do

As you investigate an issue, complete the chart, then answer the questions that follow. To complete the chart, do the following:

- Identify the point of view in the first column.
- Outline points that support that point of view in the middle column.
- Provide the source of that point of view and any support in the final column.

Issue: _____

View Expressed	Points Supporting View	Source for View

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View Expressed	Points Supporting View	Source for View

Questions

Review the different points of view you have identified, then answer the questions below.

1. Which point(s) of view could you support? For each one, provide a reason for your support.

2. Which point(s) of view do you reject? For each one, provide a reason for your lack of support.

3. Is there a point of view that you might support if the approach or style in which it is expressed were changed? Identify the point of view, and explain your reasoning.
