

Recognizing Different Perspectives

One of the keys to being persuasive is the ability to understand the full range of perspectives that people may hold on the issue you are studying. Before crafting the final copy of your persuasive piece, use this handout to think through how others may feel about the same topic. The sample responses are based on the topic of global poverty. Responses can be built on student predictions, conversations with peers, or evidence collected while researching. Remember to focus your response on the controversial issue that you are studying in class and to include as much detail as possible when defining differing viewpoints.

Questions to Consider	Sample Response	Your Response
How do you feel about the controversial topic that we are studying?	I believe that global poverty is a serious issue that we should all decide to take action on, whether our country is poor or not. Not only should governments take steps to solve global poverty, individuals should be involved, too. Solving poverty is the responsibility of everyone.	
How would people who are completely opposed to your point of view feel about the controversial topic that we are studying?	They would argue that the responsibility for solving global poverty belongs only to the countries in which people are poor—and that it is not the job of countries like ours to fix the world’s problems. Finally, they would say it was all right for individuals to get involved, but they wouldn’t see the need to get involved themselves.	
Is it possible for people to mostly disagree with your point of view, but see at least something positive in your positions? How would they feel about the controversial topic that we are studying?	They would argue that while solving global poverty is a noble goal, it’s just not possible for countries like ours to tackle such a huge problem. Trying to solve global poverty could end up hurting people in nations like ours. They would believe that we need to take care of ourselves before taking care of others.	

Questions to Consider	Sample Response	Your Response
Is it possible for people to mostly agree with your point of view, but see some weaknesses in your positions? How would they feel about the controversial topic that we are studying?	They would argue that solving global poverty is a challenge worth tackling and that everyone in the world deserves the right to live in a country in which their basic needs are met. They would also think it is the job of countries and individuals to get involved in fighting poverty. They would want to see every country helping, though—not just big countries like ours. They would want to see the people and governments of poor countries working to solve poverty, too.	

The most persuasive thinkers seek out conversations with individuals who have different positions, hoping to learn as much as possible about the issue they are studying. Use this table to identify two friends or family members to talk to who are likely to see things differently than you do.

Name of friend or family member	How are they likely to feel?	When will you speak with them?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely opposed <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly disagree	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely opposed <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly disagree	