Contemporary World Issues

Content Focus

There are many unresolved problems in the world today – poverty, lack of clean water, global terrorism, poor access to healthcare . . . to name a few. In this project, you will focus on one unresolved world issue by studying the causes and nature of the problem and the ways in which organizations and individuals are addressing this issue.

Your Task

As a group of three or four, you will examine **one** unresolved world issue, breaking down this problem into the following components (with each of your group members being responsible for one of these):

1. **a description of the problem (what it is, where it exists)**
2. **a discussion of the root causes of the problem**
3. **a discussion of how this problem impacts individuals, nations, and the world**
4. **a discussion of what governments, NGOs, individuals have done to address this problem**

If you are in a group of three students, combine 1 & 2

Your main task is to **create a three-slide Google Presentation** that will be combined with other slides from members in your group, and you will deliver a two-minute speech on this topic. In addition, you will also create **two pieces of writing**: (1) a paragraph on what you learn about this issue through your research; and (2) a first-person narrative from the perspective of a fictionalized person affected by this issue.

Your group will present this information to the class in the form of a professional lecture accompanied by the Google Presentation made up of all of your group's slides.

Requirements

Each of you must do the following:
- Do the one or two writings described above.
- Turn in notes on your topic from at least three different sources (example provided in class)
- Create three Google Presentation slides that conform to guidelines discussed / showed in class
- Plan and give a two-minute talk on one of the four topics above

To the group, you must help:
- assemble the slides together into a unified presentation
- introduce, organize, and facilitate the group during the presentation

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Speech Outline

Hook – Begin with a one or two-sentence opening that captures your listeners' attention (startling statistic, a provocative question, a short anecdote).
Thesis/Argument – One or two sentences which provide an overview of what the main point is of your topic component.
Evidence / Commentary – Provide evidence from your research that is specific and topic-appropriate. You need to comment on the evidence, too, explaining what the examples/statistics/stories mean (the "so what" of your info.)
Conclusion: Restate your thesis and lead into the next speaker or conclude for your group (depending on your position in the presentation).

Research Suggestions

Prentice Hall *World History: The Modern World*, Ch. 19, Secs. 2-4
http://www.un.org/en/globalissues (United Nations)
http://www.unfoundation.org/ (United Nations Foundation)
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/ListofIssues.aspx (Office of the High Commission on Human Rights)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Human_rights_abuses (Wikipedia list of human rights issues with links to Wikipedia articles)
https://www.ngoadvisor.net/ong/ (List of all major NGOs; you can search / sort by topic)
http://www.hrw.org/ (Human Rights Watch)
http://www.amnesty.org (Amnesty International)

Slide Contents

Each of you will create three slides:

- Minimal text, decent size
- Impactful, relevant images
- Consistent style with other group members

Presentation Scoring Guide

5
- Speaker presents a respectful and appropriate appearance
- Speaker demonstrates an excellent understanding of the subject matter; follows suggested outline
- Slide content follows class guidelines and enhances speaker's presentation
- Speaker demonstrates mastery of speaking components: volume, pacing, eye contact, posture, tone, confidence (doesn't sound memorized)
- Speaker adheres to time guidelines
- Class time is always used productively

4
- Speaker presents a respectful and appropriate appearance
- Speaker demonstrates an above average understanding of the subject matter; follows outline
- Slide content follows class guidelines and supports speaker's presentation
- Speaker demonstrates above average mastery of speaking components: volume, pacing, eye contact, posture, tone, confidence (doesn't sound memorized)
- Speaker adheres to time guidelines
- Class time is always used productively

3
- Speaker presents a respectful appearance
- Speaker demonstrates an average understanding of the subject matter; may follow outline
- Slides are fairly basic, don't necessarily follow class guidelines, and don't necessarily enhance presentation – may even detract from it
- Speaker demonstrates average understanding of speech components though may demonstrate a marked weakness in one or more areas; may sound "robotic" or unrehearsed
- Speaker may adhere to time guidelines
- Class time is mostly used productively

2
- Speaker may not present an appropriate appearance
- Speaker demonstrates a below average understanding of the subject matter; may follow outline
- Slides may not meet requirements or may detract from presentation
- Speaker does not demonstrate understanding of speech components with weaknesses in several areas
- Time and preparation are minimal; speaker doesn't seem familiar or comfortable with material
- Class time may/may not have been used productively

1
- Appearance is not adequate
- Speaker demonstrates little to no understanding of the subject matter; pays little attention to outline
- Slides are either not present, not adequate, or detract from the presentation
- Speaker generally has poor speaking skills with little attention to components
- Preparation is not apparent; presentation may be extremely short
- Class time may not have been used productively

List of Issues

1. Nuclear arms proliferation

2. Lack of clean/safe water

3. Child labor

4. Poaching

5. Air pollution

6. Land degradation, habitat destruction, deforestation

7. State-sponsored torture / arbitrary detention

8. Terrorism

9. Lack of education

10. Hunger

11. Lack of access to adequate healthcare

12. Religious persecution

13. HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

14. Gender discrimination / women's rights

15. Sexual orientation discrimination (LGBT rights)

16. Malaria

17. Refugees

18. Poverty, income inequality

Slide Info

- Use same background for all slides (exception: title slide, if you choose to have one)
- Wisely choose your colors (black text + red background = blech!)
- Text should be no smaller than 26 pt.
- All slides need **content**.
- Content should be bulleted, brief, not full sentences.
- Images need to be appropriate to topic/audience. Put name of link next to image. Write captions, too. Choose images from a filtered Google Image search to allow only those that are allowed for reproduction. Or use http://www.photosforclass.com/ for classroom-appropriate images that are properly credited on the photo itself.

Content-Specific Info

Topic 1: Think of this as a three-slide, broad overview of the issue. Answer the who, what, where, when, why, how questions, but do so briefly and not in depth. Provide a brief history of the issue – how long has the problem been around, when did it start, why, how? While I start the three slides in my project with a quote from a famous person connected to this issue, you should think of a unique hook that would work well for your topic.

Topic 2: For this topic, try to think about what we've studied this year (industrialism, imperialism, the world conflicts, for example), and try to connect this issue to something we've studied. "Root causes" means to discuss what in the human condition has caused this to be an issue – and this could have something to do with religion, culture, levels of consumerism, values, kinds of governments. Think deeply.

Topic 3: Here you really need to divide your slides into the topics we listed – impacts on individuals, nations, and the world as whole. For individuals, you could discuss a specific person as an example of the larger issue, or you could do what I did and explain how individuals in general are affected. For nations, it is good to discuss a few specific nations (but not the U.S.) that are especially impacted. On the global level, discuss impacts that affect all people, not just those in specific countries.

Topic 4: For this topic, you should mention what international laws / treaties or documents / resolutions from the United Nations have an impact here. For my topic of landmines, I talk about the Ottawa Treaty, which is an international treaty most nations have signed that bans them from producing or using landmines. You can also focus on laws that some nations have adopted to address this problem (but stay away from U.S. laws), and then end with a single slide that focuses on a few NGOs that are most prominent in addressing this issue.