

# Sample Choosing to Participate Toolbox Project and Assignments

## Sample Assignments from Partner Schools

The sample CTP assignments that follow come from members of the Facing History Partner Schools Network. The Partner Schools Network (PSN) is made up of over 140 schools that embrace Facing History's core themes as foundational to the school's mission and weave Facing History content, pedagogy, and teaching strategies throughout the entire school: in classes, advisory groups, faculty meetings, and school community activities.

The PSN is defined by a set of common principles:

- We value the complexities of identity and combat prejudice in our school community.
- We examine choices of the past and their legacies to inform our choices today.
- We integrate intellectual rigor, emotional engagement, and ethical reflection.
- We foster dialogue, empathy, and civic participation.

In addition to integrating Facing History core case studies and units—which include CTP readings and activities—at different grade levels, many schools in the Partner Schools Network create CTP-oriented projects as culminating events of the school year, designed in part to create awareness and foster conversation among peers and the school community. Three of these schools have generously shared their Choosing to Participate project assignments for other educators to use for inspiration and models.

## Final Exhibition Project, 8th-Grade Humanities

This month-long final project at Gateway Middle School in San Francisco, California, is the culminating activity of a year-long humanities course focused on the questions: What does it mean to belong? Who decides if you belong? How do people gain belonging? Because the project is the culmination of their study of US history and English language arts, it consists of a written element, a presentation (tri-fold poster and “toolbox”), and research on history and current events. Students present their posters and research at an exhibition night to friends, family, community members, and staff. The school’s ultimate goal is to create civically engaged young adults.

In order to develop the understanding and skills to take on such a project at the end of 8th grade, Gateway students use Facing History’s resources (including *Choices in Little Rock* and *Teaching “Warriors Don’t Cry”*) and scope and sequence to:

- Investigate history through the lens of identity, focusing on different novels and eras in US history
- Dig deeper into case studies that help students understand the intersection between laws, social issues, and identity
- Provide students with creative outlets to express and expand upon their study of injustices (e.g., an earlier historical fiction narrative assignment and an activism-through-art project)
- Plan for and respond to issues of intolerance/misconceptions related to identity in their own community
- Undertake the final exhibition project, an inquiry into fighting for social justice in the United States

The design of this project allows for student choice while providing a highly structured process to give them adequate support to complete the project. Students work in small groups of two to four based on their interest, choosing from a list of possible topics. They are provided with an assignment that outlines deliverables, topic options, a calendar of due dates, and a detailed explanation for each element of their project. After they take a survey to indicate their top choices of the different project options, students are placed in small groups. Students also have access to a Google Drive folder that contains their project prompt and worksheets to help them organize their research, create their argument, outline their research paper, and complete their citations. The project takes place over five weeks, about five hours per week in class.

The project assignment and rubrics (for the exhibition essay, the toolbox and tri-fold, and the presentation) are included on the pages that follow.

### **Sample Assignment: Final 8th-Grade Exhibition Project**

#### **What social injustices exist in our society and how do we fight them?**

##### **Project Description**

For your final 8th-grade exhibition project, you will work in small groups to choose a social justice issue. This will be an inquiry project tracing the evolution of an issue over the course of history while making claims about how to improve the issue in society today.

You will pick a social issue to research in depth. You will start by identifying the issue and describing why it is a problem. You will then research where the issue came from: When did the problem develop in the history of America? How did it change over the course of time? What laws, people, tactics, or movements created the change?

In order to show the social change, you will pick one data point and consider how things have changed over the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Finally, you will report on the current state of the issue in today's society. What still needs to be done? What can we do to continue improving the lives of people affected by this issue?

## Project Must-Haves

Your final project will include the following:

1. **Tri-fold Poster:** Project board that includes a visual explanation of your research and findings.
2. **Data Analysis:** What metrics will you use to show change? Locate and analyze data that supports your claim. Explain how this data shows social change and why you chose to represent it this way.
3. **Toolbox:** A kit of tangible items to represent how people brought about and can continue the social change. Think of it like a toolbox—perhaps a pencil and paper to petition, or a newspaper to represent the media used to raise awareness.
4. **Research Report:** A written component that answers the project question about your social issue (a five-paragraph essay written by each team member).

## Deadlines

- Choose your topic April 8
- Project launch/research begins April 22 or 23
- Exhibition research notetaker due May 1
- Draft of essay due May 14
- Final essay due May 20
- Final touches to project May 20
- Mock presentations May 21 and 22
- **Exhibition Night May 22**

## Roles and Responsibilities

It will be important to communicate and collaborate on this project, but also to divide and conquer!

Elect a “captain” for each element of the project:

\_\_\_\_\_ Toolbox and Explanations

\_\_\_\_\_ Research Notes and Outline

\_\_\_\_\_ Tri-fold Board and Materials

	As a Group	Individually
Research	At least 9 sources (if a group of 4, you need 12)  Make sure you are not doubling up on sources or information	3 reliable sources, with 5 facts/quotes from each
Essay	Collaborate on the outline  Collaborate on your citation page	Write your own essay in your own words
Toolbox	Create items and explanations together	Be able to explain all items in your presentation
Tri-fold	Create an engaging board, share the responsibility of bringing in resources, make sure the presentation is neat and professional	Be able to explain everything on your tri-fold and answer questions about your topic

## Displaying and Analyzing Data & Evidence

**Goal:** To identify and display data and evidence to help support your claim about how your issue has evolved and what still needs to be done.

### Key Questions

- How can we identify appropriate data and evidence?
  - Appropriate data comes from a **reliable source**.
  - Appropriate data is evidence that **supports our claim** about how our person/group created social change.
- What do we do with our data once we have collected it?
  1. **Display** it in a way that is easy to read and analyze (i.e., identify *similarities, differences, trends, and other relationships*, or the lack of these, in the data)—for example, through:
    - Tables
    - Charts
    - Bar graphs
    - Line graphs
    - Scatter plots
    - Pie charts
  2. **Analyze** the *similarities, differences, trends, and other relationships*, or the lack of these, in the data. Does the data support your claim? If so, how and why?

### Displaying Data Checklist

- Does our data come from a **reliable source**?
- Does the format of our data display (e.g., table, line graph) help us to identify similarities, differences, and trends in our data?
- Does our data **connect to and support our claim** about how our person/group created social change?
- Explain** why you chose to display your data in this manner and not another.

## Toolbox for Change and Tri-fold

### Toolbox for Change

**Objective:** To help show how your issue has evolved and what can be done or has been done to address this need. Your group will create a physical “toolbox for change” that represents what can be used or has been used to create change.

- **Your toolbox must contain at least four items.** For example, if your subject used the legal system to help create change, you might put a gavel in the toolbox, along with three other items. Your items should be symbols of the tools your individual would recommend using.
- **Each item should have a written explanation** that shows how this tool was used and how others could use it, as well.

Get creative! You can use real items or make your own. You can use a shoebox and decorate it, or you can create another vessel that represents your individual.

### Tri-fold

**Objective:** To display your learning in a neat, creative way that will engage visitors. All information should be typed or written neatly.

All three panels should be utilized.

- **Middle Panel:** What we need to do now, how can we do it
- **Side Panel:** Visual presentations of your group’s data (charts, graphs, tables, infographics) and evidence and analysis of the data for each piece
- **Side Panel:** Pictures, facts about your subject

Along with your **tri-fold**, your **toolbox for change** and a copy of your **essay** will also be displayed.