



MY TURN: TARGETING A PROBLEM FOR TEENS

(60-90 minutes of class time; time needed out of class varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn about different problems affecting teenagers, choose one, and brainstorm ways to make a difference.

MATERIALS

Taking Action handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *Taking Action* handout for each of your students.
- ✓ If possible, arrange for Internet and/or phone access in the classroom

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell students that they will have the opportunity to choose an issue of importance to teens and to learn about the problem and how they could make a difference. Read the following to the students: *Do Something, a nationwide network of young people conducted a nationwide survey of 1,238 students in grades 7-12. Do Something's 2001 Top Teen Causes Poll found that drunk driving, depression and teen suicide, guns at school, improving schools/education, discrimination, violence in school, drugs, self-esteem, AIDS, and abuse at home are teens' top 10 concerns, and two-thirds of teens (67%) plan to get involved during the next year with the issues that are important to them.*
- ✓ Ask your students if there are any concerns that they would add to this list or any concerns that they would remove from it. Have your class determine a final list of 10 concerns important to teens.
- ✓ List the 10 causes on the board and ask students to think about which one they would

like to choose to learn more about. In class or for homework, have students write about their topic; they should state the topic of interest, what they already know about this topic or issue, and questions to guide their learning.

- ✓ The next day, provide time for your students to pursue learning about their chosen topic via library resources, the Internet, calls to community agencies, and surveys of students in the school or adults in the community. If several students have chosen the same issue, encourage them to work in a group and share the information and resources they have found. Note: For more information about Do Something, teens can visit: www.dosomething.org, e-mail help@dosomething.org, or write Do Something, 24-32 Union Square East, 4th Floor South, New York, N.Y. 10003
- ✓ Have students develop either a flyer or a poster about their issue, listing key facts about the problem they investigated. Have each student or group share their issue briefly with the class.
- ✓ Brainstorm with your students the many ways that they could take action in regard to the problems they researched. Then, individually or in small groups, have students fill out the *Taking Action* handout on the following page. Give students the opportunity to share their favorite ideas with the class.
- ✓ Ask your students to implement one of their ideas for making a difference. Allow for a certain amount of time to pass and then ask your students to informally share with the class what they did in respect to the issue/cause they selected.


MY TURN: TARGETING A PROBLEM FOR TEENS (continued)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Are you surprised about the issues of importance to teens? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Do you think some of the issues are less important or more important than others? Explain why you feel this to be true?*
- ★ *Did you already know a lot about the issue you selected? If yes, where did you learn this information? If no, did you learn a lot more about your issue?*
- ★ *Did your impression of the issue change once you researched it? (Does it seem more overwhelming? Does it seem harder to understand? Easier to understand?)*
- ★ *Was it difficult to come up with ideas for taking action in respect to your issue? If yes, what made it difficult?*
- ★ *Did you implement one of your ideas for taking action? Was it difficult to undertake? Do you think you made an impact?*
- ★ *How do you now feel about the issues we listed that are most important to teens? Are you more knowledgeable about them? Do you think teens can help solve these problems?*



TAKING ACTION

The problem for teens I chose is: _____.

What I know... (List here the FACTS you have learned about the problem.)	Ways I can make a difference... (List here your ideas for how you can take action on this issue.)

When you have listed as many ideas as you can think of, put a star by the three ideas that are your favorites. (Think about which are cost and time effective and which are likely to have the greatest impact.)