

Introduction to Philosophy

Civic Action

Call one of your elected political representatives about a political, social, or community issue that you care about.

Doing this will also count as 1 volunteer hour towards the volunteer activity experiment in philosophy.

Examples

Here are some examples that other students have done for their civic action activity:

- Calling their senator about a bill impacting the LGBTQ+ community.
- Calling their congressional representative to thank that representative for their stance on immigration.
- Calling their state assembly member about a proposed abortion-related constitutional amendment.
- Calling their mayor to address the lack of blizzard preparedness for their city.

Here's What I Want You to Do

Here are some steps to follow for your civic action activity:

- Begin by deciding what your opinion is about an issue you care about.
- Scan the QR Code (or visit <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>), enter your address, and identify an elected political representative you can reach regarding that issue. This should also give you their phone number.
- Prepare for the phone call by thinking about what you want to say. Jot down some talking points or write yourself a script if you'd like. Focus on expressing your opinion and persuading your representative to do something about your topic.
 - You can search online for "script to call your representative" and find many examples.
 - For instance, here is a website with scripts for progressive/left-leaning issues: <https://5calls.org>
 - (I cannot seem to find a similar one with scripts for conservative/right-leaning issues. If you know of one, please let me know and I'll share it with the entire class!)
 - Your script should likely have something like the following form:
 - Hi, my name is...
 - I'm calling about...
 - I'm concerned because...
 - I'd like [representative] to... because...
 - I would like a response if possible. (Or something like this. The main thing to do is be sure to **leave your address**, which requires them to log your call.)
 - Thank you for your time.
- Make the phone call.
 - It is okay to speak to your representative's staff member and leave you message with them.
 - It is also okay if you end up leaving a voicemail message that does all of the above.



Civic Action (Continued)

After your phone call, **submit the evidence of your civic action** to UB Learns:

- A. A **screenshot** of your phone's call log. You can search for how to do this on your phone. Let me know if you cannot do screenshots on your phone and I will help you find an alternative means of documentation.
- B. The **name and position of the person you called** so the phone number can be cross-referenced.
- C. A two (or three) sentences **summary of what you talked about** with that person.

Here's Why I Want You to Do It

I am having you perform this civic action activity because it has you...

- Identify an issue that you care about.
- Practice taking a stance on something and presenting a short argument in defense of it.
- Develop your abilities for professional communication and civic engagement.

This activity may also push you out of your comfort zone, which is essential for your learning and growth!

Collaboration & Academic Integrity

Feel free to work with your classmates on putting together your script and even practicing what you want to say. However, please be sure that you are expressing your own views in what you are communicating. After all, the purpose of this is to talk to your elected official about *your* beliefs on an issue that *you* care about.

In addition, I expect you to make your own phone call, it is not a group activity. Let me know if you are struggling and I'll gladly help!

Above all, **please be honest if you do receive any outside assistance or use the ideas of others**. This includes using AI tools. In any of those cases, be sure to let me know what assistance you received, and I will let you know how to properly acknowledge that assistance in accordance with standards of academic integrity.