

WHAT IS PUBLIC POLICY?

Directions: Read the following definitions of and statements about public policy. Then, list at least five examples of public policies you've heard or read about. An example is provided. Finally, answer the questions below.

"Stated most simply, public policy is the sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the life of citizens."

—B. Guy Peters,
University of Pittsburgh

"Public policy consists of political decisions for implementing programs to achieve societal goals."

—Eloise F. Malone,
U.S. Naval Academy

"Who gets what, when and how?"

—Harold Lasswell,
University of Texas

"Whatever governments choose to do or not do."

—Thomas Dye,
John Thomas Dye School

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC POLICIES

1. All cars in the state must pass a government safety inspection.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What do citizens need to know about public policy issues?

From where do you think most people get their information about public policies?

WE THE PEOPLE

Directions: Along with your group members, choose three public policy issues that might be of concern to someone of your assigned identity group. Fill in the chart for each group member's identity.

WE THE...	PUBLIC POLICY	PUBLIC POLICY	PUBLIC POLICY
senior citizens	public prescription drug coverage	nursing home availability	Social Security

student handout - D

doctor	small business owner	married adult with two young children
teenager	soldier	person with a terminal illness
member of an ethnic minority	person living below the poverty line	Chief Executive Officer of a large company
homeowner	labor union member	single parent
adult female	airline flight attendant	teacher

PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

1. labor laws	2. tax code	3. textbook adoption (states or districts choosing books for their schools)
4. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations	5. day care	6. health care
7. school choice programs (allowing parents to choose which public school their child attends)	8. school vouchers (public money to pay private school tuition)	9. deployment of troops
10. City Council meetings and policies	11. military salaries	12. sex education policy
13. teen curfews	14. federal student loans	15. drivers' licenses
16. military draft	17. stem cell research	18. Social Security
19. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of new drugs	20. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations for T.V. and other media content	21. PATRIOT Act
22. affirmative action	23. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) policies	24. immigration law
25. unemployment insurance policies	26. veterans' benefits	27. government regulation of utilities and energy costs
28. national security	29. abortion laws	30. school boundaries
31. public health: flu shots	32. tort reform (legal limits to money damages in lawsuits)	33. No Child Left Behind regulations and testing

student handout - C