



PRESENTS...

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

DECEMBER 2014

LENDING A HELPING HAND – VOLUNTEERISM ESSAYS

LEVEL

Upper intermediate and above

GOALS

Students will:

- Discuss reasons why people volunteer, benefits of volunteering, local attitudes about volunteering, and their own experiences with volunteering, if any
- Listen to several speakers and identify details about what motivates people to volunteer (if using the YouTube video option)
- Brainstorm about and discuss important local or global social issues and challenges, the affected populations, and volunteer actions that can address the identified challenges
- Write short essays that describe a social challenge, why it is important, and what they can do about it through volunteering

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard, chalkboard, or large pieces of paper posted on the wall; markers or chalk
- Students: pencils or pens, blank paper if students are making their own graphic organizers
- [Graphic Organizer](#): Volunteerism – Lending a Helping Hand
- (Optional) Computer, projector or other display device, and a short video about volunteering, such as this [“Youth Volunteerism”](#) YouTube video

PREPARATION

1. Make copies or printouts of the graphic organizer, preferably one per student. If this is not possible, students working in groups can share a handout, or the teacher can present the graphic organizer on the board for students to copy on blank paper.
2. If using a YouTube video, locate and review the video online. Prepare the video playback equipment. Note: the suggested “Youth Volunteerism” video features teen speakers. This video has optional English language captions that can be used to support your students’ understanding. Turn the captions on by clicking on the “cc” icon in the YouTube player. Also, you can search the YouTube library to locate a different video about volunteering that suits your teaching context, if desired.

PROCEDURES

1. Write the word “volunteer” on the board. In a whole class setting, ask student volunteers to describe and define what it means to be a volunteer. To elicit information, you can ask guiding

questions, such as “What is the difference between volunteering and working (employment)?” and “What are examples of places that people volunteer?”

2. Facilitate a class discussion about volunteering:

(Option 1 – with a YouTube video) Before the class discussion, to create interest and activate students’ prior knowledge about volunteering, show the suggested YouTube video or another short volunteerism-related video of your choice.

- a. After the video plays, ask the class to identify some of the reasons why the people volunteered and what benefits of volunteering were mentioned. Also, prompt students to supply other reasons why people might want to volunteer. Write the students’ responses on the board.
- b. Ask the class to compare and contrast the ideas mentioned in the video to local attitudes about volunteering. Ask whether it is common for people to volunteer. If so, what are some common volunteer causes that people support? What volunteer organizations and groups work in their communities?
- c. Ask a few students to describe their experiences with volunteering, if applicable.

(Option 2 – without a YouTube video)

- a. Ask the class to identify some of the reasons why the people might volunteer and possible benefits of volunteering. Write the students’ responses on the board.
 - b. Ask the class to discuss local attitudes about volunteering: Is it common for people to volunteer? If so, what are some common volunteer causes that people support? What volunteer organizations and groups work in their communities?
 - c. Ask a few students to describe their experiences with volunteering, if applicable.
3. Create groups of 3-5 students. Ask student volunteers to pass out the graphic organizers, or, if students are creating their own graphic organizers, show a model on the board and support students, as needed, while they copy the graphic organizer format on blank paper.
 4. Explain that “lend a helping hand,” the idiom at the top of the graphic organizer, means to provide help or support to someone in need.
 5. Tell students they are going to use the graphic organizer to identify important local or global social issues and challenges that can be addressed, in part, through volunteerism. Groups should brainstorm and discuss their ideas as they identify: (1) an issue or problem, (2) who is affected, (3) groups or organizations who work to address the problem (if known), and (4) what they, as potential volunteers, can do about the issue. Walk students through the example shown at the top of the graphic organizer to ensure they understand what information should be placed in each column. Groups should try to complete the graphic organizer for three or more issues during the time you allot for group work.
 6. Next, tell the students they will use the information in the graphic organizer to develop an individual short personal essay. Student essays should:
 - Describe the issue or problem and why it is important to the writer
 - Describe who is affected by the issue
 - Describe organizations working to address the problem (if known)
 - Describe what he/she could do as a volunteer to address the problem and the potential benefits of these actions; the benefits they describe can relate to how the problem will be addressed or the positive personal outcomes of volunteering

Depending on how much time you dedicate to this activity, students can either write a draft essay during class, or they can create an organizational outline in class and write the essay as a homework assignment.

ADAPT IT TO YOUR CLASS – EXTENSION AND VARIATION IDEAS

- **Research:** Before they complete their essays, encourage students to complete internet or library research to add additional information to all columns in their graphic organizers. Depending on time available and your institution's resources, students can complete this research as a class or individually.
- **Guest speakers:** Invite guest speakers from local volunteer, civic, or government organizations working on social issues students identified. Ask the speaker to address how volunteers can contribute to the identified social cause. If your guest speaker can present in English, have students prepare questions for the speaker prior to the presentation. Regardless of whether the speaker presents in your students' native language or English, ask students to write a reflection paper in English that reacts to the presentation (what they learned about: the issue, the guest's organization, their community, and how the issue can be addressed through volunteering).
- **Develop a written volunteer project proposal:** Using your students' brainstormed ideas, select a topic for a class volunteer project and guide your students through the proposal writing process. See this [article](#) from *English Teaching Forum* for an excellent example of how to manage a proposal-writing project. Even if your class can't actually carry out the project due to resource or administrative constraints, they will gain valuable language skills, analytical skills, and content knowledge during the proposal-writing process.
- **Conduct a class volunteer project:** Using your students' brainstormed ideas, work with your class to develop a volunteer project that you will carry out together. The project might involve conducting a clean up activity, hosting an information session about a social issue, or any other idea you and your students develop together. Depending on your institution's rules, you will likely have to coordinate your project with administration officials.
- **Program service learning into your EFL curriculum:** With advance planning, you can incorporate volunteer projects that both connect to the local academic curriculum and meet real community needs. Learn more about this approach that combines authentic communication with community service by viewing this ["Incorporating Service Learning into EFL Classrooms" webinar](#) from the American English team.