

STUDENT VOICES: CURRENT ISSUES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Close Up's *Student Voices: Current Issues* allows students to examine today's most pressing issues and discuss actions policymakers have proposed to resolve those issues. Students will take part in four online sessions led by Close Up instructors to meet, interact, and deliberate with groups of their peers from all across the country. Each session will encourage students to consider multiple perspectives and deepen their understanding of how public policy affects local communities. They will examine major policy issues, evaluate proposals that represent a range of viewpoints, and develop their own ideas of how to best address the issues.

Student Program Sessions

Session 1 – Building an Inclusive Community: In order to create a respectful space for discussing complex issues, Close Up will facilitate dialogue between students from different backgrounds to build a cohesive online community. By examining a series of long-standing political values (such as liberty, equality, order, and justice), students will develop a greater understanding of why people disagree.

Sessions 2 & 3 – Current Issue Deliberations: Working together in an online community of diverse viewpoints, students will examine two major policy issues, evaluate multiple proposals representing a range of perspectives, and develop their own ideas of how to best address the issues. Students will deliberate about two of the following topics:

- **The Economy:** What, if anything, should the government do to put Americans back to work and get the economy back on track?
- **Energy and the Environment:** What, if anything, should the United States do to address environmental concerns and climate change?
- **Health care:** What, if anything, should the government do to reform health care?
- **Police Reform:** What actions, if any, should be taken to reform police practices?

Session 4 – Reflection: Students will reflect on their own political values, their priorities, and how their opinions may have evolved by deliberating with students with diverse perspectives. They will then develop personal goals for making their voices heard among friends, family, and decision-makers.

Program Resources for Teachers

To ensure that educators feel confident and prepared to support students both before and after the Close Up-led issue discussions, this program provides teachers with an invaluable professional development training session, as well as balanced, comprehensive resources to use in the classroom:

- **On-Demand Training:** The 30-minute, on-demand training session will show teachers how to use Close Up's nonpartisan techniques and materials to facilitate respectful classroom discussion of current issues.
- **Digital Resources:** Teachers will also receive year-long access to *Controversial Issues in the News*, Close Up's digital library of issue discussions, lesson plans, activities, and assessments that take a measured, bipartisan look at today's most pressing topics.

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Program Details

What is the cost and what is included in the program?

The Student Voices program costs \$900 per classroom and includes:

- Four student discussions hosted online and facilitated by Close Up Instructors;
- A pre-recorded professional development training for educators on how to frame controversial issues in the classroom; and
- Access to Close Up's *Controversial Issues in the News* digital library for the school year.

Is the program designed for a particular grade level?

The program is designed for middle school and high school students.

- The middle school program is for grades 6-8.
- The high school program is for grades 9-12.

When will the student discussions take place?

The discussion series will be offered throughout the school year. There will be separate discussions for middle school students and for high school students. When educators sign up for the program, your Close Up Representative will work with you to determine your availability and accommodate your school schedule. If we are unable to offer the program at a time that works for you during the school day, we will offer a session at the end of the school day as well.

Who are Close Up Instructors?

Close Up Instructors have over 120 hours of curriculum and methodology training and are experts in facilitating student discussions around controversial issues.

What kinds of resources will Close Up provide students and are they nonpartisan?

Close Up's resources and programs offer students a balanced and bipartisan look at controversial issues by using a selection of primary sources (speeches, op-eds, videos, current legislation) drawn from decision-makers and experts on all parts of the political spectrum. Students will be provided with resources to carefully consider both sides of an issue before developing their own opinion. To see sample resources, [click here](#).

How do I sign up?

To register your classroom(s), please visit our [website](#).