

Being an Advocate

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Estimated time:	80 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [30 minutes] Activity #1• [50 minutes] Assignment Participants will work on the “Assignment” between group meetings and will require at least two days to complete the assignment. Please note that the suggested 50 minutes for the assignment only encompasses the portion of the assignment completed during group convenings.
Group or individual activity:	Group
Ages:	11-18 years old
Grades:	Grades 6-12
Online / offline elements:	This learning experience contains links to online resources to help facilitate a group-based discussion, with an offline writing assignment.
Areas:	Main area: Civic and Political Engagement Additional areas: Content Production, Contextual Literacy, Identity Exploration and Formation, Information Literacy, Positive / Respectful Behavior
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Learning Goal

Participants will learn about the concept of advocacy by identifying an issue that affects their community and brainstorming two changes that they want to see in the future concerning that problem.

Materials

- [For educator] Computer with Internet access
- Projector and projection screen
- [For participants - optional] Computers or mobile devices with Internet access
- [For participants - optional] Printer

Resources

- Report: [The World Youth Report on Youth Civic Engagement](#) - by The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations
- Website: [Fight for \\$15: About Us](#) - by Fight for \$15
- Website: [Women's March Unity Principles](#) - by the Women's March
- Website: [#Enough: National School Walkout](#) - by the Women's March
- Video: [What Is Advocacy?](#) - by Advocates for Children and Youth
- Video: [Fight for 15](#) - by Fight for \$15
- Video: [How Do I Get Started?](#) - by Youth in Front
- Video: [What Happens After the March?](#) - by Youth in Front
- Video: [Why Protest?](#) - by Youth in Front

Activity #1: What Is Advocacy?

SAY:

- There are many aspects of our communities and surroundings that we appreciate. Maybe we are grateful for our friends. It could be that we enjoy

getting to play on a particular sports team. Perhaps we love having the opportunity to listen to new music from artists we like.

- However, sometimes there are aspects about our community that don't sit well with us. Maybe your school just put a new dress code in place, requiring expensive clothes that your family can't afford. Perhaps an elected politician is trying to create laws that don't consider your community's needs. It's possible that the transportation options where you live are not designed to take you to the places that you need to go.
- Let's say you noticed that the transit near you and your neighbors forced all of you to take three buses and a long walk to reach the nearest food market.

ASK:

- How might you try to change that?
- Are there individuals you might reach out to who can help you?
- Maybe you have friends who experience similar problems. How might you all stand up for yourselves?

SAY:

- In these kinds of situations, we often feel like things might be better if we were able to change what bothers us. This desire to stick up for what we believe in and create change is called "advocacy."

[On a projection screen, review a website used for advocacy. Highlight how the form of advocacy depicted in it began by people, often youth, who realized there was a problem affecting their community and wanted to do something to try to change it. Examples from the United States context include [Fight for \\$15](#) and the [Women's March](#). Examples that have more of a global scope include [Global Voices](#), [Greenpeace](#), and [World Wildlife Fund](#).]

SAY:

- Now we are going to identify one issue in your community that you're passionate about and some next steps you and the community might take to solve a problem.

Assignment

[Split participants into groups of 3. Give each group time in the current session, and at least two full days, to 1) research a problem impacting their community, identifying at least two ways the issue is affecting their community and two ways to potentially solve the problem, and 2) develop a poster that provides information on the identified issue and potential solutions that they will present to the larger group as part of a “gallery walk.”]

SAY:

- In your groups,
 1. Research and identify an aspect of your community (a “community” could be your school, neighborhood, or a local group you belong to) that you would like to change. You can talk to your friends, teachers, and / or family about things they would like to change or about the problems affecting them.
 2. Create a poster. The posters created by each group will be hung on the wall, and we will do a “gallery walk” together where each group will discuss the problem they identified and how to solve it.

SAY:

- Each group must identify at least two ways the issue is affecting their community and two potential ways to address it.
- Be creative: take photos and paste them onto the poster [ideally, make sure participants have access to a printer] to illustrate the problem and / or the solutions, or use flowcharts, graphs, and charts to communicate the extent of the problem and / or the solutions.
- Each poster should “stand alone.” In other words, the poster should have enough information on it so that someone can view / read it and understand the issue and potential solutions without a group member’s explanation.

[Give each group enough time to engage in research and develop their posters. Make sure that you are available for questions and technical support. When the larger group reconvenes, have participants hang the posters on the wall, give the larger group 20 minutes to walk around and look at others’ posters, then allow about 30 minutes to have each smaller group present their poster to the larger group.]