

# Common Core Social Studies Learning Plan Template

**Lesson Title:** Should Health Care be a Right?

**Author Name:** Adrienne Barry

**Contact Information:** abarry@washoeschools.net

**Appropriate for Grade Level(s):** 9-12

**History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s) (RI, W, S&L, L):** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1b

**Type of Lesson:** Research based structured academic controversy

**Student Readings (list):** Background information (abridged from procon.org, Pro and Cons of the right to health care (abridged from procon.org), and Advantages and concerns regarding universal health care (abridged from abc clio)

**Total Time Needed:** 2 block periods

**Lesson Outline:**

Time Frame (e.g. 15 minutes)	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?
10 minutes	Monitoring students/ Distributing grouping cards	Answering the prompt: Should health care be a right granted to all people in the United States? Defend your answer. Once students have an opportunity to answer the prompt, we will discuss their responses aloud.
5 minutes	Introducing the lesson/ explaining groups	Listening/ moving into groups
30-40 minutes	Monitoring students/ providing clarifications	Reading and annotating the background information, then reading their assigned perspective. Students are taking notes and annotating throughout the readings on the accompanying graphic organizer. Students will annotate the background information reading by finding two areas where you can make an inference or a conclusion (idea not explicitly in the text, but supported by the text). Underline the sections and use “!!!” to identify those areas. Make a note to the side that describes your inference/conclusion. They will also complete the Structured Academic Controversy graphic organizer.
25 minutes	Monitoring students	Discussing the arguments they found to be most convincing from their respective readings. Students will take notes on their partner’s

*The pages that follow the Learning Plan Template includes student readings and reading strategy/questions, source(s), handouts, assignment sheet, self-assessment/reflection and a rubric related to this lesson.*

		readings. They will then discuss what they believe their strongest arguments are.
20 minutes	Walking around, ensuring students are on task	Students then join two other students, who have the opposite perspective. The “Pro” side will have 1 minute to make their argument. The “Con” side will then have 1 minute to state their case. The second member of the “Pro” team will then have 1 minute to rebuttal. Then the second member of the “Con” Side will have 1 minute to rebuttal. Each side is taking notes throughout the discussion.
30 minutes	Monitoring	Students will now choose which side they find has the strongest argument and write a paragraph addressing the following prompt: Please write a paragraph below that asserts your position. <b>Should health care be a right for all people in the United States?</b> Be sure to use texts presented during your debate to support your thesis. Write an 8 sentence paragraph arguing your point.

**Description of Lesson Assessment:** Students will write a paragraph defending whether or not health care should be a right to all people in the United States.

**How will students reflect on the process and their learning?** They will have several opportunities to reflect on their learning. They will first reflect when they are presenting the information they found, then once they are discussing with the other group, and again when they are writing their paragraph.

## Background Information

6.3 million people in the US were uninsured in 2008 according to the US Census Bureau. [7] In 2007, health care expenditures<sup>1</sup> totaled \$2.2 trillion - 16.2% of the US economy. Health care is the largest industry in the US, employing more than 14 million people...

Both proponents<sup>2</sup> and opponents of the debate appeal to documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as evidence supporting whether or not all Americans should have the right to health care.

A Sep. 2009 US Census Bureau report found that 46.3 million people in the United States (15.4% of the US population) [7] did not have health insurance in 2008. Some groups contend that this figure is inaccurate or misleading because it may include undocumented immigrants, the methodology may be flawed, many people eligible for insurance enrollment may have explicitly chosen not to enroll, or people enrolled in Medicare may have said they have no insurance because they have no private insurance. In 1944 the US Supreme Court ruled in *United States v. South-Eastern Underwriters* (322 U.S. 533) [10] that insurance companies were part of interstate commerce, thus subject to federal regulation and anti-trust laws. Overriding the Supreme Court's ruling, Congress passed the McCarran-Ferguson Act [11] in 1945 that has since protected insurance firms from federal prosecution for price fixing, bid rigging and carving out protected markets.

The cost of health care has become increasingly unaffordable for many working families. 62.1% of all US bankruptcies in 2007 were related to medical expenses and 78% of these bankruptcies were filed by people who had medical insurance.[3] While the majority of uninsured people were from low-income households, 38.3% of the uninsured had an annual household income of at least \$50,000. Since 2000, health insurance premiums have risen three times faster than wages.

Health care reform to provide universal coverage was first proposed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" in 1938, [12] then again by President Harry S. Truman's "Fair Deal" in 1945, by President Richard Nixon in 1971, and more recently by President Bill Clinton's administration in 1993. [13] Each attempt faced staunch<sup>3</sup> opposition from varying interest groups and did not result in the passage of universal health coverage legislation.

During the second presidential debate on Oct. 7, 2008, [14] US President Barack Obama, then a presidential candidate, said health care should be a "right for every American." In his June 15, 2009 speech [15] delivered to the American Medical Association (AMA), President Obama stated, "Make no mistake: The cost of our health care is a threat to our economy. It is an escalating burden on our families and businesses. It is a ticking time-bomb for the federal budget. And it is unsustainable for the United States of America." He urged Congress to craft legislation<sup>4</sup> that would ensure coverage for all Americans. On Mar. 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act [16] that, among other things, increased health care coverage to include 32 million previously uninsured Americans. Under the new law, 95% of Americans will be insured, according to the White House website's "Putting Americans in Control of Their Health Care" page (accessed Mar. 29, 2010).

A June 12-16, 2009 poll shows that 64% of Americans say health care should be a right. [9] Another survey shows 57% of Americans would be willing to pay higher taxes so that all Americans have health insurance. [17] An Aug. 2009 poll showed that 86% of Americans say they think health insurance should be available to all Americans, [18] although 64% opposed raising taxes to increase access to health care.

---

<sup>1</sup> Expenditures- money spent

<sup>2</sup> Proponents- supporters

<sup>3</sup> Staunch- constant/firm

<sup>4</sup> Legislation- laws

## **Advantages of a Universal Health Care System**

... The United States has experienced exponential<sup>1</sup> increases in health care costs over the past few decades. Health insurance costs have placed a burden on many employers. By the end of the 20th century, U.S. employers represented 58% of the spending on private health insurance. Historically, employers have shouldered<sup>2</sup> most of the responsibility. These escalating costs have put U.S. companies at a strategic disadvantage against its global competitors, especially those competitors who operate in countries that have a universal health care program where health costs are contained...

Wages and benefits, including health insurance costs, are a cost of production, which is built into the costs of products and services. Since businesses in other industrialized countries are not responsible for financing the costs of health insurance for their employees, American companies either experience lower profit margins or must sell more expensive products.

If employers are relieved of the majority of the financial burden of health care, they could focus more on their core competencies, which would allow them to be more competitive. The removal of health care expenses from a business's costs of production would improve the cost position of American products and services globally. In addition, employers who currently do not offer insurance or offer inadequate health coverage would be able to recruit more qualified employees. Health care is an important benefit to employees. If the United States had a universal health plan, there would be no differentiation<sup>3</sup> among the health care packages offered by domestic employers.

Making health care access universal has also been shown to improve a nation's overall health, making it more efficient and profitable. A 2003 study by the Institute of Medicine documented several hidden costs of uninsurance. It reported that Americans without insurance cost the economy between \$65 and \$130 billion annually due to diminished health and shorter life spans. The Institute of Medicine estimated that the uninsured had an excess annual mortality rate of 25%. A 2009 study by Families USA showed that \$42.7 billion in health care costs incurred by the uninsured are passed on to those with insurance.

In addition, the Institute of Medicine reported that children who are uninsured are more likely to suffer delays in development affecting their future earnings potential. Lack of insurance also contributes to higher costs to public programs like Medicare, Social Security Disability Insurance, and the criminal justice system. The uninsured often don't get the preventive and chronic disease care they need early and are only treated after a disease has developed to an advanced stage, when costs are higher.

In 2005, Emory economist Dr. Kenneth Thorpe published an important report for the National Coalition for Health Care, a nonpartisan coalition<sup>4</sup> of businesses, health care providers, and other interested groups. Thorpe reported that creating a publicly financed universal plan would save the U.S. economy \$1.1 trillion over 10 years, three times the savings of an employer-employee mandated<sup>5</sup> program requiring individuals to obtain a certain level of health benefits either through their employer or through some other mechanism...

---

<sup>1</sup> Exponential- rapidly growing

<sup>2</sup> Shouldered- to carry

<sup>3</sup> Differentiation- establish differences

<sup>4</sup> Coalition- alliance

<sup>5</sup> Mandated- required by law

## 1 PRO Right to Health Care

- 2 1. All Americans should have a right to health care because the Declaration of Independence states  
3 that all men have the unalienable right to "Life," which entails having the health care needed to  
4 preserve life.
- 5 2. Health care is a right for all Americans because the Preamble of the US Constitution states its  
6 purpose is to "promote the general welfare" of the people. Just as all Americans have the right to  
7 an education, they should have the right to health care because they both "promote the general  
8 welfare."
- 9 3. Health care is a human right. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states  
10 that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of  
11 oneself and one's family, including... medical care."
- 12 4. All Americans should have the right to health care as do citizens of other nations. The United  
13 States is one of the few, if not the only, developed nation in the world that does not guarantee  
14 health coverage for its citizens. [1]
- 15 5. Ensuring that all Americans have the right to health care will decrease health care costs by  
16 allowing people to receive regular and preventive medical care and not wait until they are  
17 chronically ill to seek treatment when medical costs are much higher.
- 18 6. Providing all citizens the right to health care is good for economic productivity. When people have  
19 access to health care, they live healthier and longer lives, thus allowing them to contribute to  
20 society for a longer time. The cost of bad health and shorter life spans of Americans suffering  
21 from uninsurance amounts to \$65-130 billion annually. [2]
- 22 7. Lacking health care can lead people to suffer from anxiety, depression, sickness, and stress, and  
23 other symptoms that affect not only individuals, but families and communities of that individual as  
24 well.
- 25 8. Health care costs are unaffordable and bankrupting Americans. In 2007, 62.1% of all US  
26 bankruptcies were related to medical expenses and 78% of these bankruptcies were filed by  
27 people who had medical insurance. [3][4]
- 28 9. Guaranteeing the right to health care will encourage entrepreneurship, which is good for job  
29 creation. Currently people are afraid to start their own business for fear of losing the health  
30 insurance provided at their existing job.
- 31 10. Health care should be a right because it will promote equal opportunity by decreasing the number  
32 of people who are economically disadvantaged in society due to bad health and medically-related  
33 financial trouble.
- 34 11. Health care services are crucial to the functioning of a community, just like trash and water  
35 services, and should therefore be guaranteed like these services are to all Americans.
- 36 12. The right to health care should be considered a civil right. People should not be discriminated  
37 against for being sick. Americans who are ill should not have to make the choice between  
38 financial ruin or paying for the medical treatments they need to stay alive.
- 39 13. Coverage of all Americans would best counter or contain the spreading of epidemics such as the  
40 H1N1 flu (swine flu) or smallpox.

## Concerns and Roadblocks to a Universal Health Care System

There are concerns regarding the implementation of a universal health care system in the United States. The first, and largest, is how it will be paid for. One option for financing this change, which was discussed in the *International Journal of Health Services* in 1999, would be to increase the federal personal income tax by about 7%, or about \$731 per year for the average middle-income household... Individuals whose health insurance is already provided by their employer would be against the tax increase because it would decrease their final take-home pay. Although an employer would save money by not having to provide health care for employees, it is unlikely that the employer would pass these cost savings on to employees through increased wages. This issue must be addressed if and when a plan is developed.

A second concern is that people who work hard to keep themselves healthy would be paying for a service that they would rarely use. Those with healthier lifestyles would be providing coverage for people who do not take the time or effort to take care of themselves. In other words, "Costs would be redistributed from the sick to the healthy" (Rasell). Many individuals would be paying higher taxes but would not be seeing any benefits. There would be no financial incentive for people to hold themselves personally responsible for their own well-being because others would be paying the bill...

Perhaps the most important concern associated with implementing a universal health care system is that in all nations where there has been a national health care system for a number of years, there is a shortage of services. Many of the industrialized nations providing health care through a universal system are experiencing problems regarding availability of services. For example, in Great Britain more than 1 million people are on a waiting list to receive needed health care. Because there is no personal accountability with regard to costs, people overuse the covered services, which makes it harder to access them when it is truly necessary.

Another important roadblock to implementing a universal health care system is the issue of what will happen to the private health insurance industry. Switching to a single-payer system would "eliminate the jobs of hundreds of thousands of people who currently perform billing, advertising, eligibility determination, and other superfluous tasks" (Himmelstein & Woolhandler). These administrative operations, currently managed by large insurance providers, would be handled by a government department. In a system that would mean less revenues and profits, insurance providers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and physician associations like the American Medical Association have the most to lose. Therefore, in addition to the fear of losing these jobs, there is the issue of large insurance providers and pharmaceutical manufacturers in the industry exerting their influence against such a program through lobbying and campaign contributions.

## 1 **CON Right to Health Care**

- 2 1. Health care should not be a right because it is inconsistent with the Declaration of Independence,  
3 which guarantees the right to "pursue" happiness, not the right to happiness or free medical  
4 services.
- 5 2. Health care should not be considered a right because the Preamble of the US Constitution states  
6 that its purpose is to "promote" the general welfare, not to provide it.
- 7 3. Health care should not be considered a right because it is not listed in the Bill of Rights in the US  
8 Constitution. The Bill of Rights lists people's rights that the government cannot infringe upon, not  
9 services or material goods that the government must ensure for the people.
- 10 4. It is the individual's responsibility, not that of the government's, to ensure personal health.  
11 Diseases and health problems, such as obesity, cancer, stroke, and diabetes can often be  
12 prevented by individuals choosing to live healthier lifestyles.
- 13 5. No one should be entitled to health care because it is a service and a material good that a person  
14 must pay for to obtain.
- 15 6. Guaranteeing everyone health care will lead to longer wait-times for patients to receive diagnoses  
16 and treatment of illnesses, as is the case in Canada and the UK, potentially denying patients with  
17 chronic diseases timely medical care. [5]
- 18 7. Providing a right to health care is socialism and is bad for economic productivity. Socialized  
19 medicine is comparable to food stamps, housing subsidies, and welfare--all of which is charity.  
20 Distributing charity to society makes people lazy, decreases the incentive for people to strive for  
21 excellence, and inhibits productivity.
- 22 8. A right to health care is unadministratable because it is too ambiguous<sup>1</sup> what kind of treatment  
23 and services should be guaranteed.
- 24 9. Guaranteeing health care as a right will lead to an increase in demand for health care that will  
25 decrease the quality of care because health care professionals will be overstretched.
- 26 10. History has shown that granting health care as a right would lead to greater government deficits.  
27 Every time the government intervenes in health care, such as with Medicare and Medicaid, there  
28 is a greater redistribution of wealth and greater government spending.
- 29 11. If health care is considered a right, then government bureaucrats will be making health, life, and  
30 death decisions that should be up to the patient and doctor to decide.
- 31 12. Allowing health care coverage to be driven by the free market without government intervention  
32 increases competition and the incentive for providing higher quality medical technology and  
33 service.
- 34 13. Providing health care to everyone is a huge expense and may result in tax increases thereby  
35 further harming the economy and individual pocketbooks.
- 36 14. Guaranteeing health care for all Americans will lead to a problem known as "moral hazard,"  
37 meaning that people will take riskier actions because they know that if they get hurt, they are  
38 guaranteed health care coverage.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ambiguous- unclear

# Structured Academic Controversy

Question: Should health care be a right for Americans?

My argument: \_\_\_\_\_

Background Reading	
Vocabulary terms/meanings I should know and use when I speak	Important facts from background reading that support my side
Preparing My Argument	
My Claims (statements that support my argument)	My Evidence and Reasoning to Support My Claims
1.	
2.	
3.	



The Other Side of the Argument	
Opposing Claims	Opposing Evidence and Reasoning
1.	
2.	
3.	
Common Ground & Further Questions	
We can agree that...	We need further clarification on...
1.	1.
2.	2.
What is your final personal (not assigned) position on the issue? Explain using at least three pieces of evidence.	

## Reflection & Self-Assessment

**Reflect on your participation in the discussion. What did you do well? What will you improve upon in future discussions?**

Stating my points/claims clearly:

Using evidence from the text:

Using reasoning with my evidence to describe it in my own words:

Working with my partner:

Using eye contact:

Speaking loudly enough for my group to hear me:

Staying focused:

Listening and learning from the other side:

Helping the group to come to consensus:

Other:

**I would assess myself with a \_\_\_\_/25 for my participation in the discussion today.**

# Formalities of the Structured Academic Controversy

- I. Divide Students into groups of 4.
  - A. Split each group into two pairs. Each Group is assigned one side of the Argument (The Super claim)
2. Read Documents: Each Pair studies one side of the argument by reading the background material, their side of the issue, or the entire article.
  - A. Each pair identifies claims and reasoning and evidence within the text to support their position
3. Discussion:
  - A. Pair #1 advocates their position while Pair #2 takes notes citing specific claims.
    1. Pair #2 shares back what they learned and ask clarifying questions about information presented.
    2. Students DO NOT exchange papers to complete this task.
  - B. Pair #2 advocates their position while Pair #1 takes notes citing specific claims.
    1. Pair #1 shares back what they learned and ask clarifying questions about information presented.
    2. Students DO NOT exchange papers to complete this task
4. Common Ground and Further Questions
  - A. Students work together as a group of four to synthesize the ideas and come to consensus on at least on major point.
  - B. Students should also identify at least one area where they agree to need more information or clarification.
5. Whole Class Debrief/Reflection
  - A. Reflect upon content
  - B. Reflect upon process

## HELPFUL HINTS:

- Allow students to review material prior to SAC (if assigned for homework etc.)
- Provide some type of literacy strategy- annotation, note taker, highlighting, etc.)
- Build comprehension around background knowledge, vocabulary, and layout of documents.
- USE A TIMER. HAVE BREAKDOWN OF TIME SEQUENCE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO SCAN.
- When students are teaching the argument to each other, have them flip their handouts over. They should have to explain, rather than read their most compelling reasons. They cannot just exchange papers.
- Designate a lead facilitator
- WHOLE GROUP DEBRIEF!!! Make time for this!

## Structured Academic Controversy

Question: Border Dispute with Mexico: Declare War or Negotiate?

My argument/super claim: \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Reading

Vocabulary words I should know and use	Important facts from background reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rebellion: armed opposition to authority</li><li>• Santa Anna: president of Mexico</li><li>• Treaty: agreement signed between nations</li><li>• Dispute: argument</li><li>• President Polk: president of the US</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 1836 Texas was part of Mexico</li><li>• Texas rebelled and Santa Anna was forced to sign a treaty granting independence to Texas</li><li>• Mexico did not recognize treaty.</li><li>• 1845, Texas accepted into US (infuriates Mexico)</li><li>• Border Dispute arises over boundary between Mexico and US: Río Grande or Nueces River</li><li>• In 1846, President Polk sends troops to enforce US claims.</li></ul>

### Preparing My Argument

My Claims	My Evidence and Reasoning
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

### The Other Side of the Issue

#### Opposing Claims and Reasoning

#### Opposing Evidence and Reasoning

1.

2.

3.

### Common Ground and Further Questions

#### Using evidence, we can agree that...

#### We need further clarification on...

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

What did you learn about the Border Dispute with Mexico? What is your final position on the issue? Use at least three pieces of evidence to explain why.

Reflect on your participation in the discussion. What did you do well? What do you need to improve upon?



## Structured Academic Controversy Tips for Teachers

When conducting a SAC, keep in mind the following:

- Allow students to review the article before beginning the SAC even if they read it for homework.
- Always provide some type of literacy strategy for students to do while they are reading.
- Check for comprehension of the reading by asking questions of the class before students do the analysis of arguments/reasons step.
- When students are teaching the arguments/reasons to each other, have them flip their handouts over. They should have to explain, rather than read, their most compelling reasons. Tell students they cannot just exchange papers and copy the reasons down.
- Have a designated facilitator (optional). You can rotate facilitators each time you do a deliberation. The role of the facilitator is to make sure everyone participates and stays focused on the deliberation question. The facilitator is a participating member of the group.
- The debrief of the SAC is key. First have the groups each report out what decisions were made and why. Then conduct a civil conversation or a modified version of it to allow all student voices to be heard. Sometimes a student may not find any connection in the small group, but then can find common ground with others in the large group. Have students sit in a circle. You can also do a human graph to have students take a position on the deliberation question.
- Try to do the SAC without modifying the steps at least a couple of times in order to make sure students are comfortable with it.
- Introductory activities are an excellent way to hook students' interest for the deliberation topic.
- Remind students that they do not have to personally support their assigned position. They are merely finding arguments/reasons to support one side of the deliberation question. Therefore, when they are teaching the reasons, they should avoid bias language such as "We believe...". Instead they should explain the reasons as, "The author notes...." or something to that effect.