Issues Part 1

Webster's Dictionary: defines the word "**issue**" as: "a matter that is in dispute between two or more parties; the point at which an unsettled matter is ready for a decision".

Newspapers, magazines, talk shows, and television news shows rely on issues to provide the topics that will attract readers and listeners. Without issues, there would be nothing for **politicians** or lawyers to **debate**, or for **juries** or the public to vote on. Court rooms and **governments** were built for people to talk about issues. Talking about issues keeps us aware of our changing world and helps us to make it a better place.

By attempting to solve important issues, people can discover new medical cures, ways to reduce pollution and possible solutions to world poverty. Sometimes, however, efforts to solve issues can bring about changes in government, or even start wars. We could say that talking about issues is what makes human beings different from all other living things. So if issues are so important, what exactly are they?

Let's Talk About
The Issues

Simply stated, issues are made up of **facts** and **opinions**. Facts are pieces of information with enough proof to be considered true. Although this may sound obvious, very few facts are agreed to by everybody. This difference in viewpoint gives rise to the many different opinions people can have about the same thing. When two or more opinions differ from one another – we have an issue.

What is Meant by Global Issues?

Global issues are problems that every country faces to some degree.

An example is homelessness. Every country has one or more of its citizens that do not have the necessity of shelter. Homelessness might affect more citizens in one country than it does another, but every country has some experience with this issue.

There are several issues that directly affect the citizens in every country, like poverty, or child labour, just to name a few.

Sometimes it is very difficult for a country to solve these problems on their own, as they do not have the wealth to provide even the basic necessities that we might take for granted, like clean drinking water, or government funded education.

Global issues do not always have to do with people directly. Climate change is also a global issue. It is impossible for any country alone to solve this problem. Every country must contribute and make an effort to reduce their country's emissions.

Issues and Relevancy

Some issues are more likely to be important, or **relevant**, to you than others. Issues that are relevant to you are the ones that are most likely to affect your **personal** life. Which of the examples below are most relevant to you?

- Choosing a government to run a country.

- Changing educational curriculum from grade 1 - 12.

- Changing the driving limit to nineteen years of age.

- Making laws to tax polluting cars and businesses.

- Creating gender neutral washrooms in schools.

- Banning dogs from all city parks.

Issues also come in many sizes including those of **local, provincial/territorial, national** and **international (global)** importance (such as global warming and world poverty). In general, issues that involve many people, or will affect your life in a serious way are said to be the most **significant**.

What are the most significant issues you are aware of today?

Your Task:

1. Find some issues that your community is currently facing. The issues all do not need to be major ones, such as the homeless population. You can choose ones that are smaller but important to you, such as the need for a larger soccer centre or a skateboard park. The most important detail is that these are **real** issues for your community (do not make up issues.)

   You are welcome to use a variety of sources, such as the news, the radio,

the internet, newspapers, or by talking to various people. It is important to record where you got the information from.

2. After you have collected **at least six issues**, use the template below to create a chart that lists the information about your articles. The example chart below shows how to do this part of the activity.

- Beside each issue recorded in your chart, give each item a score for how significant (important) an issue you think it is. In the column labelled "you", score a grade of 1 to 5 to rank how significant each issue is to you. Here is the Ranking Score:

  - 1="No" not significant
  - 2="A Little" significant
  - 3="Fairly" significant

  - 4= "Very" significant
  - 5= "Extremely" significant

3. Share your list with at least two other people (each one at a different time) and ask them to rank the importance of each issue. Record their results in the last two columns of the chart.

Here is an example of the chart:

Complete This Side First		Complete Second		
Title of Article	A Brief Description of Each Issue You Found	How Significant is this Issue? 1=No 2=A Little 3=Fairly 4=Very 5=Extremely		
		You	Person 2	Person 3
Highway Expansion Raises Questions	Making the highway bigger is going to mean a lot more traffic in downtown. Some people think more money should be spent on more buses and rapid transit than on building more highways.	3	5	5
Translink On, Off and On again	The SkyTrain project to Richmond is going to go ahead again after being cancelled two times. Some people think it isn't a very good plan and too expensive.	2	4	5
Government to Sponsor Hybrid Technology	The government wants people to drive cars that pollute less, so they are helping companies that are inventing less polluting cars.	5	3	1

Your Turn:

Complete this side first		Complete second		
Title of Article	**A Brief Description of Each Issue You Found**	**How significant is this issue? 1=No 2 = A little 3 = Fairly 4 =Very 5 - Extremely**		
		You	**Person 2**	**Person 3**