



# Teaching Support



Take Action Teaching Support  
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**SCHOLASTIC  
EDUCATION**

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# Goals of Take Action

Like our ever-changing world, the approach to Take Action includes a multiplicity of experiences, views, and beliefs. The intention is for teachers to approach the Take Action magazines with the same level of curiosity, critical analysis, and empathy that we are looking to engender in our students. From this perspective, instructional practices should no longer demand that students give us the “right” answer. Take Action develops students’ thinking skills, instead of focusing them on what to think. All learners (students and teachers) are urged to consider how culture, history, politics, economics, and the environment make an issue highly complex and lead to multiple entry points, analyses, and conclusions. It is from this engagement with complexity that action should be taken to restore current and historical injustices.

One of the goals of the teacher’s guide is to recognize and extract the richness of each magazine. In order to achieve this goal, each magazine can and should be used multiple times (as a mentor text) in order to deconstruct meaning and reconstruct new meanings within and/or between various contexts. A key element with the Take Action magazines is to explore the context of the issue, and then create opportunities for students to apply this knowledge across disciplines to support conceptual understanding. Teachers are encouraged to make non-fiction to fiction connections and to apply each concept to real-world events, both locally and globally. This may include incorporating narratives, media texts, and current events (storybooks, documentaries, websites, newspaper articles, field trips, celebrating days of significance, etc.), which speak to the themes addressed in the issue and may enhance learning and engagement.

The goal is to create critically aware and actively engaged citizens—change-makers ready to contribute to an increasingly complex, interdependent, and globalized world. Take Action encourages a mindset of respect, connection, and self-awareness by studying local and global issues that impact students, both directly and indirectly. Throughout the Take Action series, there will be opportunities for teachers to discuss global issues with materials that are grade appropriate for junior students and accessible for a diverse student population.

# How to Use Take Action

## Using Take Action for Inquiry

Each Take Action teacher's guide begins with a guiding inquiry question (also located on the cover of each student text) that locates the reader within the context of the issue. The guiding inquiry question focuses on an overarching idea that students will have multiple opportunities to revisit throughout the unit. Teachers are encouraged to return to this inquiry question with their students throughout the unit, as their opinions may change or be further supported, as they learn more about the topic.

Take Action is designed to incorporate exploratory learning through the deconstruction and reconstruction of an issue. Both students' and teachers' understanding of the issue evolves by exposure to multiple perspectives and points of view. Through exploratory learning, teachers are encouraged to provide multiple opportunities for students to generate their own questions for further investigation and reflection, and connect the underlying themes to current local and global issues. This process provides opportunities to increase student engagement, voice, and success within the classroom, as well as a deeper conceptual understanding of the issue.

## Choosing the Right Instructional Approach for Your Class

While working through the Take Action topics and using this resource, teachers are encouraged to use their professional judgement when making decisions about how to approach each selection. A classroom teacher may choose to frame the learning by providing a provocation to begin the inquiry. Another classroom teacher may choose to have students read the text and allow them to frame their own inquiries.

## Inquiry-Based Learning (in a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model)

Teachers may use the gradual release of responsibility model to approach the resource as a whole, or within each reading selection (modelled, shared, guided, or independent inquiry). A gradual release to the inquiry can also be used in the context of teacher-led to student-led inquiry over the course of the unit/resource.

Take Action supports classroom exploration beyond the context of the materials in each unit. Allowing for student inquiry to go beyond Take Action, to further deepen understanding of an issue is encouraged. It may also be used as a launching point for students to begin to explore an issue, then generate as a group other questions they may have about the topic/issue. These questions can be used to launch student-led inquiry.

## Whole-Class, Small-Group, and/or Independent Learning Opportunities

Take Action can be used in many different classroom learning environments. For example, a teacher can decide to begin the inquiry unit with whole-class instruction and learning, then choose to create smaller groups based on the interest or needs of students to support the inquiry learning process with their class. The classroom teacher may then choose certain selections to be worked on independently, and then bring the students back together in small groups or the whole class, to share in the learning.

Take Action encourages teachers to vary their instructional practices through whole-class, small-group, and/or independent learning in the classroom, throughout the inquiry unit.

Teachers are encouraged to use professional judgement when deciding on how each selection might be read by students (e.g., using the gradual release of responsibility approach—modelled, shared, guided, and/or independent reading). The reading selections might also be used as opportunities to differentiate instruction within a classroom, by having various groups read different selections.

## Teacher Reflection Before Beginning (Questions to Ask Yourself)

The questions below are examples of questions intended to support educators in preparing to teach material from the magazines, planning a unit, and to provide opportunities for continuous reflection about the topic as it relates to teachers, students, different lived experiences, cultural perspectives, and socio-political/economic/historical contexts.

**Questions to ask yourself about the topic:** The purpose of this section is for teachers to reflect on their own background knowledge, gaps in the subject matter, and experiences/biases about the topic.

**Questions to ask yourself about your students:** In order to help determine students' background knowledge on the topic, a variety of questions have been listed for teacher consideration after their own personal reflections within the Take Action teacher's guide. The purpose of this section is for teachers to reflect on their students' background knowledge, possible gaps in the subject matter, and experiences/biases about the topic.

**Questions about social/political contexts:** In order to help determine the socio-political contexts in which the topic is situated, a variety of questions have been listed for teacher consideration within the Take Action teacher's guide. The purpose of this section is for teachers to reflect on the role of politics, culture, economics, the environment, and history on the topic.

**Questions about cultural perspectives:** In order to help determine the multitude of cultural perspectives on a topic, a variety of questions have been listed for teacher consideration within the Take Action teacher's guide. The purpose of this section is for teachers to reflect on the role of culture, identity, perspectives, and different ways of knowing on the topic.

### Examples of questions you might ask yourself about the topic

- What does this topic mean to you?
- What are your personal experiences with this topic? How might your personal experiences influence how you understand this topic, potential blind spots and biases you may have, and the various conclusions you may draw?
- How aware are you of local, national, and global issues surrounding this topic?
- How has popular culture and the media influenced your understanding of this topic?
- Have your understandings of this topic changed over time?
- Which perspectives might be missing from your understanding of this topic?
- How might your experiences and perspectives on this topic differ from other members of your classroom community?

### Examples of questions you might ask yourself about your students

- What does this topic mean to your students?
- What are your students' personal experiences with this topic? How might your students' experiences influence how they understand this topic, potential blind spots and biases they may have, and the various conclusions they may draw?
- How aware are your students of local, national, and global issues surrounding this topic? How has popular culture and the media influenced your students' understanding of this topic?
- Have your students' understandings of this topic changed over time?
- Which perspectives might be missing from your students' understanding of this topic? How might your students' experiences and perspectives on this topic differ from other members of their classroom community?
- What might your students like to learn about this topic?

### Examples of questions about Social/Political Contexts

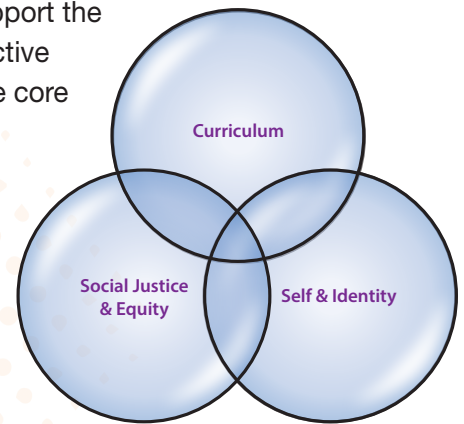
- How might politics, geography/environment, economics, and social structures influence this topic?
- How have historical events nationally and globally influenced this topic over time (root causes)?
- What are the mindsets, theories, and ways of thinking that might underlie this topic (e.g., capitalism, authoritarianism, consumerism, socialism, democracy, etc.)?
- How might differences in power, privilege, and rights (e.g., differences in access, opportunities, benefits, outcomes, etc.) influence how individuals and communities are differently impacted by this topic?
- How might structural and systemic inequities in society contribute to influences and impacts on this topic?
- How might the media, politics, businesses, and individual actions influence this topic? What actions can be taken to intervene in ways that address some of the root causes of this issue?

### Examples of questions about Cultural Perspectives

- How might understandings of this topic differ depending on one's social identities (e.g., race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, culture, social class, ability, faith/spiritual beliefs, etc.)?
- Whose understandings of this topic are present in mainstream society and in this selection, and whose understandings are missing or silenced?
- What opportunities might arise from different perspectives on this topic?
- What challenges and tensions might arise from different perspectives on this topic? Should there be a common, international understanding of the major themes surrounding this topic? Or, is having multiple interpretations of these themes beneficial (i.e., in promoting fairness, etc.)?
- What can we learn from other countries about this topic? Who might disagree with your perspectives on the questions above and why?

# Background on Optimal Questions

**Optimal Questions:** For each selection, questions have been generated to support the deconstruction of text and reconstruction of meaning, based on individual/collective identities and issues of power/privilege in society. Optimal Questions will explore core *curriculum* expectations, issues of *self & identity*, and *social justice & equity* to promote higher-order thinking, and are situated within two or more of these overlapping components (see graphic). Through discussion of the text, students can co-construct meaning that will validate, challenge, or change their beliefs. This will allow them to make more informed decisions about if, when, and how to act. A conscious effort has been made to consider the contributions to, influences, and impacts of the topic on the histories, cultures, spiritual values, and ways of life of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.



Social Justice & Equity	Curriculum	Self & Identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is often not one right answer (grey areas allow for rich conversation).</li> <li>• Everyone is on their own personal journey of discovery and will arrive at their own conclusions and beliefs that will reaffirm, change, or enhance students' belief systems and likely change over time.</li> <li>• Encourages teachers to guard against a finite solution as a class. Instead, we encourage teachers to appreciate multiple ideas, solutions, and truths.</li> <li>• To develop critical thinking and encourage diverse opinions that are substantiated through experience and critical analysis</li> <li>• Power and privilege are relational, inter-relational, individual, collective, historical, political, economic, social/cultural, and environmental. They exist in ideas, relationships, and actions.</li> <li>• Democratic laws (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms—who made these laws? Can they be challenged? How? Democracy as a way of life and not just an end)</li> <li>• Rights and freedoms (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)—lack of awareness of your rights and freedoms is a tool of oppression</li> <li>• Justice (punitive versus restorative, short term versus long term)</li> <li>• Personal, local, and global impacts and actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covers expectations/ outcomes mandated by the provincial curriculum</li> <li>• Recognizes that literacy and numeracy are not ends in themselves; they are the means to a deeper understanding of concepts and big ideas</li> <li>• Critical thinking skills that focus on higher-order thinking</li> <li>• Moves away from mandated specific curriculum expectations/ outcomes to big ideas and concepts</li> <li>• Includes Canadian perspectives on local and global contexts</li> <li>• Includes multi-literacies within reading selections</li> <li>• Opportunities for interdisciplinary connections across disciplines are critical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture and identity (e.g., race, socio-economic status, gender, gender identity, age, culture, faith, ability, class, place of birth, nationality, etc.)</li> <li>• Ways of knowing—different ways of seeing the world (e.g., competition versus collaboration, individualism versus collectivism)</li> <li>• Relevance to students you teach (honouring their experiences of the subject matter, their identities, and their local space)</li> <li>• Perspective and voice</li> <li>• Multiple and intersecting identities (e.g., race and class, ability and gender, etc.)</li> <li>• Non-essentialism—guarding against a single story of any culture or identity</li> </ul>



**Interdisciplinary Connections:** For each Take Action selection, there are interdisciplinary suggestions/questions to extend conceptual learning and understanding into other disciplines. Provincial ministry documents encourage interdisciplinary approaches to teaching, to deepen students' conceptual understanding. For example, it is often critical for students to explore the mathematics within critical literacy in order to challenge the power relations being discussed. This helps students make informed decisions about the topic/concept, and bring context and real-world meaning to the concept, knowledge, or skill.

The list below is not an exhaustive list, and teachers/students are encouraged to create additional questions in other disciplines to explore the concepts in greater detail.



**Financial Literacy**



**Social Studies**



**Mathematics**



**Global Connections**



**Health**



**Science**



**Indigenous Connections**



**Media**



**Technology**



**Drama**



**Global Citizenship**



**Art**



**Arts**



**Music**



**Dance**



**Physical Education**

# Assessment

In the front matter of the Take Action teacher’s guides, you will find a [Learning Outcomes Chart](#) that can be used to guide assessment, regardless of whether you are using the Take Action selection as an entire unit, an individual lesson, for small/guided groups, or for independent work. If being used to support a unit plan, this chart can support educators with backward design. The Interdisciplinary Connections questions that accompany each selection can be assessed using the Application of Concepts component within the Learning Outcomes Chart.

Within the Learning Outcomes section of the chart, teachers can create qualifying statements to distinguish the range of student achievement (e.g., beginning to, sometimes, often, always).

## Learning Outcomes Chart

Components of Learning	Learning Outcomes
<b>Knowledge and Understanding of Ideas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Content knowledge</li> <li>- Concept attainment to develop understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies key issues within the topic</li> <li>• Demonstrates an understanding of key concepts (including ideas, opinions presented, facts, statistics, vocabulary, and big ideas) within the topic</li> <li>• Identifies critical information with relevant examples and provides evidence to support their responses</li> <li>• Uses inductive reasoning (making broad generalizations from specific content) while reading various selections to understand the big ideas within the topic</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Thinking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deconstructing multi-literacies</li> <li>- Critical and innovative thinking</li> <li>- Planning skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines multiple points of view and perspectives (considering individual and collective identities) to identify biases</li> <li>• Questions and challenges the notions of power and privilege (economic, societal, historic, political, cultural, and environmental)</li> <li>• Generates, gathers, and organizes ideas/information to incorporate into their responses and action planning</li> <li>• Makes inferences, evaluates, and forms conclusions about the big ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Communication of Ideas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organization of ideas and expression of information</li> <li>- Use of appropriate conventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizes ideas to express information in a clear and concise message using a variety of forms (e.g., verbal and non-verbal communication, visual, written, and/or media)</li> <li>• Communicates information for an intended purpose and audience</li> <li>• Uses subject-specific conventions appropriately (e.g., writing conventions, informal and formal oral communication, media forms, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Application of Concepts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Application of social justice concepts within the topic, between topics, and transferred to other curricular areas</li> <li>- Enduring understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deconstructs the inquiry question in order to construct their own position/stance on the issue</li> <li>• Uses social justice concepts to make connections from the texts to other texts, themselves, their school, home, community, world, etc.</li> <li>• Applies conceptual understandings to different areas of the curriculum</li> <li>• Draws conclusions using inductive reasoning to inform actions (personal, local, national, and global) that impact change</li> <li>• Questions and challenges current injustices/inequities as they relate to the concept or topic</li> <li>• Challenges and questions the universal messages presented as fundamental concepts/big ideas in curricula</li> </ul>

**How can teachers assess student work using this resource?** Teachers are encouraged to co-construct success criteria with students for each question/task by linking questions to overall or big curriculum expectations/outcomes in the mandated provincial curriculum expectations/outcomes. The success criteria will reflect the knowledge and/or skills required to meet the expectations/outcomes at the provincial ministry standard. Teachers may assess student work by providing oral or written descriptive feedback as appropriate.

The following is an example of how a teacher might deconstruct a question from the Take Action teacher’s guide to create assessment look-fors and success criteria.

Optimal Question	Assessment Look-For	Success Criteria and Student Self-Assessment
<p>Canada’s elementary school enrolment rate is not 100%. Should we be striving to achieve 100% enrolment? Is this even possible? Does everyone have the same quality of education? What groups do not have the same quality of education in Canada? Why might this be? How can we help provide the same quality of education for all Canadians?</p> <p>Source: <i>School for All</i>, “The Big Picture” selection</p>	<p>Students can state an opinion and provide relevant supporting details. Students can consider multiple perspectives and stakeholders on the topic. Students can use prior knowledge, evidence from the text, and research to support a response. Students can draw conclusions about the topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can state an opinion and provide relevant supporting details</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can consider multiple perspectives and stakeholders on the topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can use prior knowledge, evidence from the text, and research to support a response</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can draw conclusions about the topic</li> </ul>

**Assessment For Learning** (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Growing Success*, pp. 27–36):

For each selection, the Minds on Reflection questions can be asked of students prior to reading to understand the background knowledge in this area (assessment for learning). The questions provided in the teacher’s guide for each selection may be used as a diagnostic assessment to help ascertain students’ prior knowledge about the content area and intermediate grade-appropriate skills and strategies.

**Assessment As Learning** (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Growing Success*, pp. 27–36):

Co-created success criteria can be used to generate self, peer, and teacher oral/written descriptive feedback as students practise the skill. Based on assessment of student performance, the teacher may create differentiated instructional groups/tasks to support the various needs in the classroom moving forward in the unit. Furthermore, teachers may also use assessment to determine the trajectory of the unit based on students’ needs (e.g., whole-class instruction, shared instruction, guided instruction, and independent instruction).

**Assessment Of Learning** (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Growing Success*, pp. 27–36):

An effective culminating task is open-ended, allows for student choice (differentiated instruction), and allows students to extend their learning to multiple disciplines (interdisciplinary). It is also crucial for culminating tasks to empower students to:

- understand the historical and contextual issues around the topic from different perspectives,
- raise awareness about the issue in connection to unjust power relations and its impact on current events,
- affect change at the personal, local, and global levels.

Questions in each specific selection as well as questions/suggested activities in the Your Turn! section can be used as opportunities for assessment of learning, with the support of the Learning Outcomes Chart on page 8.

# Generic Prompting Questions

The following is an additional list of questions that may be tweaked by the teacher to be more specific to any given context and used to deconstruct any reading selections. This is not meant as an exhaustive list, but rather a support for teachers looking to apply similar questions they used in Take Action, to deconstruct other texts. We encourage teachers to explore these questions, especially the ones that seem difficult or controversial, as it is through our commitment to sitting in the discomfort that we can create a world that is more just and humane. We also encourage teachers to add questions to this list as they arise in their classrooms and contexts.

## Generic Extension Questions/Going Deeper

### Questions That speak to Self/Identity/Culture Perspectives

- How do you feel about this issue?
- Who might disagree with your perspectives and why?
- What are your personal experiences with this topic?
- How might your personal experiences influence how you understand this topic, potential blind spots and biases you may have, and the various conclusions you may draw?
- How might your experiences and perspectives on this topic differ from other members of your classroom community?
- Have your understandings of this topic changed over time?
- Which perspectives might be missing from your understanding of this topic?
- How might understandings of this topic differ depending on one's social identities (e.g., race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, culture, social class, ability, faith/spiritual beliefs, etc.)?
- How might this selection be different if written from the perspective of someone of a different gender, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, age, faith, socio-economic status, racial group, etc.?
- How might differences in power or privilege (e.g., differences in access, opportunities, rights, influences, impacts, etc.) influence how individuals and communities are differently impacted by this topic?
- How do the images in the text represent people with different social identities?
- If you were to consider a different perspective on this issue, what arguments can be made for or against the topic?
- Whose perspective might be missing on this issue and why?
- How might one's culture and traditions influence the value of the topic?
- What lessons have Canadians learned about (the topic) that can be shared with others around the world?
- What can Canadians learn from other countries, communities, and cultures that can help us deepen our understanding of the topic?
- What do you need/want to know more about this topic?

## Questions That Speak to Equity

- Who has the power to make decisions about this topic?
- Whose voices are included and whose voices are left out or silenced?
- Who benefits and who is disadvantaged from this issue?
- How might different understandings and perspectives influence how people are impacted differently by this topic? How might these differences influence who and what impacts this topic?
- How might different understandings and perspectives influence how people contribute differently to this topic?
- How might different understandings and perspectives influence how people have differences in responsibility to fix the challenges associated with this topic?
- What are the root causes of this problem? How might the effects of the problem be mistaken for the root causes? Who benefits and who is disadvantaged by this mistake?
- What historical events and contexts have led to and influenced these issues?
- What are the short- and long-term impacts of (this topic)?
- What was \_\_\_\_\_ like in the past? What might it be like in the future?
- Does the way the information is presented (in text and images) lead to misrepresentation or stereotyping of a person or group of people? How?
- How has popular culture and the media influenced your understanding of this topic?
- How might globalization impact your understanding of this topic?
- How might increased globalization and speed and connectivity (i.e., technology) have changed perspectives over time?
- Whose understandings of this topic are present in mainstream society and in this selection?
- How are people, ideas, and actions presented in this selection? How else might they be presented?
- What challenges and tensions might arise from different perspectives on this topic?
- What opportunities might arise from different perspectives on this topic?

## Questions That Speak to Socio–Economic, Political, and Historical Perspectives

- What laws, policies, and/or practices are in place to protect \_\_\_\_\_ (locally, provincially, nationally, globally)?
- Who ensures that these laws, policies, and practices are being followed?
- Should there be consequences if rules/laws are not being followed?
- Should there be a common, international understanding of the major themes surrounding this topic? Or, is having multiple interpretations of these themes beneficial (i.e., in promoting democracy and differences in values and worldviews)?
- How do events and laws worldwide impact how we interpret this topic and what can we learn from other countries?
- How might politics, geography/environment, economics, and social structures influence this topic?
- How have historical events nationally and globally influenced this topic over time?
- What are the mindsets, theories, and ways of thinking that might underlie this topic (e.g., capitalism, authoritarianism, consumerism, socialism, democracy, etc.)?
- What are the social/political/economical (historical and current) reasons for...?
- Who should be held responsible for remedying injustices associated with this topic?
- How should local and national governments and governmental organizations be held responsible for identifying injustices and intervening effectively?
- How might the media, politics, businesses, and individual actions influence this topic?
- How might structural and systemic inequities in society contribute to, influence, and impact this topic?
- Who might not want to address the structural and systemic inequities? Why?

## Questions That Speak to Taking Social Action

- Who are the people making a difference on this issue? Who might disagree with your perspective? How might people trying to make a difference negatively impact the issue?
- How could we think and speak about this issue differently? How might this influence the actions we take/do not take?
- What could we do that would call attention to this issue both in school and out of school? Let's explore various alternatives and possibilities for doing something about this topic.
- How might the solutions put forth further contribute to the social, political, environmental, and economic injustices connected to this topic?
- What actions can be taken to intervene in ways that address some of the root causes of this issue?

# Generic Questions to Prompt With Final Task

## Questions to Support Student Thinking and Learning

After a thorough examination of different perspectives on the issue, and an analysis of the issues presented through the lens of equity, socio-political/economic/historical issues, culture, and identity, students are asked to take action. Students can choose to take personal, local, national, or international action. The questions below can be used to support student thinking and learning, resulting in social action that is contextual, addresses root causes of injustice, and considers multiple perspectives on the topic.

### Who?

- Who are the different people connected to this issue? Who might you talk to before deciding on an action?
- Whose perspectives did you consider before taking action? Whose perspectives did you leave out?
- Who might agree with your choice of action and who might disagree? Why?

### What?

- What do you hope to accomplish by taking action in this way?
- What additional problems or injustices might your actions cause? What additional questions came up after taking this form of action?
- What criteria will you use to choose the best path of action to take?

### How?

- How might your own stereotypes and biases influence how you determine what the problem is and how you take action to solve it?
- How might your actions be unfair to certain people or groups of people? How might your actions cause some people to be seen as the villains while others are seen as the heroes?
- How can your actions have greater impact? How can your actions address the root cause of the issue instead of simply providing a surface-level solution?

### Where? (Location, Contexts)

- In what contexts/spaces might your action support the change you are hoping for?
- In what contexts/spaces might your action not support the change you are looking for?



## When?

- When would be the best time to take action (e.g., consider social, political, economic, historical, and environmental factors)?
- When might you need to slow down or stop your action altogether?
- When might you need to ask more questions?
- When might you need to self-reflect on why you are taking a particular action?

## Why?

- Why did you choose to take the specific level(s) of action you chose (e.g., personal, local, national, and international)?
- Why did you choose this particular medium to take action? How might a different medium change the impact of your action?
- Why are you committed to this form of action? How does this form of action connect to your experiences, ideas, and values?
- Why might some people choose not to engage in any form of action on this issue in particular?