



A Questlove Jawn

Summer of Soul

(...OR, WHEN THE REVOLUTION COULD NOT BE TELEVISED)



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About *Journeys in Film*

Founded in 2003, *Journeys in Film* operates on the belief that teaching with film has the power to prepare students to live and work more successfully in the 21st century as informed and globally competent citizens. Its core mission is to advance global understanding among youth through the combination of age-appropriate films from around the world, interdisciplinary classroom materials coordinated with the films, and teachers' professional development offerings. This comprehensive curriculum model promotes widespread use of film as a window to the world to help students to mitigate existing attitudes of cultural bias, cultivate empathy, develop a richer understanding of global issues, and prepare for effective participation in an increasingly interdependent world. Our standards-based lesson plans support various learning styles, promote literacy, transport students around the globe, and foster learning that meets core academic objectives.

Selected films function as springboards for lesson plans in subjects ranging from math, science, language arts, and social studies to other topics that have become critical for students, including environmental sustainability, poverty and hunger, global health, diversity, and immigration. Prominent educators on our team consult with filmmakers and cultural specialists in the development of curriculum guides, each one dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the culture and issues depicted in a specific film. The guides merge effectively into teachers' existing lesson plans and mandated curricular requirements, providing teachers with an innovative way to fulfill their school districts' standards-based goals.

Why use this program?

To be prepared to participate in tomorrow's global arena, students need to gain an understanding of the world beyond their own borders. *Journeys in Film* offers innovative and engaging tools to explore other cultures and social issues, beyond the often negative images seen in print, television, and film.

For today's media-centric youth, film is an appropriate and effective teaching tool. *Journeys in Film* has carefully selected quality films that tell the stories of young people living in locations that may otherwise never be experienced by your students. Students travel through these characters and their stories: They drink tea with an Iranian family in *Children of Heaven*, play soccer in a Tibetan monastery in *The Cup*, find themselves in the conflict between urban grandson and rural grandmother in South Korea in *The Way Home*, watch the ways modernity challenges Maori traditions in New Zealand in *Whale Rider*, tour an African school with a Nobel Prize-winning teenager in *He Named Me Malala*, or experience the transformative power of music in *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma & the Silk Road Ensemble*.

In addition to our ongoing development of teaching guides for culturally sensitive foreign films, *Journeys in Film* brings outstanding documentary films to the classroom. Working with the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California, *Journeys in Film* has identified exceptional narrative and documentary films that teach about a broad range of social issues in real-life settings such as famine-stricken and war-torn Somalia, a maximum-security prison in Alabama, and a World War II concentration camp near Prague. *Journeys in Film* guides help teachers integrate these films into their classrooms, examining complex issues, encouraging students to be active rather than passive viewers, and maximizing the power of film to enhance critical thinking skills and to meet the Common Core Standards.

Journeys in Film is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

A Letter from Questlove



Dear Teacher,

There was always an educational component to *Summer of Soul*. At first, it was my own education. I couldn't believe that I had not heard about this major music festival in the summer of 1969, just weeks away from Woodstock, featuring the top Black artists of the day.

As I made the movie, it became more and more apparent that the film could, and should, also be a source of education for others. For starters, the rediscovery of the festival—the way in which it was rescued from the forgotten corners of history—contained an important lesson about the dangers of erasure. History isn't just what we know. It's also what we don't know. The more generations that were born and schooled without this festival on their radar, the more people would be operating with only a partial field of vision. An obstructed view is not a clear one.

And then there are the performances themselves, vibrant acts of Black genius that not only illuminate the singers and the bands but also those who came to Harlem to hear them. The festival and the movie sit at the heart of a living, breathing body of stories about Black life, Black living, and Black joy in the late sixties. I am thrilled that this curriculum exists to help the film do its part in explaining our shared American past—and by extension, our present.

Sincerely,

Questlove

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Q" followed by a stylized flourish.

Introducing *Summer of Soul*

In the eventful summer of 1969, the countercultural music festival of Woodstock caught the nation's eye and received reams of press coverage for its celebration of drugs, sex, and rebellious youth, as well as for rock and roll. Meanwhile another major music festival was under way, running in the north end of Manhattan for six weekends—the Harlem Cultural Festival, featuring many of the top Black performers in the country and attended by thousands of enthusiastic celebrants—all largely ignored by major press outlets. Despite performances by Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone, Sly & the Family Stone, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Mahalia Jackson, B.B. King, The 5th Dimension, and more, the festival soon faded into historical oblivion, except in the memories of concert-goers.

Through this documentary, new generations are coming to appreciate the wide range of Black music: spirituals, gospel, rhythm and blues, jazz, soul, hip hop, and more. Music of the Black diaspora, including Afro-Cuban music, is included as well. Questlove's brilliant direction has located the music in the context of the 1960s: from the excitement of the NASA's moon landing to the devastating assassinations of pioneers and political leaders like Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr., and from the optimism of the civil rights movement to the destruction of Black neighborhoods in urban rioting.

Premiering at the Sundance Film Festival in 2021, *Summer of Soul* won a Grand Jury Prize and an Audience Award. Subsequently, the documentary has been nominated for many additional film prizes and has won frequently, while receiving almost universal critical acclaim.

DIRECTED BY: Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson

PRODUCED BY: Joseph Patel p.g.a., Robert Fyvolent p.g.a., David Dinerstein p.g.a.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Jen Isaacson, Jon Kamen, Dave Sirulnick, Jody Allen, Ruth Johnston, Rocky Collins, Jannat Gargi, Beth Hubbard, Davis Guggenheim, Laurene Powell Jobs, Jeffrey Lurie, Marie Therese Guirgis, David Barse, Ron Eisenberg, Sheila C. Johnson, Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson

MUSIC SUPERVISOR: Randall Poster

EDITED BY: Joshua L. Pearson

MUSIC BY: Adam Peters

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Shawn Peters

Awards and Nominations

Sundance Film Festival Winner

February 3, 2021

Grand Jury Prize – Documentary
Audience Awards – Documentary

Critics' Choice Documentary Awards Winner

November 14, 2021

Best Documentary Feature
Best Archival Documentary
Best Music Documentary
Best First Documentary Feature, Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson
Best Director, Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson
(tied with Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin for *The Rescue*)
Best Editing, Joshua L. Pearson

National Board of Review Winner

December 3, 2021

Documentary Film

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards Winner

December 18, 2021

Best Documentary/Non-Fiction Film

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards Winner

December 18, 2021

Best Editing, Joshua L. Pearson

Grammy Awards Nominated

January 31, 2022

Best Music Film

Producers Guild of America Awards Nominated

February 26, 2022

Outstanding Producer of Documentary Motion Pictures

Independent Spirit Awards Nominated

March 6, 2022

Best Documentary Feature



Spending Priorities

Enduring Understandings

- Establishing priorities when it comes to addressing social issues and inequities can be influenced by personal background, experiences, perception, and awareness.
- Powerful communal spaces that allow those who are oppressed to be seen, heard, recognized, and respected as human beings help to maintain feelings of hope in times of adversity.
- Providing solid and supportive evidence while presenting a position or stance is critical when building convincing arguments encouraging an audience to invest time, funds, and other resources toward social action.

Essential Questions

- What are some elements that influence how we assess our social priorities in terms of the allocation of time and resources?
- How can we better examine social issues from a number of perspectives, as well as identify other associated issues involved?
- How do well-researched and supported arguments help to develop awareness and encourage positive change?

Notes to the Teacher

The Harlem Cultural Festival was more than just music. Attendees witnessed creative expressions of pain, celebration, protest, pride, and strong calls to action against society's inequities. The timing of the festival took place during the last year of the 1960s against the backdrop of police brutality, the Vietnam War, political unrest, and riots across the United States. Attendance meant a chance to heal after the assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy, key advocates for change. The communal space of the park in Harlem provided a sanctuary of rejuvenation for those in the continuous fight to be seen and heard as they sought social justice and equitable reform.

During one segment in *Summer of Soul*, it was indicated that Harlem Cultural Festival took place on the Sunday of the Apollo 11 moon landing, which was nationally televised during the summer of 1969. It was noted by members of the media that concert-goers and other minorities across America were not interested in watching this monumental moment in the advancement of science and technology. Why was this? *Summer of Soul* highlights Walter Cronkite and other local journalists capturing reactions from unimpressed Black festival-goers who made it very clear that they felt the concert's connection with their community and prevalent social issues was more relevant to resolving the social needs of this country. It was felt then and now that excessive amounts of taxpayer money were being used to fund wars and space exploration, money that would be better spent solving critical ecological issues right here on earth. One interviewee exclaimed, "Never mind the moon; let's get some of that cash in Harlem." Many agreed with his sentiment that the money for the space mission could have been spent to address poverty for many in need across the country.

The world is currently in the midst of a global COVID-19 pandemic, which since early 2020 has afflicted the United States with increased unemployment rates, business shut-downs, education reform setbacks, and other hard economic impacts. However, also in 2020, NASA's Perseverance rover touched down safely on Mars. The project has been estimated at a total cost of \$2.9 billion. This is the latest of four Mars projects, which collectively are among the most expensive missions ever undertaken by NASA¹.

This lesson does not aim to steer students in the direction of one position or the other in terms of the importance of space exploration or where funding should be allocated. Its goal is to get students thinking about how to convincingly express their stance on social priorities and issues that they feel need to be addressed in order to bring about positive change in their communities, throughout the country, and around the world. Are there other, more relevant uses for resources that would address inequities here in the United States? How can they build supporting evidence for those claims?

In this lesson, the film itself lays a foundation as students are able to view examples of social inequities and the effect they have on minority communities across the country. This lesson asks students to draw from their experiences and identify social issues about which they feel compelled. It will be important to set the tone of a psychologically safe space for students to openly discuss complex issues such as race, class, gender, etc. Establish classroom norms that students create themselves that will allow for authentic and honest conversations.

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/02/mars-nasa-space-exploration-cost-perseverance-viking-curiosity/>

Part 1 of the lesson introduces the notion of social issues and asks students to consider various social issues and their effects on individuals, society, and the world. Students will conduct research based on their social priorities and work with partners to develop a news broadcast script that they will present to the full group.

In Part 2, the class will participate in a formal debate in which students will learn how to express arguments effectively, provide supporting evidence, and frame counterarguments in ways that support their position. Students will research the costs of NASA's current plans to travel to Mars and consider whether to argue for a different use for these resources.

In Part 3, students convert their points of view into compelling storytelling through the development of persuasive speeches. Students will identify their setting and audience to help frame the tone of their speeches and present a call to action for the social issues that they are hoping to address.

Note: If time is short, you may wish to have students do only Part 2 or Part 3 rather than both. In all three parts of the lesson, you will want to emphasize an open-ended approach that encourages a rich diversity of responses and insights.

Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that the listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Duration of lesson

5–6 class periods

Assessments

- Completion of handouts
- Participation in class discussions
- Written news broadcast script
- Participation in group presentations and debate
- Persuasive speech

Materials needed

- The film *Summer of Soul*
- Projector
- Internet and word processing access
- Copies of **Handouts 1–5**

Procedure

Part 1: Identifying Social Priorities and Impact

1. Begin class by explaining to students that a social issue is any issue that has an impact on individuals in society. There are many types of social issues that affect people:

- Local issues: social issues that affect people more locally in their communities, schools, homes, or places of work.
- National or regional issues: social issues that affect communities in a particular country or region
- Global issues: social issues that affect communities across the entire world

2. Pose the following question to the students: *What are some social issues that you feel need to be addressed to bring about positive change in our community/country/world?* Give them time to brainstorm and start a class list for their suggestions. Provide one example to start (for example, poverty, homelessness, healthcare, mental health support).

Try to have each student contribute at least one idea. When the list exceeds the number of students in the class or you're satisfied with the number of responses, group students into pairs and allow groups to self-select topics that they feel strongly about, or assign each pair a topic. (Record the full list of ideas or allow them to remain visible for later use during Part 2 of this lesson. Indicate which ideas have been assigned to which pairs of students.)

3. Distribute **Handout 1: Defining Social Issues and Priorities** to help students examine their social issues from a number of perspectives and define the wider context and associated issues involved. Allow students time to conduct preliminary research, reflect on their specific issue, exchange ideas, and take notes.

4. After students complete **Handout 1**, allow time for partners to briefly review, share, and discuss responses to the questions with the class. Encourage students to use their handouts to capture additional notes during class discussion if needed.

5. Explain that student partners will produce a short news broadcast on their social issue. A news broadcast is written to inform or bring the awareness of a specific audience to an issue for a specific purpose. Student partners will take on the roles of a news reporter and a field expert who will be interviewed for his/her opinion regarding the topic. Students will work together to write a script to be used for each role.

6. Distribute **Handout 2: Developing a News Broadcast Script** and allow students time to conduct further research on their issues, including relevant facts, statistics, or expert opinions.

7. Give students adequate time to collaborate on writing a news broadcast script to describe key events related to the issue, specify whom the social issue impacts, create interview questions for the expert role, and draft a meaningful response for the expert using the research findings. Then provide time to practice role-playing as the news reporter and field expert.

8. Have student partners record their newscast and play it for the class or present their news broadcast live. Conduct a discussion of the issue with the full class after each presentation.

Part 2: Conduct a Formal Debate

1. Explain to students that a debate is a formal discussion on a particular topic in which opposing arguments are put forward. Tell students that they will be engaging in a debate that involves two sides: one supporting a resolution and one opposing it. Explain that as teacher or facilitator, you will serve as the judge based on your assessment of the quality of the debate. Use **Handout 4** to record your assessments.

2. Depending on the size of the class, break the students up into either two or four small groups. (Groups should have no more than 5–7 students each). Assign groups as either the affirmative team (FOR the resolution) or the opposing team (AGAINST the resolution).

3. Remind students that there is a segment during *Summer of Soul* that highlights NASA's long quest to put a man on the moon, which culminates on the same day as the Harlem Cultural Festival. Several people interviewed felt the funds spent for the Apollo 11 moon landing would have been better used in dealing with poverty and other social issues in America.



4. Explain that they are now going to consider a similar issue and debate about it. The debate teams will research the recent government costs of NASA's current plans to travel to Mars and consider whether the funds could have been allocated toward increasing resources for other social issues or causes. Allow the affirmative team a few minutes to select a social issue from the previous class brainstorm list that was NOT assigned to a student pair during Part 1. Have the students write the following resolution and relevant notes on **Handout 3: Debate Planner**:

Resolution/Debate Topic—Government spending on NASA's current plans to travel to Mars should be instead used to fund efforts addressing _____.
(Insert the social issue selected by the affirmative team)

5. Explain the debate structure detailed in the section below to students and allow both teams adequate time to conduct further research and complete **Handout 3** in preparation. (Students can use more than one copy of the handout if needed.) Suggest that students assign one speaker for each section of the debate; however, research responsibilities should be a collaborative effort. Write the following debate structure on the board:

- Opening statement
- Argument #1
- Argument #2
- Rebuttals
- Closing statement

6. Tell students that you will serve as the moderator and judge for the debate, and use **Handout 4: Debate Assessment** to score team efforts. Explain to students that during the debate, there cannot be any interruptions as speakers are presenting their arguments.

The debate structure is as follows:

- The affirmative team will present their opening statement first, followed by the opposing team's opening statement. (Remind students to speak clearly and to take notes on the arguments presented by the other team.) Teams will want to address questions or ideas posed in these statements as they present further arguments. (5–10 minutes for each team)
- The affirmative team will present their first argument in support of the resolution. During this time, they will also identify and suggest ideas for addressing possible challenges related to their argument. (5–10 minutes)
- The opposing team will present their first argument against the resolution. During this time, they will also identify and suggest ideas for addressing possible challenges related to their argument. (5–10 minutes)
- The affirmative team will present their second argument in support of the resolution. During this time, they will also identify and suggest ideas for addressing possible challenges related to their argument. (5–10 minutes)
- The opposing team will present their second argument against the resolution. During this time, they will also identify and suggest ideas for addressing possible challenges related to their argument. (5–10 minutes)
- Teams will have 10 minutes to collaborate privately and frame their rebuttals based on their prior research.
- The opposing team shares their rebuttal, which includes defending their argument while addressing both arguments of the affirmative team. (5–10 minutes)
- The affirmative team shares their rebuttal, which includes defending their supportive argument while addressing the arguments of the opposing team. (5–10 minutes)

- Each team gets a final opportunity to address arguments made and solidify their stance during closing statements. (The affirmative team should present their closing statements last.) (3–5 minutes each)

7. Once the debate has ended, share the assessment for each team and determine the winner. Conduct a full group discussion to allow students an opportunity to share out what they learned from the information shared by each team (**Handout 4**).

8. If you have additional debate teams, follow the same procedure as for the first debate.

Part 3: Turning Points of View into Persuasive Speeches

1. Tell students they will be writing a persuasive speech based on the social issues that they originally selected for their broadcast scripts in the previous activity. (It is fine that each social issue was assigned to two students as this activity will require them to indicate a specific audience and setting for their speech; this will probably result in each student framing a different approach to addressing the social issue.)

2. Distribute **Handout 5: Developing a Persuasive Speech**. Instruct students to complete the worksheet and then type up their speeches. Emphasize that they will be asked to identify a setting in which they would plan to give this speech, in addition to the intended audience that they are hoping to galvanize into action. (Examples may include a commencement speech for an audience of high school or college students; a public speech for local community advocates; a testimonial with local, state, or national political officials as the audience; a presentation for potential funders; etc.) Their speeches should be framed with their specific setting and audience in mind.

3. For homework, students should rehearse their speeches to prepare for presentation to the class.

4. Student presentations: Have students present their speeches in front of the class. Before starting, each student must share the setting in which they are giving this speech, including specifying the expected audience that they are attempting to motivate to action. The student audience should take a moment to position themselves in the role of members in that audience. After each presentation, ask students:

- What did you hear in the speech that made the most persuasive case for the presenter's argument?
- Was the speech appropriate for the setting identified?
- What elements of the speech do you feel would appeal the most to the audience identified, and why?

Extension Activities

1. Invite students to complete projects or essays in which they interview an older member of their community who is willing to describe personal experiences or stories in connection with a social issue from the 1960s.

2. Social change is typically gradual and incremental. Allow students to make the connection between a social problem of the 1960s and one that they feel needs to be prioritized today. Have there been any key milestones in addressing the issue from that time until now? Highlight successes and challenges for addressing this issue, such as societal, structural, and technological changes. How have communities come together throughout this time to approach and advocate for further resolutions? Have students prepare a report for the class on their findings.



Handout 1

Defining Social Issues and Priorities

Directions: Answer the following prompts based on your existing knowledge, experience, and preliminary research.

What is a key social issue that you feel needs to be addressed to bring about positive change in our community/country/world? Why is this issue meaningful to you?

Who is affected most by this issue?

Does this issue have a typical setting? If not, specify examples of the most prevalent areas. *(For example, if the social issue is education inequality, many reform efforts begin in school settings, followed by affiliated out-of-school learning environments.)*

(Specific locations, community descriptions, locale demographics, settings, etc.)

Why is it important for society to be aware of this issue and takes steps for resolution? What evidence do you have that indicates the public should invest time, funds, and other resources toward addressing this issue?

What are some associated issues that are connected with this problem? Are there social or cultural issues that influence this issue?



Handout 2

Developing a News Broadcast Script

Partner A, News Reporter/Interviewer: You are playing the role of a journalist. Develop an opening statement or story describing the social issue in detail and a closing statement to solidify your stance. Work with your partner to determine interview questions that will be posed.

Partner B, Field Expert: You are extremely knowledgeable about relevant facts, statistics, and suggested resolutions regarding your selected social issue. Develop a script that includes your responses to the questions, posed in a way that will inform your audience and inspire awareness.

Note: Any research necessary to develop the scripts should be a collaborative effort.

Use the following outline as guidance as you write your broadcast script. Use additional sheets of paper if necessary.

1. Social Issue/Topic: _____
2. Name of broadcast story: _____
3. Where are you broadcasting from? _____
4. Give a detailed description of the social issue, who is most impacted, and who has the most influence in helping to address the issue.



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5. What have been some recent key events related to this issue?
6. What is the position of the field expert?
7. Develop 4–5 interview questions to be posed to the field expert.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
8. Indicate relevant facts and statistics in response to the interview questions.
9. What are some recent public efforts to resolve this issue? What have been the successes and challenges involved?

Handout 3

Debate Planner

Directions: Work with your group to plan your debate. Take notes in the sections below to help you prepare for your arguments. Use additional paper if necessary.

Resolution/Debate Topic: _____

Which side are you on? (Circle one) Affirmative Team / Opposing Team

Opening Statement:

Argument #1	Supporting Facts	Possible Counterarguments

Argument #2	Supporting Facts	Possible Counterarguments

Rebuttals: (to be completed during the debate)

Closing Statement:



Handout 4

Debate Assessment

Use the following guide to assess arguments presented by students during the formal debate.

Debating team name/position _____

Team members: _____

1. Opening arguments and statements were effective and persuasive.	5 4 3 2 1
2. The team presented solid evidence and convincing statements to support their stance.	5 4 3 2 1
3. Argument #1 was presented with clarity at an appropriate volume.	5 4 3 2 1
4. Argument #2 was presented with clarity at an appropriate volume.	5 4 3 2 1
5. The team addressed the opposing team with confidence and made appropriate eye contact.	5 4 3 2 1
6. Rebuttals were specific to opposing arguments and expressed with clarity.	5 4 3 2 1
7. Rebuttals showed evidence of good listening skills.	5 4 3 2 1
8. Concluding arguments and statements were effective and persuasive.	5 4 3 2 1
9. Team members were courteous and respectful as the other team presented its case.	5 4 3 2 1
10. The overall collective effort of the debate team was effective.	5 4 3 2 1

Additional comments: _____



Handout 5

Persuasive Speeches for Social Action

Directions: Complete the speech template below with notes for a persuasive speech. Once you have finished this pre-writing, compose a persuasive speech in a properly-formatted document according to your teacher's guidelines. Remember in framing your speech to consider your setting and audience. What elements would your audience care most about? What stories and relevant information would your audience relate to?

Setting (Where would your speech take place?): _____

Audience (Probable characteristics of your listeners): _____

Introduction

- Begin with a relevant story or captivating example in relation to your social issue to draw the audience's attention.
- Establish rapport with the audience by finding points that both supporters and opponents of the argument could agree on or relate to.

Thesis

- Share your strong personal stand and why it is important for society to be aware of this issue and take steps for its resolution. What is your recommendation for reform or action?

Body

- Argument #1 (provide evidence, explanations, comparisons, and narrative examples)

- Argument #2 (provide evidence, explanations, comparisons, and narrative examples)

- Argument #3 (provide evidence, explanations, comparisons, and narrative examples)

- Refute counterarguments
 - Admit that there may be certain disadvantages to your proposed course of action and identify them. (cost, future issues, timing, etc.)

 - Offer possible solutions to these counterarguments.

Conclusion

- Restate your stance.
- Share final summation of your arguments.
- Give the audience a call to action and make a final appeal for change.



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