**Choose a Research Topic**

Read the overviews of these possible topics. Find one that interests you. When choosing your topic, focus on one particular aspect of the topic, ex. Cruel and unusual punishment definition under Criminal Justice topic. The links that follow can be used to complete the Research portion of the Mock Congress. There are links that you may want to refer to at the end of the list of topics that apply to any topic that you select.

**Civil liberties** are freedoms protected by the Constitution. If you are interested in current issues like school prayer, the phrase, “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, or the controversy surrounding the Patriot Act, this is the topic for you. This topic also includes intellectual property such as music downloads on the internet.

*  Text of the Bill of Rights: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/charters.html>
*  American Civil Liberties Union: <http://www.aclu.org>
*  Alliance for Justice: <http://www.aclu.org>
*  First Amendment Center: <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org>
*  American Constitutional Society for Law and Policy: <http://home.acslaw.org>
*  Center for Constitutional Rights: <http://ccrjustice.org>
*  World Intellectual Properties Organization: [http://www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/](%22)

**Civil rights** are those rights that belong to all citizens regardless of race, gender, age, or national origin. If you want to address the voting age, the rights of the disabled, or women’s rights, this is the topic you should select.

*  U. S. Commission on Civil Rights: <http://www.usccr.gov/>
*  Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the LCCR Education Fund: <http://www.civilrights.org/>
*  Foundation for Individual Rights in Education: <http://thefire.org/>
*  American Civil Rights Institute: http://thefire.org/
*  Center for Individual Rights: <http://www.cir-usa.org/>
*  U.S. Dept. of Education Office for Civil Rights: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/know.html>
*  Disability Info.gov: <http://www.disability.gov/civil_rights>
*  National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: <http://www.naacp.org/content/main/>
*  Feminist Majority Foundation: <http://www.feminist.org/>

**Criminal Justice** is the topic for those interested in the death penalty, penalties for crimes, and juvenile justice.

*  U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/>
*  Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice: <http://www.cjcj.org/>
*  Justice for All: <http://www.jfa.net/>
*  Death Penalty Information Center: <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/>
*  Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics: <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/>
*  Families Against Mandatory Minimums: <http://www.famm.org/>
*  American Civil Liberties Union: <http://www.aclu.org/>

**Education**– Would you like a say in how to make your school and educational experience better? Choose this topic if you want to address standardized testing, school start times, vocational training, or quality teachers.

*  [U.S. Department of Education](http://www.ed.gov/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). News, program descriptions, policy links and more.
*  Education Commission of the States: <http://www.ecs.org/>
*  National Education Association: <http://www.nea.org/>
*  Center for Education Reform: <http://www.edreform.com/Home/>
*  American Council on Education: <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>
*  School Choices: <http://www.schoolchoices.org/index.html>
*  Anti-Defamation League: <http://www.adl.org/main_Education/default.htm>

**Environment and Energy**- Do you believe we need to do a better job of protecting the environment? Or do you think Americans already waste too much time and money on environmental regulations? Should economics take precedent over saving the environment? If you are interested in natural resources, alternative energy sources, land use, or animal habitats and welfare, choose this topic.

*  Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/>
*  Natural Resources Defense Council: <http://www.nrdc.org/>
*  Property and Environment Research Center: <http://www.perc.org/>
*  The Nature Conservancy: <http://www.nature.org/>
*  Animal Welfare Information Center: <http://awic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?tax_level=1&info_center=3>
*  Sierra Club: <http://www.sierraclub.org/>

**Gun Control** – Who should be able to own a gun and what kind of guns should Americans own? How does gun control look in light of the Second Amendment?

*  Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, Explosives (Department of Justice): <http://www.atf.gov/>
*  National Rival Association: [http://home.nra.org/#/home](http://home.nra.org/%22%20%5Cl%20%22/home)
*  The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/>
*  Gun Control Network: <http://www.gun-control-network.org/GCN02.htm>
*  CATO Institute: <http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=975>

**Health and Safety** - Many people suffer illness, injury, or even death because of sometimes-preventable risks, from unsafe driving to unhealthy habits. Millions of Americans do not have health insurance or access to quality medical care. What role, if any, do you think the government should have in health care?

*  Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: <http://www.ahrq.gov/>
*  Alliance for Health Reform: <http://www.allhealth.org/>
*  Americans for Free Choice in Medicine: <http://www.afcm.org/>
*  National Transportation and Safety Board: <http://www.ntsb.gov/>
*  Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration: <http://store.samhsa.gov/home>

**Immigration**- Whether our families moved here 200 years ago or 10 years ago, almost every American arrived through immigration. Should we restrict immigration, or should we welcome all immigrants to the United States?

*  U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Bureau: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>
*  Center for Immigration Studies: <http://www.cis.org/>
*  National Immigration Forum: <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>
*  Immigration Law Portal: <http://www.visalaw.com/>
*  National Immigration Law Center: <http://www.nilc.org/>

**National Defense**- How would you protect the United States from terrorists and others who wish to do us harm? Select this topic to learn more about what our government is doing as well as the alternatives some people have proposed.

*  U.S. Department of Defense: <http://www.defense.gov/>
*  Center for Security Policy: <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/index.xml>
*  Counsel for a Livable World: <http://livableworld.org/>
*  Project on Defense Alternatives: <http://www.comw.org/pda/>
*  Missile Defense Agency: <http://www.mda.mil/>
*  National Defense Committee: <http://www.nationaldefensecommittee.org/>

Look up where political parties stand on the issue you choose at:

*  Republican Party: <http://www.gop.com/>
*  Democratic Party: <http://www.democrats.org/>
*  Green Party: <http://www.gp.org/index.php>
*  Libertarian Party: <http://www.lp.org/>

Other General Information Sites:

*  U.S. Government’s official web portal: <http://www.usa.gov/>
*  A search engine for politics, policy, and political news: <http://www.politicalinformation.com/>
*  Almanac of policy issues: <http://www.policyalmanac.org/>
*  A nonpartisan, nonprofit guide to current political issues: <http://www.publicagenda.org/>