

# THE AIDS EPIDEMIC FACILITATION GUIDE

## PREPERATION BEFORE CLASS

### REVIEW BACKGROUND

Here's some background information to help prepare you to lead your students through this role-play.

### SUMMARY

This VOXPOP is set in San Francisco in 1986. Though HIV has ravaged the LGBTQ community, the wider public is just starting to understand the danger that the growing epidemic poses. Students take on the roles of Activitsts, Concerned Citizens, Scientists and Public Officials and craft a response to the growinig crisis by voting on proposals (see page 5).

### KEY QUESTIONS

- How should we treat incurable disease?
- How do we balance public health and civil liberties?
- Who should be the face of the fight against AIDS?

### STUDENT ROLES

As students log into VOXPOP, they are distributed across the following five groups:

ACTIVISTS	CONCERNED CITIZENS	SCIENTISTS	PUBLIC OFFICIALS
Activists have spent years fighting for HIV research and treatment. Now that politicians and mass media finally care about HIV/AIDS, they fear that the LGBTQ community will face more discrimination and cruelty.	Concerned Citizens speak for everyday Americans, who are confused and scared. They don't trust the politicians and scientific "experts" who could have stopped the spread of HIV. Now we face a deadly epidemic!	Scientists are sick of dangerous behavior and misinformation about how HIV spreads. HIV is a medical crisis and needs a medically sound response!	Public Officials believe that a public health crisis requires a strong government response. They need Americans to give up civil liberties in order to protect society as a whole.

# SETUP

Prepare to run the role-play in your classroom.

## CREATE A SESSION

Create a session for each class period in which you will run the role-play. Go to:

[voxpath.io/role-plays/the-aids-epidemic](https://voxpath.io/role-plays/the-aids-epidemic)

You will be asked to **Name** your session. We suggest naming it after the class period in which you will run it.

Then you will be asked to enter your **email address**, so we can send you an email with the link to the session. Save the email and use it to open the session when the class starts.

VOXPOP saves your progress as you play, so you can run the role-play over multiple days. Just click on the link in the email to re-open it.

## DECIDE ON DURATION

In this guide, we suggest timings for a 60-minute session, including notes about sections that you can skip if you are pressed for time.

For a more relaxed experience, you can split the role-play into multiple sessions. Running a VOXPOP over two 45-minute sessions works particularly well. Look for the + in suggested timings to see where it's beneficial to add time. If you split the role-play into two sessions, we suggest ending the first day after the Issues (page 3). You can always revisit the videos the next day if you like. Just hit the Back button at the bottom.

## CLASSROOM SETUP

When you're ready to start the role-play, use the link in the email to open the session on your classroom's main screen.

Students should each use an individual device to log in and interact with the role-play. They can use any web-enabled device, including PCs, Chromebooks, tablets and phones.

You can leave desks in their normal configuration, but students will be moving around the class and meeting in different groups throughout the role-play. They should carry their device with them when they move.



# INTRODUCTION

During this phase students are introduced to the situation, read their profiles and get into character.

10 minutes total

## ASSIGN PROFILES - 3 min

Before class starts, open the VOXPOP session you created on your classroom screen.

As students arrive they can log in on their web-enabled device by going to the **URL**

[voxpath.run/core](https://voxpath.run/core)

Students should then enter the 6-character alphanumeric **Code** displayed on the classroom screen.

They will be asked to type in a display name.

- If students are returning to a session that's already in progress, they must type their name exactly as they did before. Names are case- and punctuation-sensitive.
- Names will be displayed on the classroom screen.

As students log in, they will be assigned to **Groups** and their name will appear on the screen.

If students arrive late, you can bring up the **URL** & session **Code** by clicking on .

## WELCOME - 1.5 min

A video introduces students to VOXPOP.

## THE SITUATION - 4 min

A video provides the historical background that students need to know.

## PROFILES - 3 min

Your students receive information about their roles, including their **Group** and a personal **Bio**.

Students should hit the yellow button on their screen when they're done reading.

## INTRODUCTIONS - 3 min

In this phase, students get into character by introducing themselves to one another.

Walk around and look at your students' profiles to get a sense of who they are.

# VALUES

During this phase students discuss their group's goals and share them with the class.

10 minutes total

## VALUES INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

## DISCUSS VALUES - 4+ min

Students meet with their **Group** and establish common goals.

Each **Group** has a different question to discuss. The questions are listed below along with their group's perspective on the value. Each **Group** must each select one representative to explain the answer to the class.

SCIENTISTS value KNOWLEDGE	ACTIVISTS value COMPASSION	PUBLIC OFFICIALS value AUTHORITY	CONCERNED CITIZENS value RESPONSIBILITY
<p><b>Why is knowledge vital to fight HIV/AIDS?</b></p> <p>To fight HIV/AIDS, our methods must be supported by science.</p> <p>A medical problem needs a medically sound response.</p>	<p><b>How do we treat HIV/AIDS patients with compassion?</b></p> <p>Compassionate care means respecting people's freedom and dignity.</p> <p>AIDS patients have already faced discrimination. They deserve respect.</p>	<p><b>Why is government authority so important?</b></p> <p>A public health crisis requires a clear government action.</p> <p>We cannot beat HIV/AIDS unless we unite behind policies that work.</p>	<p><b>Who is responsible for the HIV/AIDS crisis?</b></p> <p>HIV/AIDS is widespread because 'experts' lied.</p> <p>We must take all precautions, because we can't trust people to do the right thing.</p>

## SHARE YOUR VALUES - 5 min

In this phase, students practice public speaking and learn about the other **Groups**.

Encourage **Groups** to cheer for each other and show support for the **Values** that align with theirs.

As you click **Next**, the software will call up the **Groups**, in this order:

- SCIENTISTS
- ACTIVISTS
- PUBLIC OFFICIAL
- CONCERNED CITIZENS

# ISSUES

During this phase, we break the challenge facing the class into three issues.

8 minutes total

## ISSUES INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

## THE ISSUES - 7+ min

VOXPOP divides the conflict into three main **Issues**. There is one video per **Issue**.


These are the **Issues**:

MEDICINE	PREVENTION	IDENTITY
<p>Many doctors say that the most urgent issue facing AIDS patients is the lack of compassionate care. A number of hospitals around the country refuse to treat people with AIDS, because it makes their staff and other patients nervous.</p> <p>Many patients say that we should focus on finding a cure. Right now, the drug AZT is going through a clinical trial. The results are promising. People argue that we should cut this trial short and put AZT on the market immediately.</p> <p><b>How should we treat an incurable disease?</b></p>	<p>There is no vaccine for HIV. So the only way to stop the spread is to encourage – or enforce – safe behavior.</p> <p>Surgeon General C. Everett Koop promotes the widespread distribution and use of condoms.</p> <p>Public officials say that, to keep Americans safe, we need to know how widespread HIV is. We need to test everybody and find out who has HIV. Activists worry that, if it were leaked to the public, a list of everyone with HIV would affect people’s ability to find housing, jobs and schools.</p> <p><b>How do we balance public health and civil liberties?</b></p>	<p>Scientists and Public Officials say that Bobbi Campbell should be the face of our movement. He was a leading activist until his death in 1984. Making him a national hero would speak directly to the gay community: the group at greatest risk of acquiring HIV.</p> <p>Many people say that Ryan White should be our spokesperson. He’s a nice kid who just wants to go to school. By publicizing Ryan White’s plight, we can also remind the American public that HIV does not spread through casual contact.</p> <p><b>Who should be the face of the fight against AIDS?</b></p>

## POST-VIDEO DISCUSSIONS - Time-permitting

A discussion question will appear after each video plays, with suggestions for groups to call on. These classwide discussions are a good way to review the **Issues** and establish alliances between **Groups**.

However, **they are not necessary, and discussion is not included in the time estimates** given in this guide.

If you choose to answer the questions with your class, remind students to click the **Perspective** button  to learn more about what their group thinks.

# COMMITTEES

During this section, students are divided into committees to work on one of the three issues.

10 minutes total

## COMMITTEE INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

## WORK IN COMMITTEES - 9 min

In this phase, students must work with members of other **Groups** to select proposals that address the crisis.

Students from each **Group** are distributed across three **Committees**.

In their **Committees**, students:

- Vote on their individual devices to select one **Proposal** for a whole class vote,
- Pick a representative to explain and argue for their **Proposal** to the class,
- If applicable, pick a representative to present arguments against the proposal.

These are the **Proposals**:

COMMITTEE ON MEDICINE	COMMITTEE ON PREVENTION	COMMITTEE ON IDENTITY
<p><b>APPROVE AZT</b></p> <p>In clinical trials, patients taking the new drug AZT are surviving. Cut short the trials and release AZT to the public.</p> <p>Supporters: ACTIVISTS</p>	<p><b>MANDATORY TESTING</b></p> <p>The federal government will regularly test everyone in the U.S. for HIV.</p> <p>Supporters: SCIENTISTS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, CONCERNED CITIZENS</p>	<p><b>BOBBI CAMPBELL</b></p> <p>Campbell made the first public poster warning gay men about HIV/AIDS. He worked for the LGBTQ+ movement until his death.</p> <p>Supporters: SCIENTISTS</p>
<p><b>HOSPITALS MUST TREAT HIV/AIDS</b></p> <p>Some private hospitals won't admit patients with HIV/AIDS. Force all hospitals to treat HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Supporters: PUBLIC OFFICIALS</p>	<p><b>SEX ED IN SCHOOLS</b></p> <p>Public schools must teach sexual health education and distribute free condoms and contraceptives.</p> <p>Supporters: ACTIVISTS, SCIENTISTS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS</p>	<p><b>RYAN WHITE</b></p> <p>Ryan White is a nice teenager who was bullied and expelled from school when a blood transfusion gave him HIV.</p> <p>Supporters: ACTIVISTS</p>

Your students' devices have more information about the proposals they can access by clicking



**Ask your students to tell you more about the proposals.**

## VOTE & EPILOGUE

During this section, students debate the solutions, cast votes, learn about what really happened and reflect on the experience.

17 minutes total

### VOTE INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

### DEBATE & VOTE - 9 min

The class decides by majority vote whether to pass the **Proposals** selected by the **Committees**.

This is an opportunity for students to practice public speaking as they attempt to persuade classmates to vote for or against proposals.

**Encourage debate! This is the last chance to address the crisis.**

As you click **Next**, the website will prompt a **DEBATE** and then a **VOTE** on each proposal, in this order:

COMMITTEE ON MEDICINE

COMMITTEE ON PREVENTION

COMMITTEE ON IDENTITY

### WHAT HAPPENED - 7+ min

An **Epilogue** video explains what really happened.

When the video is done playing, these suggested discussion questions appear:

- What similarities do you see between the AIDS epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic? What differences do you see?
- How do we balance people's personal liberties with the public good?

The post-activity discussion gives students time to decompress from the role-playing experience.