



## Value-Based Problem Solving Grades 6-8 and 9-12 Social Studies or Language Arts

### Overview:

Students will identify and analyze problems in their community that are **contrary** to the 12 shared American Values listed at [www.purpleamerica.us](http://www.purpleamerica.us). Students will be divided into groups of 3 or 4 and together they will prescribe value-based solutions to these problems.

### Objective:

When this lesson is completed, students will:

- Have an understanding of the 12 Shared American Values
- Evaluate elements in our society that block American Values
- Synthesize solutions to societal problems using shared values.

**Length:** Approximately three 80-minute blocked periods (Modify as needed/desired.)

### Materials:

- List of 12 values from [www.purpleamerica.us](http://www.purpleamerica.us)
- Current local and national news magazines and newspapers
- Materials for making posters

### Application:

#### Step 1:

As a class, come up with common definitions and understandings of the 12 Shared American Values. Students will be asked to identify the poisons (feelings or emotions) that get in the way of values being applied, resulting in a divided community.

#### Examples:

- Selfishness
- Anger
- Racism
- Homophobia

- Fear of the Unknown
- Sexism
- Greed

**Step 2:**

Place students in groups that fit your class structure. Have students research events in their school, neighborhood, city, state or nation where they see unhealthy behavior due to a lack of shared values.

**Step 3:**

After students have researched their events, have each group give a diagnosis of what negative feelings or emotions caused the event to happen, and to give a prescription of how some of the Shared American Values could have led to a different conclusion or may have prevented the event from happening.

**Step 4:**

Groups will present their solution to events, by comparing what happened with what should have happened had people not forgotten their values. Students will be able to choose how they want to illustrate their value-based solution through:

- Posters
- Skits
- Video
- PowerPoint
- Newspaper Articles

**Assessments:**

Teachers should create rubrics to fit their expectations; however, every group's work should demonstrate an understanding of the shared American values, an analysis of how negative emotions and the absence of values can lead to trouble, and the ways that an understanding of shared values can resolve problems.

