

## **History/Social Science Argument: Racism, Reparations and the 2020 Elections**

### **History Argument Guidelines**

Two or more team members will prepare the history argument and will present it on the Challenge Day before a panel of judges. The argument, which should address the prompt below, should be 6 to 8 minutes in length. Visual aids, like PowerPoint, are allowed. Your argument must include primary source evidence and interviews that the team members have conducted. On the day of the event, you will submit a list of sources used in the development of your argument. If the list of sources is not included, 15 points will be deducted from the final score. If the list of sources is submitted but does not contain either primary source evidence or interviews, 10 points will be deducted from final score. See scoring rubric.

**Major Thesis Question:** Should the issue of United States government reparations to the descendants of African-Americans who were enslaved in the US be a focus of the 2020 presidential elections?

Earlier this year, a bill was filed in Congress to study the question of reparations. In arguing whether or not reparations should be a focus of the 2020 elections, please address the following:

- a. Is there a moral and historical justification for reparations?
- b. If you agree with reparations, what form would you recommend and why? If you disagree with reparations, explain why, with specific reference to forms that have been proposed.
- c. Should the issue of reparations be a focus of the 2020 presidential election debate and become a part of your candidate's platform? Consider, for example:
  - would this win or lose support for your candidate;
  - should a moral imperative outweigh the importance of winning the election, or visa versa?

### **Your thesis argument should be supported by:**

- An explanation of why you believe that reparations are justified and how your reparations proposal aligns with your rationale. What other considerations do you take into account to support your particular reparations proposal?  
OR
- An explanation of why you believe that reparations are not justified, or why you believe, if morally justified, why actually making reparations is impractical or unwise.  
AND
- A careful examination of the implications for making reparations an election issue in the 2020 campaign. Here you might imagine yourself the candidate of your choice or his/her campaign manager. Consider what is at stake in the election, how your position would help or hinder the fight against systemic racism, racist divisiveness, and the lives of African-Americans across the US.  
AND
- Supporting your position with an example from this or a previous presidential campaign where a decision to include or not to include a controversial issue was made.

### **Please refer to the specific requirements below:**

1. Presentation length 6-8 minutes
2. Visual aids may be used
3. Face to face, telephone or Skype interviews with at least one each of the following:
  - Presidential or congressional candidates or their staff members.
  - Campaign organizers or news media members.
  - Civil rights organizations or activists.