

Targeted Proficiency Level: Advanced Low

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to make a mid-range prediction about a community issue.
- Students will be able to make a long-term prediction about a global issue.
- Students will be able to support their predictions with reasonable arguments.
- Students will be able to evaluate the likelihood of their classmates' predictions.
- Students will be able to negotiate a “bet” on the likelihood of an outcome with a classmate.

Modes: Presentational Writing, Interpretive Reading, Interpersonal

Recommended Materials:

- Internet access
- Long Bets handout in English
- Reaction worksheet
- Prediction scaffolding worksheet
- Presentation template
- LFO To Go or other conversation-recording framework
- Binder for curating students' “bets”

Procedure:

The teacher should read Brian Eno's essay “The Big Here and Long Now” (available at <http://longnow.org/essays/big-here-long-now/>) in advance. Using the ideas in this essay, introduce students to the concepts of “small here,” “big here,” “short now,” and “long now.” The goal of this entire project is for students to expand their awareness of the connections between their immediate surroundings and the global community, and recent events and their long-range repercussions. Possible ways to get this discussion going are to read and discuss the entire essay as a class; read an abridged version; ask students where they live and expand their answers from home address to city, county, state, nation, continent, and planet; or other ideas that a teacher may have after reading the essay.

Introduce the concept of “long bets” as a way to get people thinking about a “Long Now.” Distribute the long bets handout to students. Once students have read some of the long bets, summarize them on a whiteboard or shared projection in the target language. Note: no actual betting will take place at any point during this project.

Have students complete the reaction worksheet. If possible, translate the reaction worksheet into the target language. Discuss students' responses as a whole class.



Students will each be making two predictions. One will deal with something in the local community (“local” can be defined by class discussion) at least one year from now. One will deal with a global issue at least five years from now. Distribute the prediction scaffolding worksheet, which will guide students through the process of making their predictions and supporting them with arguments. Students will need time to think about their predictions and arguments.

Once students have drafted their predictions, they can copy each of them on the top part of a presentation template. Display all of the predictions at once (you could tape all of them to the classroom walls, or students could leave them on their desks. Students will circulate around the room and read all of their classmates’ predictions. Students should look for predictions that they would like to “bet” against - these should be around issues that they find personally interesting, and they should choose at least three (so that they have back-ups).

As an interpersonal task, students will find one fellow student to “bet” with. In the end, half of the students will be sticking with one of their predictions, and half of the students will be challenging a classmate’s prediction. Once everyone has found a “betting” partner, the pairs take turns discussing why they do or don’t think the prediction will come true. Challengers fill in reasons for why they don’t think the prediction will come true on the presentation templates. Pairs of students can record their discussion on LFO To Go or a similar application that allows for students to share oral work with the teacher.

Collect all of the “bets” into a binder which will be available for this and all future classes to read. Which predictions will come true in the coming years?

*Notes: This is a large project that calls for higher-level thinking on the part of students and possibly out-of-class research; it would be a good complement to “genius hour” projects. It is also the sort of project that can become legendary if done every year. In addition to sharing examples of bets from the Long Bets website, teachers can share students’ “bets” from previous years, and when a prediction comes to pass or is disproven, the teacher can use it as a springboard for class discussion.*

