

People Power Through Petitions



A petition is a statement regarding a particular issue that many people can sign to prove that they share the same concerns, agree with your position, or are interested in learning more about the cause. Petitions serve as a very effective way to gain the attention you need to effect change. Signatures obtained from petitions are not votes, but they are an expression of general interest in your cause. Even if the petition doesn't result in a tangible outcome, petitions are a demonstration of group strength! Follow these steps to get started:

1. **Identify the message and goal of your petition.** Some ideas may include: urging lawmakers to declare one day of the year as "Clean Up Our Town Day", getting schools to offer a new class, building a new park in your neighborhood, or establishing a no-meat day in the school cafeteria.
2. **Choose whether you want your petition to be an online or a paper petition.** Online petitions are easy and great for broad issues, but paper petitions may be more effective for changes on a local scale. To cast an even broader net, you can create both an online and a paper petition! These websites: change.org and thepetitionsite.com offer step-by-step instructions for setting up online petitions, for paper petitions there are several templates online you can customize and download.
3. **Give your petition a title and include a brief statement outlining the purpose of your petition.** This statement should appear at the top of every page of signature, so that people know what they are signing.
4. **Identify the authority or agency who will receive your petition.**
5. **If using a paper petition, leave enough space for names, signatures, and physical and email addresses.** Number the lines so you can easily total the number of signatures you have.
6. **Brainstorm with others to find people to sign your petition: schoolmates, friends, neighbors, teachers, relatives, etc.**
7. **Distribute copies of or the link to your petition to helpers.** Make sure everyone is prepared to explain your petition and answer questions.
8. **Ask people to sign your petition. Be polite!** Remember, some people will not agree with you and will not want to sign your petition. Just move on to the next person! Online petitions can be distributed via email and social media, or you can have a tablet/laptop at the ready for people to sign when you go door-to-door. Remember: if you take your petition door-to-door, NEVER go alone. It's always better to go in pairs.
9. **If you chose to go with a paper petition, when you are done collecting signatures, photocopy all of the pages of your petition.** Put the copies away for safekeeping. You may need it later if your petition is lost, or needs to be verified.
10. **You may want to contact or call your local television station or newspaper and tell them about your petition.** Many local newspapers like to do stories on young people making a difference. Let the media know when and where you plan to deliver your petition.
11. **Deliver or present your petition to an official who has power to act on your ideas.**

Petition to Add Environmental and Population Education Classes

Petition summary and background:	The world population, now over 7.6 billion, is growing by almost 83 million people per year. We are adding more people each day than at any other time in human history. This rapid population growth makes it increasingly difficult for us to protect the human environment and provide enough food, clean water, shelter, and resources for everyone. Environmental and population education programs which teach students about these critical issues are an important component to school curricula.
Action petitioned for:	We, the undersigned, urge our principal, teachers and local school board to include environmental and population education in our school curriculum.

	Printed Name	Signature	Address	Email	Date
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3.					
4.					
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