

Civic Reflection for AmeriCorps State/VISTA Organizations Suggested Topics and Readings

For **AmeriCorps** organizations, one approach to a civic reflection series is to align topics and readings with the AmeriCorps focus areas. A series of five to ten discussions set up in this way could employ any combination of the following readings.

- Getting things done
 - A Bed for the Night
 - The Lamb and the Pinecone
 - Saving the Crippled Boy
 - The Lesson
- Strengthening Communities
 - Theme for English B
 - The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements
 - The Wife of His Youth
 - Selection from 'Specimen Days'
- Encouraging Responsibility
 - The Drum Major Instinct
 - The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas
 - Self-Reliance, excerpt
 - The Lovers of the Poor
- Expanding Opportunity
 - Fellowship
 - Theme for English B
 - The Eleventh
 - Mending Wall

For **VISTA** organizations, with the emphasis on poverty and capacity-building, we suggest the following sequence:

- A Bed for the Night
- The Lovers of the Poor
- The Lesson
- The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements
- The Eleventh

Note: all readings listed above, along with discussion questions, are currently available in *The Civically Engaged Reader* or *Talking Service*.

Civic Reflection for AmeriCorps State/VISTA Organizations

Suggested Topics and Readings

Stages of team development as they relate to the suggested topics and readings

- Forming Stage:
 - “Begin with the end in mind.”
 - What is service about?
 - Members should begin to understand the larger national service movement, AmeriCorps, and your program.
 - Members should identify why they came to this service opportunity, what motivated them to join, and what they want to see for themselves as a result of their time in the program.
 - ⇒ Choose readings from the focus area “Getting Things Done”

- Storming Stage:
 - Members should be reminded that service is not simple and real community change requires hard work, dedication, commitment, and a team of people to get things done.
 - Members should be reminded of the original reasons why they joined so you and they can ensure that is not forgotten.
 - ⇒ Choose readings from the focus area “Strengthening Communities”

- Norming Stage:
 - Members explore their own futures and roles in civic and service life.
 - Managers can express that they are serious about the members, the community, service, and the larger picture of engagement.
 - ⇒ Choose readings from the focus area “Encouraging Responsibility”

- Performing Stage:
 - Managers can provide increased leadership opportunities for their members.
 - ⇒ Choose readings from the focus area “Expanding Opportunity”

- Adjourning Stage:
 - Members will reflect on all they have been through and all the people with whom they have had the great opportunity to serve.
 - Managers should implement strategies that can help their members stay connected to one another, the program, and the larger national service movement.
 - ⇒ Choose readings from the focus area “Getting Things Done”
 - Managers should present options and tools for next steps, possibly serving a second year in AmeriCorps.
 - Members moving on should be given trainings, information, and tools to think about what is next both personally and professionally and how they will continue service and civic engagement once they leave the program.
 - ⇒ Choose readings from the focus area “Expanding Opportunity”