

Preface

Every day, students are exposed to a variety of controversial issues, ranging from waste management and organ transplants to freedom of information. Making sense of these issues—getting background information and sorting out different points of view—can be a daunting task.

Some subjects, such as justice and war, have been part of human societies for a long time. Others, such as cloning and global warming, have emerged in recent decades. While young people may have an immediate interest in articles entitled “Peer Pressure” and “Teens and Sex,” they may view “Long-Term Care” as fairly remote from their lives. Yet for a variety of reasons, an obscure issue may suddenly become a very relevant one.

This four-volume reference work, *Current Issues*, is designed to help students grasp the issues they come across in school assignments, through the media, and in conversations with others. The encyclopedia contains 265 entries related to a wide range of subjects taught in secondary schools and community colleges, including history, government, sociology, economics, earth sciences, environmental studies, and health. Each article presents an overview of the issue and important background information, along with relevant discussions of constitutional principles, social or environmental considerations, or other significant factors. The article also summarizes different points of view. An editorial board of distinguished scholars reviewed all entries. The articles in *Current Issues* are arranged in alphabetical order and illustrated with photographs. Charts and graphs supplement the text. Definitions of difficult or unfamiliar terms appear in the margin, along with sidebars that highlight particular aspects of an issue. Cross-references at the end of each entry direct the reader to articles on related subjects. Volume 4 includes a Glossary of key terms used in the encyclopedia, a list of Additional Sources with books and Web sites arranged by field, and a comprehensive Index.

Preface

Many of the subjects about which people express deep concern today are widely discussed in the media. But information about them is often presented without context and may be one-sided or focused on a small part of the story. The encyclopedia of *Current Issues* provides balanced overviews of important topics that should help students gain a better understanding of the complex world in which they live.

Cumulative Index

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