

American Literature
Against the Current
Essay Questions

Directions: Each group member must choose a different one of the following writing assignments concerned with issues raised in Chapter 9: *Against the Current*

1. In Billy Frank's view, "there's more good people than bad people, and the system will work if we all get in there and take part and stay committed." Write a speech in response to this statement. Do you agree or disagree? Use at least one personal and one historical example to make your case. Deliver your speech before the class.
2. Write a radio script about the fish-in movement. Provide background information and include interviews with people from all sides in the confrontation. Cover the scene of a fish-in with descriptive commentary and "live" dialogue.
3. The struggle to protect Northwest Indian fishing rights was about much more than economics. It was also about preserving a traditional way of life. Identify and write a newspaper article about an "endangered" form of livelihood in your area. What forces are threatening its existence? What efforts are being made to preserve it? What are the issues involved? If no such challenge exists where you live, choose one from another region.
4. Write an essay about the goals and strategies of civil disobedience. As examples, draw on the fish-in movement and one other historical episode of your choice. Compare and contrast the goals, strategies and outcomes of the two efforts. As an extension, write a companion essay on an issue that would inspire you to engage in civil disobedience today and why.