



# HxA High School Classroom Activity Series

## Culminating Activity: This I Believe

To conclude the “HxA High School Classroom Activity Series,” have students complete the assignment described below. The assignment is adapted from the “activity extension” found on page 2 of [“All Minus One: Play the Devil’s Advocate.”](#)

### This I Believe

Listen to the inaugural episode of the podcast series, [“This I Believe.”](#) The original program sought “to point to the common meeting grounds of beliefs, which is the essence of brotherhood and the floor of our civilization.” Write an essay (500 to 800 words), titled “This I Believe,” about one belief you hold.

### Essay Instructions

Regarding your own social or political views, what is one belief you have that you think is misunderstood by many others today?

Succinctly express this belief in one to two sentences. Then describe:

- How this belief was formed. For example, what experiences in your life led you to this belief?
- How this belief has changed. For example, did you have a new experience or learn about evidence or someone else’s perspective that changed your belief?
- How this belief has been confirmed. For example, did you experience or learn about evidence that made you more confident in your belief?
- How this belief has been tested. For example, has anyone challenged your belief?

As an extension to the last bullet point—how this belief has been tested—write about a belief in opposition to your own. *Steel man* this opposing view. Articulate what a person who holds this view sincerely believes. Try to describe their belief more clearly than they can, and follow the [HxA Way](#) when doing so:

1. Make your case with evidence.
2. Be intellectually charitable.
3. Be intellectually humble.
4. Be constructive.
5. Be yourself.

End your essay by describing where your belief and the opposing view might overlap and diverge. Without making a statement about whether you think they are right or wrong, describe what you think accounts for the overlap and divergence?

### Activity Extension

Once students have completed their essays, if you want to take the assignment a step further, have them read their essay aloud and record it as a podcast episode. Compile all the podcast episodes into one classroom podcast series and have the students listen to each other's episodes. This will allow students to learn about the diverse views of their peers.

Here is a [list of apps](#) that teachers have used to create student podcasts. Follow your school's protocol for receiving parental permission if you make the podcast publicly available.