



Jacob Smith

Age: 21

Gender: Male

Hometown: Denver, CO

Marital Status: Single

Profession: Political Science Major @
UC Boulder

Affiliations: College Republicans, Rugby
Team, Racquetball Club

Background

With Jacob, it's all about discipline and hard work. If he's not playing rugby or racquetball, he's likely to be found with a book or two in hand, working at the library or outdoors when the weather's nice enough. While he has a laptop, he usually leaves it in his dorm room; he wants to be able to drop everything for a quick rugby practice if necessary.

Jacob has three older siblings who went to college on scholarship, so paying his own way was important. He pays for college through scholarships, work studies, and loans. He plans to go to Law School after graduation.

Politically, Jacob aligns himself with the Republicans, and he welcomes a good debate. Most of his friends have learned not to get dragged into one of Jacob's debates, though; he's usually well-informed, and even if he isn't, he's likely to win the debate simply by being the one talking the loudest.

Tech Exposure

Jacob has a laptop that he purchased before his freshman year at UC Boulder. While he doesn't consider himself an expert, Jacob is well-versed in surfing the internet, researching online, sending email, and writing papers. He's confident that he can do whatever he needs to on the computer, and isn't afraid of exploring a little bit to figure out how to do something.

Jacob has had a cell phone since he was 15, which he paid for himself using the income from his part-time job. His current phone is one of the newer camera phones that can connect to the internet. He's used his phone to connect to the internet only to download new ringtones; he hasn't had need to explore any other uses. He'll take a picture on his camera phone if his camera isn't nearby.

Context of Use

At the most recent meeting of the College Republicans, Jacob heard that there was going to be a deliberative poll about the upcoming national election. Jacob was vaguely familiar with the concept, and jumped at the opportunity to convince others of the value of his political views. His strategy is to dominate the conversation as much as possible--nobody can disagree if they don't have a chance to give their input.



Ruth Baxter

Age: 62

Gender: Female

Hometown: Mentor, OH

Marital Status: Married 35 years

Profession: Retired 5th Grade Teacher,
Children's Museum Volunteer

Affiliations: Environmental Defense Fund,
Planned Parenthood

Background

Ruth has dedicated her life to helping and caring for children. Even at a young age, she was responsible for watching her five siblings. As an adult, she taught fifth grade at a local elementary school for 35 years until she decided to retire. She and her husband Max have three children and five grandchildren.

Politically, Ruth gets fired up if the issue centers around children or the environment--two issues that are very important to her. While her stance on these issues tends to get her identified as a liberal democrat, she's hesitant to identify herself with a particular party -- primarily because she doesn't want to get involved in a debate about an issue she doesn't know much about.

Tech Exposure

Ruth and Max don't have a computer in their home; Ruth personally has never seen the need for it. Her children keep pushing her to get a computer, but she insists that going to the library is good enough for her.

When Ruth does use the library computer, she uses it to do research, find books in the library, and email her grandchildren. She shies away from online shopping, though, since she doesn't feel comfortable giving too much personal information online. Ruth isn't a fast typist, so her emails are often short and to the point. She also tries to minimize her time on the computer because staring at the screen for too long strains her eyes.

Ruth has a cell phone that she carries with her for emergencies, but she rarely finds cause to use it. Her phone is able to take pictures and connect to the internet, but she's never bothered learning how to work "all those fancy gadgets."

Context of Use

Ruth saw a flyer at her library about participating in a deliberative poll on the future of children's education programs at the library. She hadn't heard of a deliberative poll before, but she was certain that she wanted to voice her opinion on this issue. It's the day of the event, and she shows up ready to debate the issue. The library attendant directs her to her seat, and she launches the PICOLA web application.