The Challenge of Governance is the fourth volume in the W.M. Keck Foundation Series, a series of educational publications that address key challenges facing our democratic and pluralistic republic under the framework of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights. The W.M. Keck Foundation, one of the nation’s largest charitable foundations, primarily supports higher education, medical research, and science. The Foundation also maintains a Southern California Grant Program that provides support in the areas of civic and community services, health care, precollegiate education, and the arts. The Board of Directors of Constitutional Rights Foundation is grateful to the W.M. Keck Foundation for its vision and generosity.
# The Challenge of Governance

## TEACHER’S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as “the Nation’s Report Card,” issued the results from its 1998 civics assessment of high school seniors. Based heavily on the National Standards for Civics and Government for High School, the assessment found that only 26 percent of all high school seniors showed proficiency in civics understanding. Reporting on the results, the Los Angeles Times stated: “Most of the nation’s 3 million high school seniors will be eligible to vote next year in the first presidential election of the 21st century, but only one in four of them has more than a rudimentary understanding of how the American system of democratic government works . . . .”

The assessment clearly showed that more needs to be done to assure that students understand American democracy and are able meet the National Standards for Civics and Government for High School. We designed The Challenge of Governance with this in mind.

The Challenge of Governance gives teachers an opportunity to review content from the national standards with students in a systematic and comprehensive manner. In addition, the materials use interactive methodology that provides students with intellectual and critical-thinking skill building, also required by the standards. We hope that this approach proves to be both content rich and methodologically sound.

Overview of the Teacher’s Guide

This Teacher’s Guide is designed to provide instructional support for the classroom use of The Challenge of Governance. The student text is divided into 16 short chapters. Each chapter consists of two parts. The first part is an introductory reading covering one or two of the National Standards for Civics and Government for High School. These standards have been incorporated into most states’ civics and government standards. The introductory readings offer students a review of all the national civics and government standards. The second part of each chapter is an activity reading that pursues a related specific issue of current importance. The activity readings offer student an opportunity to delve more deeply into an issue and prepare students for an interactive activity that will engage students and foster critical thinking.

This Teacher’s Guide provides recommended lesson sequences incorporating readings, directed discussions, and interactive activities supported by reproducible handouts. Each lesson is structured with an overview, learning objectives, standards addressed in the lesson, preparation needed for the lesson, and step-by-step procedures.

The lessons are structured somewhat differently from the other volumes in the Challenge series. Please take note of the following:

Handout Q. This is the last handout in this Teacher’s Guide and contains a vocabulary list for each lesson. Teachers may want to distribute this handout in advance of each lesson and ask students to review the applicable words.

Focus Discussion. Each lesson begins with a focus discussion. The discussions are designed to elicit personal opinions from students and make the introductory reading more meaningful.

Introductory Reading. The first reading in each chapter is an introductory reading based on the National Standards for Civics and Government for High School. These readings are packed with information. It is recommended that students read this as a review after having covered the material in their civics or government class. Or teachers may want to base a lecture on the introductory reading, which will give students an opportunity to ask questions. Following the lecture, students should be able to read the material themselves.

Points of Inquiry after the Introductory Reading. Each introductory reading is followed by Points of Inquiry, questions for discussion or writing. These questions are taken directly from the National Standards and are based on the benchmarks for each standard.

The remaining parts of the lesson are similar to the other volumes. The activity reading is more high interest reading than the introductory reading. It is followed by Points of Inquiry for another discussion. Then students take part in an interactive activity, which requires critical thinking and provides an opportunity for the students to get more involved in the subject.

One final note: We plan to put links related to each reading on our web site. Students (or teachers) may find these useful to get more information on a particular subject or to better prepare for an activity. To find these links, go to www.crf-usa.org, click on Links, and click on The Challenge of Governance Links.
Lesson 1: The Constitution and Governance

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore constitutional government. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading about the origin and principles of constitutional government. Next, they read and discuss an activity reading focusing on the constitutions of emerging democracies. Finally, in small groups they evaluate some provisions from new constitutions of emerging democracies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the purposes and sources of law.
2. Explain the purposes of constitutional government.
3. Identify major philosophical ideas and historical events that influenced limited government in the United States.
4. Explain the nature and importance of “popular sovereignty.”
5. Compare and evaluate constitutional provisions from other countries.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School

(3) Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good

(4) Understands the concept of a constitution, the various purposes that constitutions serve and the conditions that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government

(8) Understands the central ideas of American constitutional government and how this form of government has shaped the character of American society

(12) Understands the relationships among liberalism, republicanism, and American constitutional democracy

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, distribute Handout Q. This handout contains key words for all the lessons. You might assign the key words for review prior to each lesson. You will also need a copy of Handout A for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion with students by asking:

1. What is a constitution?
2. What might it be like if the United States did not have a Constitution?

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Have students read The Constitution and Governance on page 6. Hold a discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 8.

1. What have people in history claimed were different sources of law? What do you think should be the main source of law? Why?
2. What are some different purposes and functions of law?
3. What are the purposes of a constitutional government? How can a government have a constitution and not be a constitutional government?
4. How can constitutions promote change or help resolve social issues? Give some historical examples.
5. What major philosophical ideas and historical events helped influence the creation of limited government in the United States? Why do you think the principles of constitutional government prospered in America?
6. What is “popular sovereignty”? Why is it important to the U.S. Constitution?
7. What is the origin of the word “democracy”? What does it mean? In our society, what is the different meaning between a “democrat” and a “Democrat”?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Have students read Emerging Democracies on page 8. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 9.

1. Does a constitution guarantee that a nation will treat its citizens justly? Why or why not?
2. Does respect for the rule of law guarantee that a constitution is democratic? Why or why not?
3. What do you think are the main factors that distinguish a democratic from a non-democratic form of government?
4. Do you think there are economic, social, or educational conditions that foster democracy? If so, what are they?

D. Small-Group Activity: Evaluating Constitutions

Step 1. Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students.

Step 2. Distribute Handout A—Evaluating Constitutions to each student. Review the instructions and answer any questions students may have. Emphasize that all three questions on the handout require reasons for their answers. Allow groups time to complete the activity.

Step 3. Go through each provision separately, calling on different groups to report their answers to the questions and allowing for discussion of each question.

Lesson 2: Constitutional Limitations on Government

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students examine the different methods the constitution uses to limit government. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading about constitutional limitations on government. Next, students read and discuss an activity reading on the amendment process. Finally, in small groups, students role play a congressional committee discussing and voting on a proposed amendment against flag burning.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Identify and explain four limits on governmental power in the Constitution.
2. Explain how the values and principles of the Constitution have affected American society.
3. Describe the nature and influence of liberalism.
4. Evaluate a proposed constitutional amendment.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(2) Understands the concept of a constitution, purposes of constitutions, conditions leading to constitutional government
(8) Understands the central ideas of American constitutional government and how this form of government shapes American society
(12) Understands the relationship among liberalism, republicanism, and American constitutional democracy
(15) Understands how the U.S. Constitution grants and distributes power and responsibilities to national and state government and how it seeks to prevent the abuse of power

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout B for each group.
PROCEDURE

A. **Focus Discussion:** Ask students: “Do you think the government is too powerful? Why or why not?” Hold a brief discussion.

B. **Introductory Reading and Discussion:** Have students read *Constitutional Limitations on Government* on page 10. Hold a discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 12.
   1. What is liberalism? When did it arise? What did it influence? What other political meanings are there of the word “liberal”?
   2. Name four limits on governmental power as laid out in the Constitution. How does each one function to limit the power of the central government? All these limitations slow down the process of government. Why do you think the founders did this?
   3. Aside from limiting government, what else does the Constitution do?
   4. How have the values and principles of the Constitution affected American society?

C. **Activity Reading and Discussion:** Have students read *The Amendment Process* on page 12. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 14.
   1. What are two methods for modifying the Constitution?
   2. Why do you think the founders made the Constitution so difficult to amend? Do you agree that it should be? Why or why not?
   3. What proposed amendments to the Constitution do you know about? Do you think any of them should be added to the Constitution? Explain.

D. **Small-Group Activity: Burning the Flag**

   Step 1. Divide students into groups of three or four. Ask them to imagine that they are members of a judiciary committee making recommendations on a proposed amendment to the Constitution.

   Step 2. Distribute a copy of Handout B—*Burning the Flag* to each group. Review the proposal and instructions and answer any questions students may have. Make it clear that they are to give reasons for their decisions. Tell them to review the article they just read to help them with the activity.

   Step 3. When they have completed the task, ask each group to present its decision to the class. Be sure to ask students why they made their recommendation.

   Step 4. Conclude the activity by taking a class vote on the flag-burning amendment.
Lesson 3: A Democratic Republic

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore the purposes of government and the different democratic forms of government. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on this subject. Next, they read and discuss an activity reading on proposals to make America more democratic. Finally, they role play a presidential commission making recommendations on whether to replace the electoral college.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Compare federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.
2. Compare the parliamentary and shared powers systems.
3. Compare republics and direct democracies and summarize arguments for and against each.
4. Express an informed opinion on the nature and justification for political authority.
5. Evaluate and justify a position on the electoral college.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(1) Understands about civic life, politics, and government
(5) Understands the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems
(6) Understands the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government
(7) Understands alternative forms of representation and how they serve the purposes of constitutional government
(12) Understands the relationships among liberalism, republicanism, and American constitutional democracy

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout C for each group of 3-5 students.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Ask students: “Do you think our form of government is democratic enough?” Hold a brief discussion.

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read the A Democratic Republic on page 15. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 17.
1. Why do you think politics is found wherever people gather? What does politics help people do?
2. Why are political authority and government necessary? What are some formal institutions that have existed to exercise political authority? How have people justified political authority historically? What do you think should justify it? Why?
3. Compare and contrast the federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
4. What is a system of shared powers? What is a parliamentary system? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
5. What is a republic? How does it differ from direct democracy? What are the main arguments for and against each? In modern America, what is the different meaning of the words “republican” and “Republican”?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Making America More Democratic on page 18. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 19.
1. Do you think the initiative process should be adopted at the federal level? Explain.
2. Do you think campaign finance reform is necessary? Why or why not?
3. Many times in our history it has been suggested that the electoral college be changed. Why do you think it never has been?
Lesson 4: The Civil Society

OVERVIEW
In this lesson, students explore the nature and importance of civil society. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading about the principles and values of a civil society. Next, they read and discuss an activity reading about compulsory national service. Finally, they work in small groups role playing a presidential commission recommending whether compulsory national service should be established in the United States.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
1. Explain the nature and importance of “civil society.”
2. Describe how voluntary associations have played an important role in American history.
3. Identify three basic values of American society and explain their importance.
4. Evaluate the pros and cons of required national service.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED
Civics Standards for High School
(2) Understands the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
(9) Understands the importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, beliefs, and principles of American constitutional democracy
(10) Understands the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life

PREPARATION
In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout D for each student.

PROCEDURE
A. Focus Discussion: Ask students: “Do you think young people ‘owe’ anything to their country? To their communities?” Hold a brief discussion.
B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Have students read The Civil Society on page 20.
Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 21.

D. Small-Group Activity: Should We Replace the Electoral College?

Step 1. Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students.

Step 2. Distribute Handout C—Should We Replace the Electoral College? to each student and review it. Tell students that they should review the electoral college section of the activity reading on page 18 to help them with their discussion. Answer any questions they may have.

Step 3. Give them time to complete the task. When they are ready, ask which groups favored option #1. Ask them for their reasons. Ask others who rejected this option why they did. Hold a class discussion. Repeat this for each option.

Step 4. Conclude by holding a class vote on each option.
1. How do our institutions of government reflect fundamental American values such as justice, liberty, equality, limited government, and the common good? How do these basic values depend on each other? How do you think these values are important for the individual and society?

2. What is “civil society”? Why is it important in a democracy? How do you think civil society is treated by authoritarian or totalitarian governments? Why?

3. Throughout American history, voluntary groups have played a political role. Give three examples.

4. How have voluntary associations sometimes performed the same responsibilities as government? What debates have developed because of this?

5. Why do you think voluntary associations have been so important in America throughout its history?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read National Service on page 22. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 23.

1. What value do you think national service has?
2. What national service programs in the past do you think were most valuable? Why?
3. What is mandatory national service? What would be its advantages? Its disadvantages?

D. Small-Group Activity: To Serve or Not To Serve?

Step 1. Explain that today students are going to consider the pros and cons of requiring national service for all young people. Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students and distribute Handout D—To Serve or Not To Serve? to each group.

Step 2. Review the handout and answer any questions students may have. Remind students that they will need to (1) give reasons to support their answers and (2) be prepared to explain their reasons to the class. Allow groups time to do the activity.

Step 3. When they finish, ask: “Which groups favored option #1? Why?” Hold a discussion. Allow other groups to comment on why they rejected the option. Repeat this process for each option. Ask if any groups created different options, list them on the board, and discuss them as well.

Step 4. Conclude the activity by hold a class vote on which option they would recommend.
Lesson 5: Diversity and Equality

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore how our political system addresses issues of diversity. First, students read and discuss an introductory article about diversity and equality. Next, they read an activity reading on the constitutional issue of student-led prayer at public school events. Finally, they role play Supreme Court justices and attorneys deciding this issue.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Express different viewpoints about the role and value of diversity in America.
2. Explain a historical conflict over diversity.
3. Argue and decide a constitutional issue over diversity.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School

(11) Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

(14) Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion by asking students: “Do you think our nation does enough to ensure equal protection under the law? Why or why not?”

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Have students read Diversity and Equality on page 24. Hold a brief discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 25.

   1. In what ways is America a diverse society? What are some different viewpoints about the role and value of diversity in American life? How has diversity affected American politics?
   2. What are some conflicts in American history that have taken place over diversity? Why do you think some of these conflicts have been resolved and others have not?
   3. Why do you think constitutional principles must be followed when managing conflicts with diversity?
   4. What gaps are there between the ideal of equality and actual equality in American society? What efforts do you know about that have reduced these gaps? Do you think ideals, like the ideal of equality, are important? Explain.

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Have students read Should Students Have the Right to Lead Prayers at Public School Events? on page 25. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 27.

   1. What is the establishment clause? What is its purpose?
   2. Do you think the establishment clause is important? Explain.
   3. What do you think are the strongest arguments on each side in the student-led prayer case?

D. Small-Group Activity: Supreme Court Role Play

Step 1. Explain that the Supreme Court had one issue before it in the Texas student-led prayer case. Write the issue on the board: Does the school board policy permitting student-led, student-initiated prayer at football games violate the establishment clause?

Step 2. Inform students that they are going to take part in a role play of the Supreme Court deciding this issue. Divide the class into groups of three. Assign each student in each triad one of three roles: (1) lawyer for the school board, (2) lawyer for the Catholic and Mormon families, and (3) Supreme Court justice.

Step 3. Regroup the class so that students can consult with one another while preparing for the moot court. Put school board lawyers on one side of the room, lawyers for the families on the other, and Supreme Court justices in front. Tell the lawyers to think up their best arguments and the justices to think up questions to ask each side. Tell everyone to refer to the reading.
Lesson 6: Conflicts

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore methods that governments use to resolve conflicts. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading about how our constitutional democracy deals with conflicts. Next, students read and discuss an activity reading about legal methods for dealing with conflicts over eminent domain actions. Finally, working in small groups, students evaluate hypothetical cases to determine whether they qualify as “takings” requiring just compensation under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify examples of conflicts between basic values or constitutional principles.
2. Identify factors in American society that have contributed to lessening divisiveness.
3. Evaluate whether hypothetical cases qualify as “takings” under the Fifth Amendment.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(13) Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout E for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Remind students that our Constitution guarantees the right to free speech and the right to a fair trial. Ask students: “How might these two rights come into conflict? Which right is more important? Why?” Hold a brief discussion.

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Conflicts on page 28. Hold a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 29.

1. What are some examples of conflicts between basic values or principles?
2. Why might people agree on values in the abstract but disagree on specific issues?
3. How have organized labor, business, and government been involved in political conflicts?
4. How have recourse to the legal and political system and the concept of loyal opposition lessened the divisiveness of political conflict in the United States? What other factors have contributed to lessening divisiveness and how have they done so?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Zoning and Eminent Domain on page 30. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 31.

1. What are some rights usually associated with the ownership of property?
2. What provisions of the Constitution help protect property owners? What power does the government have to protect the interests of the general public?
3. How do zoning laws reduce conflict over land use?
4. When is just compensation called for under the Fifth Amendment?

D. Small-Group Activity: Is It a Taking?

Step 1. Divide the class into pairs.

Step 2. Distribute Handout E—Is It a Taking? to each student. Carefully review the handout. Answer any questions students may have and allow time for students to complete the assignment.

Step 3. When they are done, call on one pair to report on what they decided on Case 1 and why. Hold a discussion over the case. Repeat this process for each case.

Lesson 7: National Government and Taxation

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students learn what the federal government does and how it pays for it. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on the role, structure, and financial responsibilities of the federal government. Next, students read and discuss an activity reading about how money is raised to fund the government. Finally, working in small groups, students take the role of presidential advisors who must evaluate proposals for replacing the graduated income tax.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Explain the purpose and organization of the three branches of federal government.
2. Identify and explain two independent federal regulatory agencies.
3. Describe the origins and characteristics of the graduated income tax system.
4. Evaluate tax plans proposed as substitutes for the graduated income tax.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(15) Understands how the U.S. Constitution grants and distributes power and responsibilities to national and state government and how it seeks to prevent the abuse of power
(16) Understands the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy, and understands how government is financed through taxation

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout F for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion by asking “Do you think the federal government is too big? Why or why not? If so, how would you change it?”
B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Have students read National Government and Taxation on page 32. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 33.

1. What is the purpose and organization of each of the three branches of the federal government?
2. Name two independent federal regulatory agencies. What does each do? What functions does each have?
3. How can the government’s foreign and trade policies affect the lives of ordinary citizens?
4. What are some pro and con arguments over involving the federal government in solving domestic problems such as education, health care, and child care?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Have students read Tax Debates on page 34. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 35.

1. How has the method of raising money through taxation for the federal government changed over the years?
2. What is the difference between a “regressive” and a “progressive” tax?
3. Which of the following income taxes—a, b, or c—do you think is most fair? Explain your answer.
   a. Everyone pays the same amount, e.g., $5,000.
   b. Everyone pays a flat rate, e.g., 15 percent.
   c. Everyone pays a progressive rate, e.g., on the first $20,000, the rate is 5 percent, on the next $80,000, the rate is 15 percent, and on everything above $100,000, the rate is 25 percent.

D. Small-Group Activity: Council of Economic Advisors

Step 1. Explain to students that they are going to take the role of presidential advisors and evaluate three tax-reform proposals.

Step 2. Divide the class into small groups of 3–5 students. Distribute Handout F—Council of Economic Advisors to each student. Review the instructions and answer any questions students may have. Allow groups time to complete the activity.

Step 3. Ask who favored the sales tax. Ask for their reasons and let the class discuss this tax.

Step 4. Repeat Step 3 for each of the tax proposals.

Step 5. Conclude by letting students vote on which proposal they favor.
Lesson 8: State and Local Government

OVERVIEW
In this lesson, students examine the role of state and local government in our constitutional system. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on state and local government. Next, they read and discuss an activity reading about welfare reform, with an emphasis on the shift from federal to state jurisdiction. Finally, students debate the pros and cons of several welfare-reform policies.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
1. Identify how the U.S. Constitution limits the powers of states.
2. Explain how the Constitution limits the power of the federal government over the states.
3. Explain the concepts of reserved and concurrent powers.
4. Make reasoned decisions on issues of welfare reform.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED
National Civics Standards for High School
(15) Understands how the U.S. Constitution grants and distributes power and responsibilities to national and state government and how it seeks to prevent the abuse of power
(17) Understands issues concerning the relationship between state and local governments and the national government and issues pertaining to representation at all three levels of government

PREPARATION
In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout G for each student.

PROCEDURE
A. Focus Discussion: Ask students “In the last week, what institutions of state and local government did you have contact with?” Hold a brief discussion.
B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Have students read State and Local Government on page 36. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 38.
1. How does the U.S. Constitution limit the powers of states? How does the Constitution limit the power of the federal government over the states? What are reserved and concurrent powers? Give examples of each.
2. In what ways do state and local governments provide opportunities for experimentation and innovation?
3. How have many state and local governments made themselves more accessible to citizens?
4. How has the federal government changed since the nation’s founding? What are some arguments for and against this change?
C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Have students read Welfare on page 38. Hold a brief discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 40.
1. When was the federal welfare system originally established? Why was it established?
2. In recent years, what criticisms were leveled at the federal welfare system? What finally happened to the system? Do you believe this was a good idea? Why or why not?
3. Why might it cost more to move welfare recipients into jobs than to maintain the old AFDC system that did not require work? If this proves to be true, do you think it would be worth the cost? Explain.
4. Do you think that the nationwide welfare reform effort is generally too harsh on poor people, too lenient, or just about right? Give reasons for your answer.
D. Small-Group Activity: Welfare Reform Policies
Step 1. Tell students that today they are going to examine and debate the pros and cons of several welfare reform policies.
Step 2. Divide the class into four groups. Distribute Handout G—Welfare Reform Policies to each student. Assign each group one of the policies listed on the handout. Review the instructions on the handout.
Step 3. Allow each group time to prepare for the discussion.
Step 4. Have each group discuss its welfare reform policy while the rest of the class observes. During each group’s discussion, designate a chair as a “hot seat,” which any student outside the group may take to contribute his or her ideas to the discussion. This student must give up the “hot seat” when another student from outside the group wishes to participate.
Step 5. After each discussion, let the whole class vote on the policy.
Lesson 9: The Role of the Judiciary

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students learn about the judicial system. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on the role, structure, and principles of the judiciary. Next, they read and discuss an activity reading on the independent judiciary. Finally, students role play voters deciding whether or not to recall judges.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Explain the nature and importance of ordered liberty, the rule of law, equal protection, and due process.
2. Cite examples in U.S. history of the failure of the rule of law.
3. State a reasoned opinion on whether judicial review belongs in the American constitutional system.
4. Evaluate whether to retain or recall hypothetical judges.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(18) Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of human rights

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout H for each group.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion by asking students: “Do you think judges and courts promote justice? Why or why not?”

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read The Role of the Judiciary on page 41. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 43.
   1. What is the concept of ordered liberty? How does it protect the rights of citizens?
   2. What are some practices illustrating the central place of the rule of law in our constitutional system? What are some examples of events or practices in our history when the rule of law broke down? What are examples of judicial protections being denied to citizens?
   3. How does the legal system help preserve people’s rights? Do you think Americans resort to lawsuits and the legal system too much instead of using other means like negotiation or mediation? Explain.
   4. Do you believe judicial review belongs as part of the American system of constitutional government? What are arguments against it? In favor of it? Which do you agree with? Why?
   5. What is equal protection of the law? What is due process of law? How are both of them crucial to the rule of law?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Independent Judiciary on page 43. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 44.
   1. Do you think it’s important to have an independent judiciary? Why or why not?
   2. Describe some different methods used to select judges. Which do you think is best? Why?
   3. In most states, judges are on the ballot. What do you think voters should consider when voting for judges?

D. Small-Group Activity: The Voters Decide

Step 1. Tell students that today they are going to role play voters who must decide whether to recall or retain three judges.

Step 2. Divide the class into groups of two or three students. Distribute Handout H—The Voters Decide to each group. Review the instructions and answer any questions that students may have.

Step 3. Allow students time to complete the activity. When they finish, discuss each justice and vote as a class on each one.

Step 4. Debrief the activity by discussing this question: “What are valid reasons for voting to recall or retain judges? Why?”
Lesson 10: Setting the Public Agenda

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students examine how the public agenda is set in America. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on the public agenda. Then they read and discuss an activity reading examining how well the press performs its function in setting the public agenda. Next, in a homework assignment, students search for factual inaccuracies, logical errors, and emotional appeals in the political media.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Explain “public agenda” and how it is shaped.
2. Express a reasoned opinion on how well the political media are doing at setting the public agenda.
3. Use criteria such as logical validity, factual accuracy, emotional appeal, and distorted evidence to analyze political communication.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(19) Understands what is meant by “the public agenda,” how it is set, and how it is influenced by public opinion and the media.

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout I for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Ask students:
   1. What do you think are the most important issues facing America today?
   2. Do you think the media do a good job of addressing these issues?
   Hold a brief discussion of these questions.

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Setting the Public Agenda on page 45. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 46.

1. What is the public agenda? How do political institutions and political parties shape it? How do the media influence it?
2. Why do you think some issues that groups consider important do not become part of the public agenda?
3. What is public opinion? How is it measured? How is it used in public debate? How can it be influenced by government and the media? How does it influence public policy and the behavior of public officials? What do you think the role of public opinion should be in a democracy?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Are the Political Media Focusing on the Wrong Things? on page 47. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 48.

1. Many journalists argue that they do not give a negative slant to their political reporting; all they do is report reality. Do you agree or disagree with this view? Why?
2. What do the news media and the public have a right to know about the personal lives of elected officials and political candidates? What do they not have a right to know? Explain your answer.
3. Do you think the media are doing an adequate job in helping to set the public agenda? Explain.

D. Homework Assignment: Distribute Handout I—Evaluating Political Arguments to each student. Carefully review the assignment, answer any questions students may have, and assign a due date. After students turn in their assignments and you evaluate them, discuss with the class examples of each type of error that students found.
Lesson 11: Voting and Selecting Political Leaders

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore ways that citizens select political leaders. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on how American politics are shaped by the two-party system, campaigns, and elections. Next they read and discuss an activity reading about low voting rates and proposals for addressing the problem. Finally, students conduct a poll to determine political interest levels.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Identify initiatives, recalls, and referendums
2. Explain the nature and development of American political parties.
3. Conduct an opinion poll and evaluate its results.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School

(20) Understands the roles of political parties, campaigns, elections, and associations and groups in American politics

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout J for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Ask students: “Are you planning to vote in the next election? Why or why not?” Hold a brief discussion.

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read the Voting and Selecting Political Leaders on page 49. Hold a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 50.

1. How did the two-party system develop in the United States? What important role do third parties play in this system?
2. How are American political parties different from those in many countries? How are they organized? What do they do? Why are political parties weaker today than in the past?
3. How do political parties provide citizens with opportunities for participation? What are some ways that people can participate in the electoral process outside of party politics?
4. What are initiatives and referendums?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Why Don’t People Vote? on page 51. Hold a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 52.

1. Why don’t people vote? List as many causes as you can for the decrease in voter turnout. What do you believe is the main cause?
2. What do you think the consequences might be to American democracy if the trend of declining voter turnout continues into this century?
3. Some people argue against increasing voter turnout because it would bring to the polls vast numbers of politically ignorant people. What do you think?

D. Small-Group Activity: Political Interest Poll

This is an opinion survey. Before beginning, decide whether you want to have students poll other students or members of the community. If the answer is members of the community, change the last question on Handout J to “Do you ordinarily vote in elections?”

Step 1. Inform students that they will be conducting an opinion poll.

Step 2. Divide the class into pairs. Distribute Handout J: Political Interest Poll to each student. Have each pair of students conduct the survey on each other for practice.

Step 3. Tabulate the results for the whole class and discuss them. (Record the results for future reference.)

Step 4. Determine the best way for getting a random sample of the group you are surveying (students at the school or community members). For example, students might survey every fourth person in the lunch line.

Step 5. Then have pairs of students conduct the survey on five people outside of class.

Step 6. Have each pair of students report their results. Tabulate them and compare them to the class survey.
Lesson 12: Public Policy

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students examine public policy. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on public policy and its formulation. Then they read and discuss an activity reading on how the Supreme Court addressed the policy of racial gerrymandering of congressional districts, which was done to ensure the election of minority candidates. Next, in small groups students role play the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee deciding whether states should be allowed to have at-large congressional districts.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Explain what a public policy is, tell who makes it, and give an example of a process for making it.
2. Describe how and when citizens can influence the making of public policy.
3. Decide on a proposed policy and offer reasons for the decision.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(21) Understands the formation and implementation of public policy

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout K for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion by asking students the following questions:
1. How are policies (rules, regulations) at your school set?
2. How can they be changed?

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Public Policy on page 53. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 54.
1. What is public policy? Give an example of one, tell which major groups are interested in it, and explain their positions.
2. Who makes public policy? Give an example of a process for making it.
3. How and when can citizens influence the making of public policy?
4. Why might it be difficult for people to agree on some issues of public policy? Give a modern example of a highly controversial issue of public policy.

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Race and Representation on page 55. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 57.
1. What policy did the white voters in Georgia and North Carolina challenge in court?
2. What was the goal of this policy? Do you agree with the goal? Explain.
3. How did the U.S. Supreme Court affect this policy?
4. Some people argue that it does not really matter if minority voters do not get to elect minority representatives. White representatives can do just as good a job representing the interests of minority voters. Do you agree or disagree with this argument? Why?
5. Do you think voting districts that intentionally separate minority voters from white voters are similar to racially segregated parks, schools, and housing? Why or why not?

D. Small-Group Activity: Should At-Large Congressional Districts Be Allowed?

Step 1. Divide the class into groups of three to five students.
Step 2. Distribute Handout K—Should At-Large Congressional Districts Be Allowed? to each student. Review the handout and its assignment and answer any questions students may have.

Step 3. When groups are ready, call on them to report on what they decided and why. After students have discussed the issue, vote as a class on the bill.

Lesson 13: America’s Foreign Policy

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students examine American foreign policy. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on foreign policy. Then they read and discuss an activity reading on when the United States should intervene militarily. Next, students role play members of the National Security Council advising the president whether to intervene militarily in two hypothetical situations.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:
1. Summarize the basic changes in U.S. foreign policy from the nation’s founding to the present.
2. Explain the role of the three branches of government in creating American foreign policy.
3. Apply the criterion of national interest to hypothetical situations.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School
(22) Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy.

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout L for each student.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Ask students: “Do you think America should be more concerned with foreign affairs or with what goes on within our own borders? Explain.”

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read America’s Foreign Policy on page 58. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 59.

1. What is foreign policy? How would you characterize American foreign policy during most of the 19th century? At the beginning of the 20th century? Following World War II? Today? What do you think accounts for the differences?
2. What role do the three branches of government have in creating American foreign policy? What tensions sometimes arise between the branches over foreign policy? Who else influences foreign policy?
3. What principles and values have helped shape American foreign policy?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Military Intervention on page 60. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 61.

1. How do you think domestic politics might impose restraints or obligations in the way the United States acts in the world?
2. In each of the situations described, what might be some reasons against intervening? What reasons were there for intervening?
3. What do you think are vital national interests of the United States? Why?
4. When do you think it is justified for the United States to use military force? Explain.
5. Do you think the United States should ever use military force unilaterally? Explain.

D. Small-Group Activity: Crisis!

Step 1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students.

Step 2. Distribute Handout L—Crisis! Should the United States Intervene Militarily? to each student. Review the handout’s assignment, answer any questions, and tell students how much time they have.

Step 3. Call on a group to report on what it decided to do about Country A and why. Ask if other groups agreed or disagreed with this group and why. Hold a class discussion.

Step 4. Repeat this process for Country B.

Step 5. Debrief the activity by asking under what circumstances they believe it is proper for the United States to intervene militarily in the world.
Lesson 14: America and New Global Realities

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students examine America’s role in the international community. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on the subject. Next, students read and discuss an activity reading on the World Trade Organization. Then, in a writing activity, students state a reasoned position on whether the United States should be a member of the World Trade Organization.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Cite examples of how the world is tied together politically, economically, technologically, culturally, and environmentally.
2. Explain and give an example of an international NGO and IGO.
3. State a reasoned opinion on whether the United States should belong to the WTO.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

National Civics Standards for High School

(22) Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy

(23) Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations

PREPARATION

In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q.

PROCEDURE

A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion with students by asking: “How is your daily life affected by what goes on in the rest of the world? How does what you do on a daily basis affect other parts of the world?”

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read America and New Global Realities on page 62. Hold a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry on page 63.

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read The World Trade Organization on page 64. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 65.

1. What is the World Trade Organization? Why was it created?
2. What are tariffs and trade barriers? Do you think they are ever justified? Explain.
3. What are some concerns that people have about the World Trade Organization? Do you agree with them?
4. What are some arguments against the United States belonging to the World Trade Organization? What are some arguments in favor of it?

D. Writing Activity: Should the U.S. Belong to the WTO?

Step 1. Ask students to imagine they are advisors to the president. The president has asked their advice on whether the United States should belong to the World Trade Organization.

Step 2. Tell students to write as homework a short essay. Tell them that their essay should state a conclusion on this question and support it with reasons. If necessary, allow students time to research more information for their essays. Constitutional Rights Foundation’s web site has links to more information on this subject. Tell students to go to www.crf-usa.org, click on Links, click on The Challenge of Governance Links, and click on America and New Global Realities.
Lesson 15: Citizenship and Rights

OVERVIEW
In this lesson, students examine citizenship and the rights of citizens. First, students read and discuss an introductory reading on citizenship and rights. Then they read and discuss an activity reading covering the issue of whether illegal immigrants should be denied public benefits. Next, in small groups students role play a city council deciding whether non-citizens should be allowed to vote in local elections.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
1. Explain the two ways people can become American citizens.
2. Describe how political and economic rights reinforce each other and how they sometimes conflict.
3. Express reasoned opinions on whether illegal aliens should be denied public benefits and whether non-citizens should be allowed to vote in local elections.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED
National Civics Standards for High School
(24) Understands the meaning of citizenship in the United States, and knows the requirements for citizenship and naturalization
(25) Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights
(26) Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights

PREPARATION
In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need a copy of Handout M for each student.

PROCEDURE
A. Focus Discussion: Hold a brief discussion by asking students: “What rights do you think are most important? What would life be like without these rights?”

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Citizenship and Rights on page 66. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 67.
1. What are the two ways people can become American citizens?
2. What does a person who is not a citizen have to do to become a citizen? Do you think these requirements are fair and reasonable? Explain.
3. What are some personal rights that Americans have? Political rights? Economic rights? How do these rights reinforce each other? How might these rights conflict?
4. What rights do non-citizens have? Do you think they should have these rights? Explain.

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Should Illegal Immigrants Be Denied Public Benefits? on page 68. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 69.
1. What was the purpose of Proposition 187? What does it require?
2. What was the Plyler decision? Do you agree with it? Explain.

D. Small-Group Activity: Should Non-Citizens Be Permitted to Vote?
Step 1. Divide the class into groups of three to five students.
Step 2. Distribute Handout M—Should Non-Citizens Be Permitted to Vote? to each student. Review the handout and its assignment and answer any questions students may have.
Step 3. When groups are ready, call on them to report on what they decided and why. If any group amended the ordinance, write the amendment on the board. After students have discussed the issue, vote as a class on the ordinance and on any amendments to it.
Lesson 16: Civic Participation and Responsibility

OVERVIEW
In this lesson, students explore how citizens can participate in civic life. First, they read an introductory reading on civic responsibility and civic participation. Next, they read and discuss an activity reading on types of civic participation. Finally, they plan and implement an action project.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
1. Identify elements of good citizenship and methods of civic participation.
2. Identify character traits that contribute to civic responsibility.
3. Understand how civic participation can fulfill individual and community goals.
4. Plan, implement, and evaluate a service project.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED
National Civics Standards for High School
(27) Understands how certain character traits enhance citizens’ ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities
(28) Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals
(29) Understands the importance of political leadership, public service, and a knowledgeable citizenry in American constitutional democracy

PREPARATION
In advance of the lesson, you might assign for review the key words for this lesson from Handout Q. You will also need copies of Handout N, Handout O, and Handout P for each student. You may also want to decide in advance:
(1) How much class time can students spend on a project?
(2) Will you limit the project to school or can students do a project that requires them to go off-site?
(3) Will the whole class do one project or will separate groups do different projects?
(4) Will you decide on a project in advance and guide the students to choose that project, will you give the students several projects to choose from, or will you let the students design a project for themselves? Note: The more decisions students make themselves, the greater their buy-in to the project.

PROCEDURE
A. Focus Discussion: Ask students: “Do you think Americans take enough responsibility for solving problems in their own communities? Why or why not?” Hold a brief discussion.

B. Introductory Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Civic Participation and Responsibility on page 70. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 71.
1. What are some basic personal responsibilities? How can society benefit by people taking care of their personal responsibilities? What are some different civic responsibilities? How are they important? What character traits promote personal and civic responsibility?
2. How might moral considerations or constitutional principles force a person to refuse their civic responsibilities? How might tension arise between a person’s personal and civic responsibilities?
3. What are different opportunities for individuals to engage in public service? How do you think students can exercise leadership in public service?
4. What is the difference between taking political action and non-political volunteering to help the community? Give an example of each. Why are they both important?
5. What are some current and historical examples of citizen movements in America? Explain what each was trying to achieve.
6. Why do you think it is important for individuals in a democracy to know about American constitutional democracy and the workings of government?

C. Activity Reading and Discussion: Ask students to read Getting Involved on page 71. Conduct a class discussion using the Points of Inquiry questions on page 72.
1. What are the three basic ways of getting involved in your community? Which do you think is most effective? Why?

2. The anthropologist Margaret Mead once said: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” What does this mean? Do you agree with it? Explain.

D. Class Activity: Planning and Implementing an Action Project

Explain to your class that they are going to plan and complete an action project to address a problem in their school or community. (You may want to assign students to keep individual journals about the project. This will aid your individual evaluation of the students.) Distribute Handout N—Seven Steps for an Action Project and review each step. Answer any questions students may have. Use the handout to help students plan and implement an action project.

Step 1: Select a Problem. Ask students to brainstorm a list of problems that apply to their own school or community. Have students meet in small groups and select the three problems they think are most important. To help students decide, have them discuss the questions listed under Step 1 on the handout. Get a class consensus on the problem that students want to work on.

Step 2: Research the Problem. Your students’ research will depend on what problem they select and what they need to find out. In general, they should look for answers to the four questions listed under Step 2 on the handout. Students should also be looking for ideas for action projects.

Step 3: Find and Analyze Policies Related to the Problem. Have students contact local officials and ask about policies. Distribute Handout O—Seven Questions About Policy to each student. Hold a class discussion using this handout to analyze a policy that students have found.

Step 4: Decide on an Action Project. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group think of at least three project ideas that would address the problem they have chosen and then select the most suitable one. Have each group present their plan to the class. (If the class is doing one project, students should discuss and decide on the project.)

Step 5: Plan the Project. Distribute Handout P—Project Planning to members of the class for them to base their project plans on. If small groups are doing different projects, have each group submit a completed project plan. If the whole class is doing the same project, you can plan the project as a whole group or you can assign a committee to submit a project plan for the whole class to review.

Step 6: Do the Project. If the whole class is doing the project, tasks may be divided among committees with a project coordinating committee overseeing the entire project.

Step 7: Evaluate the Project. Do a formal evaluation of the project’s success using the evaluation plan students created in their project plan. Also have students evaluate how well they planned, how well they worked as a team, and what they learned from the project.
Evaluating Constitutions

Many new democracies have emerged in recent years—each with a new constitution, many with provisions different from the U.S. Constitution. Below are several provisions taken from the constitutions of emerging democracies. In your group, read and discuss each of the provisions. For each provision, answer the following questions and be prepared to report your answers to the class:

1. Why do you think the country has this provision (or these provisions) in its constitution?
2. Do you think this provision conflicts with or supports the basic principles of a constitutional government? Why? (See page 6 for a listing of these principles.)
3. How is this provision different from the U.S. Constitution or U.S. practices? Which do you think is better? Why?

**PROVISION #1**

Argentina’s constitution declares that the Roman Catholic Church is the nation’s official religion. This means that Catholic priests preside over many state functions and that religion is taught in the public schools. (It does not mean that everyone must be a Catholic because the constitution also declares that all people in Argentina have a right to practice their own religion.)

**PROVISION #2**

South Africa’s constitution calls for proportional representation in the two houses of the national legislature. Instead of a single winner in a small district, the South African system creates large districts that have many representatives. Each party runs slates of candidates in each district. Citizens vote for the party of their choice. For example, a district may have 10 representatives. In a district with 10 representatives, a party would need about 10 percent of the vote for each seat. If a party got 30 percent, then the top three candidates from its party slate would win election as representatives.

**PROVISION #3**

One of the most striking provisions in both the new South African and the Russian constitutions is their list of rights. Both constitutions contain long lists of rights. They have almost all of the rights in the U.S. Constitution and many more in much greater detail. For example, the U.S. Constitution says everyone is entitled to due process of law. The Russian constitution spells out in detail due process rights like: “The defendant shall not be obliged to prove his or her innocence.” As another example, the U.S. Constitution never mentions the word privacy, although many people interpret a right to privacy from the protection from unreasonable searches in the Fourth Amendment. The Russian constitution spends paragraphs detailing exactly what rights to privacy a person has. The same is true for property rights.
Burning the Flag

Background. As part of a peaceful political demonstration outside the 1984 Republican National Convention in Dallas, a protester burned an American flag. The protester was arrested and convicted for violating a Texas law against desecrating a “venerated object,” in this case the flag. The protester appealed his conviction. In 1989 in Texas v. Johnson, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5–4 that the protester was engaged in expressive speech protected by the First Amendment. It therefore overturned his conviction. Since that time, several attempts have been made to amend the Constitution to prohibit flag burning.

Proposed Amendment. The following amendment has been proposed: Congress and the States shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

Your Assignment. You are a congressional committee discussing and voting on the proposed flag amendment. Do the following:

1. Read and discuss the proposed amendment and the arguments supporting and opposing the amendment.
2. Vote on whether you think this amendment should be passed on to the floor of Congress for a vote. (This is essentially a vote on whether you favor or oppose the amendment.)
3. Be prepared to discuss your decision and reasons for it with the rest of the class.

Arguments Supporting the Amendment. The flag is the one sacred symbol that unites us as a nation. It does not stand for any political party or issue; it stands for all America and all Americans. Soldiers have died leading their units into battle carrying the flag. They considered it an honor worth dying for. Before the Supreme Court’s decision, the federal government and almost every state outlawed desecrating the flag. These laws did not stop people from criticizing the United States in the strongest terms possible. There are countless ways other than burning the flag to do this. Someone could burn the Constitution, burn a politician in effigy, speak out in disgust over the government or the United States, and on and on. Adopting this amendment will not harm a person’s right to free speech. States and the federal government should have the right to make burning the flag against the law.

Arguments Opposing the Amendment. This amendment to outlaw flag burning will violate one of the basic principles of the First Amendment: Government may not ban the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea offensive. This amendment would be the only amendment ever to limit the First Amendment, our most basic freedom. Moreover, the amendment is unnecessary. Flag burnings rarely take place. Existing laws against vandalism, arson, and inciting a riot cover most incidents of flag burning. Further, the meaning of flag desecration is unclear. Might it be against the law to wear clothing or hats that have representations of the flag? To protect our basic freedom and the First Amendment, the proposed amendment should be voted down.
Imagine that you have been appointed to a presidential commission. The commission is to make recommendations on whether the electoral college should be replaced and, if so, what should replace it. Read and discuss the arguments for and against the electoral college and then discuss and decide on one of the options listed below. (Most of these options will require a constitutional amendment.) Be prepared to report on the reasons for your decision.

Arguments Against the Electoral College. First, it allows a president to be elected who does not win the popular vote. This has occurred at least three times (in 1876, 1888, and 2000). Second, deadlocks can happen. A third-party candidate or a close election can prevent any candidate from getting a majority. When no one captures a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives decides who is president. This has occurred twice in our history (in 1800 and 1824). One study has shown it has almost happened 22 times. Third, because every state gets at least three electoral votes regardless of the state’s population, voters in small states have more power than those in large states. Fourth, each state’s electoral vote does not depend on the number of voters casting ballots. States with the same number of electoral votes may have far different turnouts on election day. Fifth, the electoral college may hold down voter turnout. If opinion polls show one candidate far ahead in a state, voters in that state who prefer another candidate may not vote. In fact, candidates often don’t campaign in states where the other candidate holds a substantial lead.

Arguments in Favor of the Electoral College. First, the electoral college represents our federal system, with its emphasis on the states and their representatives. Second, the electoral college is not archaic and undemocratic. We have two senators from every state regardless of the state’s population. We don’t consider that archaic or undemocratic. Third, it allows every state to participate and have a voice, including the small states. These states might be overlooked if the election depended solely on candidates seeking the most votes. Fourth, it prevents sectionalism by requiring a winning candidate to have support distributed throughout the country. Fifth, it has contributed to political stability by promoting the two-party system, which encourages the major parties to represent a wide range of interests. Sixth, it strengthens the power of minority groups, which can play a powerful role in deciding the outcome of close elections in states.

Option #1: Popular vote. Decide the presidency based on the candidate who receives the highest total popular vote.

Option #2: Majority Popular Vote. Decide the presidency based on the candidate who receives a majority of the popular vote. If no candidate receives a majority, then a run-off election between the two highest vote-getters would take place.

Option #3: District Electoral Vote. Each state gets electoral votes based on its number of congressional representatives plus its two U.S. senators. The district electoral vote gives one electoral vote to the winner in each congressional district, and the overall winner in the state gets two electoral votes. This system is already used in two states (Maine and Nebraska). If every state were required to use it, a constitutional amendment would be necessary. But your commission could also simply recommend that each state adopt this system.

Option #4: Retain the Electoral College.
To Serve or Not To Serve

You are members of a special presidential commission on compulsory national service. Your commission is supposed to recommend to the president whether a compulsory national service program should be set up and, if so, what kind of program it should be. Below are several options. As a group, do the following:

1. Discuss each option. Think of each one’s pros and cons. How would it affect the nation? What effect would it have on young people? What penalties would there be for young people who refused to participate in a compulsory service program? You might want to refer to the reading National Service for additional information.
2. Decide on what to recommend to the president. It may be one of the options or an option you create.
3. Prepare to report your decision and the reasons for your decision.

**Option 1: Mandatory Social Service.** This would require every person at age 18 to give one year of service in a social service agency. The only exemptions from this requirement would be for reasons of health or for those volunteering to serve in the military. Those serving would receive a stipend covering living expenses.

**Option 2: Mandatory Military or Social Service.** This would do away with the all-volunteer army. Every young person would have a choice of serving two years in the military or in a social service agency.

**Option 3: Extend the Benefits of the AmeriCorps Program.** This would not mandate any service, but it would increase the benefits of those serving in AmeriCorps and thus encourage more young people to serve in AmeriCorps. The current AmeriCorps program provides, among other things, about $5,000 in college-tuition money for those members who complete a year of service. This option would pay members completing a year of service two years of college tuition or $8,000 toward college expenses (whichever is greater). Members could pay for four years of tuition by completing two years of service.

**Option 4: Require No Service.** This would keep things as they are now. No person would be required to perform national service in peacetime.
Is It a Taking?

Background. The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution declares that government may not take private property “for public use without just compensation.” This means that the government must pay fair market value for any private property it takes. For example, if the government wants to build a hospital on your land, it can use its power of eminent domain to take possession of your land. But it must provide you with just compensation.

In recent years, a new property-rights movement has emerged. This movement has challenged many government regulations as takings of private property. Zoning, environmental, and other governmental restrictions have been challenged. As long ago as 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court in Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Mahon ruled that the Fifth Amendment was not limited to physical takings of property. It held that if a government regulation went too far in restricting an owner’s use of property, it amounted to a taking. Four years later, the court upheld zoning regulations as constitutional. In recent years in response to various challenges, the court has stated that a land-use regulation is a taking if it:

1. “does not substantially advance legitimate [government] interests,” or
2. “denies an owner economically viable use of his land.”

Using this two-part test, the court has ruled that it was a taking when a coastal protection ordinance prevented an owner from building on his two lots and thus made his property worthless.

Assignment. As a group, read and discuss each of cases below. Decide if you think it is a taking and why. Prepare to report your decisions and your reasons for them.

Case 1: Rent Control. To make housing more affordable, the city of Santa Elenor enacted a rent-control law. It limits increases in rent to inflation. If, for example, inflation raises prices 4 percent in a year, then landlords can increase their rents by 4 percent. Otherwise, the law prevents apartment owners from raising rents except when tenants voluntarily vacate units. An owner of 300 apartment units has sued the city demanding just compensation for what he calls a taking. He says the fair market value of most of his units is far higher than the law lets him charge. He says he is being ruined financially.

Case 2: Billboard Ban. To preserve scenic beauty and to facilitate public safety by removing distractions to drivers, Phelps County has enacted a ban on roadside billboards. Existing billboards must be removed within five years. A ranch owner whose property borders many miles of open highway has sued the county. She says that her property has lost significant value because she cannot get revenue from billboards. She considers this a taking and demands just compensation.

Case 3: Park Requirements. To make sure there is sufficient park land, Lynnhaven County has enacted an ordinance requiring that all developers of large tracts of residential housing reserve 20 percent of the land for parks. A developer has challenged this law, claiming it is a taking without just compensation. The developer says that he is losing a substantial amount of money by setting aside land for parks instead of building houses on them.
Imagine that you are members of the Council of Economic Advisors. You must give advice to the president on three proposals for replacing the current federal graduated income tax. As a group, do the following:

1. Read and discuss each proposal carefully. Assume that each plan, according to the best estimates, will generate the same tax revenue as the current tax. Consider each plan in terms of fairness, ease of use, popular appeal, and enforceability. Refer to the reading Tax Debates for more information on each plan.
2. Decide on the plan you favor. Discuss the reasons you favor one plan over all the others.
3. Be prepared to discuss your decisions and the reasons for them.

**NATIONAL SALES TAX**

This would impose a 25-percent sales tax on all products and services. Taxes will be charged to the consumer at the retail level. Food would be exempt from the sales tax.

**THE FLAT TAX**

Taxpayers would pay a single tax rate of 17 percent on their income, regardless of the income level. It would abolish all existing tax deductions. It would also establish a minimum taxable income of $23,000 with a family deduction of $3,500 per child. For example, a family with two children would not be taxed on the first $30,000 of income (23,000 minimum income + $3,500/child + $3,500/child = $30,000).

**VALUE-ADDED TAX**

This would place a multi-level tax on the production and distribution of manufactured goods and services. The tax would be charged to the businesses that manufacture goods, distribute them, and provide services. The businesses would then raise the price of goods and services to cover the cost of the tax, passing the expense on to the consumer. It would add about 25 percent to the cost of all items taxed.

**NONE OF THE ABOVE**

Keep the graduated income tax.
Many issues remain unresolved or controversial under welfare reform. Below are four such issues with "Yes" and "No" positions briefly stated. As a group, do the following:

1. Read and discuss the policy issue that has been assigned to you.
2. Your group is going to discuss this policy in front of the rest of the class. Prepare a number of questions to help the discussion proceed. Each student in your group should prepare to take a position on your policy.
3. Choose a spokesperson. The spokesperson should introduce your policy by explaining what it is about to the rest of the class.
4. Discuss your welfare reform policy in front of the class. All members of the group should contribute to the discussion at least once.

Policy #1: Should there be a lifetime limit of five years on all welfare benefits?

**No:** Some parents and their children may need more than five years of benefits to make the transition from welfare to work.

**Yes:** Limits will prevent people from staying on welfare too long.

Policy #2: Should able-bodied adults without dependent children and who work less than 20 hours a week be limited to three months of food stamps in any three-year period?

**No:** This limitation would affect persons with no income other than food stamps who often take longer to find work because they have few employable skills or have physical or mental disabilities.

**Yes:** This limit is needed to motivate able-bodied adults to get a job.

Policy #3: Should it be harder for children with certain disabilities to qualify for SSI benefits?

**No:** An estimated 315,000 children with learning disabilities and behavior problems such as attention deficit disorder will lose their SSI benefits under stricter eligibility standards.

**Yes:** Many of these children are not seriously impaired; some parents were coaching their children to fake disabilities in order to collect SSI.

Policy #4: Should welfare recipients who are assigned to community-service work be paid minimum wage or better?

**Yes:** Community-service workers deserve to be paid according to the same rules that apply to workers in private employment, as required by U.S. labor law.

**No:** Hard-to-employ persons placed in community-service jobs are being adequately compensated by learning job skills while also collecting welfare benefits. Minimum-wage pay for such jobs increases the cost of welfare reform in each state.
The Voters Decide

Below are descriptions of three judges who are subjects of recall elections. You are voters who have the opportunity to vote to recall or retain these judges. As a group, discuss and vote on each judge. Prepare to report reasons for your decision on each judge to the whole class.

**MAGNOLIA FISH**
Justice Fish worked as a public defender for 13 years before she was appointed chief justice of the state supreme court by the governor. Chief Justice Fish was retained by a slim margin (51.7% of the vote) after her first term on the appellate court. In the same election, voters passed a death-penalty initiative by an overwhelming margin. In the next three years, 39 defendants were sentenced to death. In each case, Justice Fish voted to overturn the sentence. A majority of the other judges joined Justice Fish to overturn 29 death sentences but in 10 of these capital-punishment cases, Justice Fish stood alone.

**reasons:**

**GEORGE ROWAN**
Justice Rowan is a well-respected judge recently appointed to the state supreme court. Before his appointment, Justice Rowan resigned as a board member of the National Rifle Association (NRA). One year later, the state supreme court struck down a state law requiring a two-week waiting period for all firearms purchased at gun shows. The court ruled 4-3 that the law violated an individual’s constitutional right to bear arms. Gun control groups are demanding that Justice Rowan be recalled, claiming that his vote to strike down the law reflected a conflict of interest between his role as a state supreme court judge and a former board member of the NRA. Others say that judges should not be recalled simply because they must make decisions on issues that involve their personal beliefs or attitudes.

**reasons:**

**CAROL JOYCE**
Just months after Judge Joyce was appointed as a trial judge, she presided over an environmental group’s lawsuit against a land development corporation. Judge Joyce dismissed the case before trial, finding no merit in the group’s lawsuit. Soon after, the environmental group discovered that Judge Joyce was a stockholder in the land development corporation. Judge Joyce was censured by the state judicial board, and the case was appealed, reversed, and retried before another judge.

**reasons:**
When evaluating political statements and arguments (whether they are in advertising, the media, or conversations), it’s important to be able to spot factual and logical errors. Below is a list of some of the most common errors.

**Your assignment is: Find examples of four of these errors.** You can look for the errors in newspaper editorials, political cartoons, political magazines, news programs, interview programs, or political advertising. For each of the items you find, do the following:

1. Write down the error on a sheet of paper.
2. Tell where the error came from, who made it, and the date, time, name, and channel of the broadcast program or the date, name, and page number of the newspaper or magazine it appeared in.
3. Tell what type of error it is and explain why it is an example of this error.

**Look For . . .

**Factual Inaccuracies.** Look to see if the facts are right. Watch out for:

- **Factual errors.** Did someone actually say that? Did that really happen? Did it happen in the way it was described? Factual errors occur all the time. They can be difficult to detect because sometimes they are repeated over and over, and many people believe they are true.

- **Distorted evidence.** Is someone only telling part of the story? Does a quote reflect what the person said or does it distort the truth?

**Logical errors.** If an argument is logically invalid, it can be factually correct and still fallacious. For example: “All communists believe in free health care. Jones believes in free health care. Therefore he is a communist.” The conclusion does not logically follow from the premises. Check to make sure arguments are logically consistent. There are many types of logical fallacies. Here are a few common ones:

- **Post hoc ergo propter hoc.** This is Latin for “after this therefore because of this.” This fallacy concludes that X caused Y simply because X happened before Y. For example, “We enacted a curfew and crime went down.” This statement alone does not prove the curfew caused crime to go down. More proof is needed.

- **Slippery slope.** This fallacy argues against taking a certain step because it will eventually lead to disaster. “If a curfew passes, next they’ll make it earlier, then they’ll only allow young people out with adults, then they’ll stop adults from going out, and we’ll have a police state.” Without proof that these things will happen, this statement is illogical.

- **False dilemma.** “Either we pass a curfew or juvenile crime will soar.” Always ask whether these are the only alternatives. Rarely are there just two. Posing a false dilemma does not prove the need for a curfew or any other policy.
Evaluating Political Arguments

**Emotional Appeals.** If an argument, instead of offering evidence, simply appeals to people’s emotions or to their biases and prejudices, it is mere propaganda. Below are seven basic propaganda techniques:

- **Glittering generality.** This tries to associate the policy or politician with some positive idea or feeling: “motherhood,” “the flag,” “apple pie,” “freedom,” “truth,” “justice,” “the American way.”
- **Bandwagon.** This asks you to join with the crowd. Support X because a lot of other people support X.
- **Name calling.** This tags the opponent and the opponent’s ideas with negative names. Personal attacks divert attention from the issue at hand: Is the policy a good one or not?
- **Card stacking.** This is a one-sided argument. It only presents favorable information and withholds any unfavorable information or arguments.
- **Transfer.** This tries to establish guilt or praise by association. “The politician is no good: She hangs out with known criminals.”
- **Plain folks.** This tries to portray the individual or organization as just being ordinary people—probably from humble origins. “He was born in a log cabin.”
- **Testimonial.** This is an appeal to false authority. Experts provide important, relevant information. But they must be experts. If an environmental expert says the river is polluted, that is relevant information. But a movie star’s opinion on river pollution is not an expert opinion.
Political Interest Poll

The purpose of this survey is to determine the level of people’s interest in the electoral process. There are two steps to conducting this survey:

Step 1: Select the people you want to survey. Students? Teachers? People of all ages? Other groups? You don’t have to ask every student to learn people’s attitudes. Take a random sample. For example, surveying every fifth student in line at the cafeteria would give you a random sample of students.

Step 2: Conduct the survey. Be sure to explain the purpose of the survey. Tell people they do not have to give their names. Be polite. People who answer your survey are doing you a favor.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that democracy is the best method of governing a state or nation?
   
   Yes   No   Don’t know

2. Do you think the outcome of elections have any effect on how our nation is run?

   Yes   No   Don’t know

3. Do you think that it is possible to influence the way people vote through political discussions?

   Yes   No   Don’t know

4. Do you know of at least one political candidate who speaks for your beliefs and needs?

   Yes   No   Don’t know

5. At election time, do you talk about political candidates with others?

   Often   Sometimes   Not at all

6. Do you think enough Americans vote in national elections?

   Yes   No   Don’t know

7. Do you think that more Americans would participate in elections if voter registration were easier?

   Yes   No   Don’t know

8. Do you plan to vote in political elections after you turn 18?

   Yes   No   Don’t know
Should At-Large Congressional Districts Be Allowed?

Background. In 1967, Congress passed a law outlawing any state from holding at-large elections for Congress. This was to prevent the white majority in Southern states from electing all the representatives for the state. Since that time, many African Americans have been elected to Congress from the South. The Department of Justice, under the Voting Rights Act, promoted the creation of majority-minority districts. As you have read, the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down these districts in North Carolina and Georgia as violating the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

In recent years, some voting-rights advocates have proposed cumulative-voting plans to increase minority representation. For example, Georgia has 11 members of Congress. Under cumulative voting, Georgia would not have congressional districts. Instead, each of the 11 members of Congress from Georgia would represent all of Georgia in at-large districts. Each voter would cast 11 votes. A voter could vote for 11 different candidates, cast all 11 votes for one candidate, or divide the 11 votes among several candidates. The 11 candidates who got the most votes would win election to Congress. For example, if 30 candidates ran, the 11 candidates with the most votes would win.

Cumulative voting, say advocates, would increase minority representation. But federal law bans at-large congressional districts. Advocates have proposed changing this law to allow for cumulative voting plans.

Assignment. Imagine that you are member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. A bill has been proposed to allow at-large districts. This would mean that Southern states could, with Justice Department approval under the Voting Rights Act, enact cumulative-voting plans. As a group role playing the judiciary committee, do the following:

1. read and discuss the arguments supporting and opposing this bill,
2. vote on whether to pass or defeat the bill, and
3. be prepared to report on your vote and your reasons for it.

Arguments Supporting the Bill. Cumulative voting should be allowed. First, it is race-neutral and therefore clearly constitutional. Second, it would give fairer representation to minorities, because people with intense feelings could concentrate their votes. Third, it gives a greater choice to voters, and no one will feel that his or her vote is wasted. Fourth, this system is not confusing or un-American and is currently being used successfully in more than 50 local jurisdictions in the country.

Arguments Opposing the Bill. Cumulative voting would have negative consequences. First, it is based on the erroneous assumption that minority candidates can best represent minorities. This is divisive and damaging to the country. Second, the system is too confusing and more open to corruption. Representatives would represent many times more people than they do now. It would make it almost impossible for contact between constituents and representatives. Only lobbyists would have access. Third, it would tend to make the representatives more radical, because if they can appeal to some vocal minority, they might get elected.
Crisis! Should the United States Intervene Militarily?

You are members of the National Security Council. You advise the U.S. president on matters of national security. The president has asked for your advice on whether the United States should intervene militarily in the following situations. For each situation, you should do the following:
1. Discuss reasons for intervening and reasons against intervening.
2. Decide whether to intervene.
3. Assign different members of your group to report your decision in each situation and the reasons for your decision.

**Country A:** This is a small country in the Caribbean. Its economy depends on tourism. For many years, dictators ruled it. In 1990, the country became democratic and held its first elections. Unfortunately, in recent years, tourism has declined dramatically, causing an economic crisis in the country. In recent weeks, a military coup took place. Protests have taken place, and disorder reigns in the streets. The military leaders have threatened to nationalize the tourist industry, jeopardizing privately owned American investments. A small contingent of American medical students live on the island. Their safety is in question. The Organization of East Caribbean States has called on the United States to intervene militarily and restore order.

**Country B:** This is a poor African country near the equator. Two major ethnic groups live in the country and have a long history of not getting along. When the country became independent in the 1960s, a dictatorship began. Its leader favored members of one ethnic group over the other. Many members of the oppressed group left the country and lived as refugees. In 1990, an army of these refugees invaded and forced the dictator to allow refugees to return and share power in the government. The two groups lived in peace, but tension remained high. Recently, extremists overthrew the government. They want to rid the country of all members of the oppressed ethnic group by killing them. Their carefully planned extermination has begun. If this army is not stopped, more than 1 million persons will die. This would be one of the largest genocides since World War II. A United Nations resolution has condemned the killing, but the United Nations has no armed force prepared to enter to the country. No neighboring country has the ability to intervene. Members of the fallen government have called on the United States to intervene militarily. The United States has no alliance with this country or with any countries bordering it. But several countries that have harbored refugees have offered the United States the use of their airports and facilities. No U.S. military force is nearby.
You are members of the Centerville City Council. Centerville is a mid-size city with about 100,000 residents of voting age. One-fifth of these residents, however, are not U.S. citizens. Many are legal aliens, but some are illegal aliens. Like the rest of the population, they work, pay taxes, and send their children to schools in the Centerville Public School District. But they are not allowed to vote because they are not U.S. citizens. Recently, the following proposed city ordinance has come before the City Council:

All residents of voting age in Centerville shall be allowed to vote in Centerville city and Centerville Public School District elections. It shall not matter whether a Centerville resident is a U.S. citizen or non-citizen.

As a group role playing the City Council, do the following:
1. Read and discuss the background and the arguments supporting and opposing this ordinance, below.
2. Decide what to do about the ordinance. You have three choices. As City Council members, you can:
   • Vote for the ordinance.
   • Vote against the ordinance.
   • Vote to change, or amend, the ordinance. If you amend the ordinance, write your new version on a separate sheet of paper.
3. Be prepared to report on your vote and your reasons for it.

Background. Letting non-citizens vote is not a new idea. Prior to World War I, 22 states allowed non-citizens who were residents to vote. Anti-immigrant feelings engendered by the war ended this practice. But today six cities in Maryland allow non-citizens to vote in city elections. New York City and Chicago have always permitted non-citizen parents of school-age children to vote in school-board elections. Several major cities across the country are considering allowing non-citizens to vote.

Arguments Supporting the Ordinance. Non-citizens pay taxes, obey the laws, and send their children to public school. But they have no say in how tax money is spent, what ordinances the city enacts, or how their children are educated. This isn’t right. Furthermore, permitting them to vote would make them full members of the community and may even encourage them to go through the difficult naturalization process and become citizens.

Arguments Opposing the Ordinance. First, some non-citizens are here illegally and should not be allowed to vote. Second, following the logic of those who support the ordinance, then non-citizens should be able to vote in state and national elections as well. This would make non-citizens the equal of citizens. If non-citizens want to vote, they should make a commitment to the country and become citizens. Contrary to what supporters of the ordinance say, the naturalization process is not difficult. It just takes commitment.
Seven Steps for an Action Project

Step 1: Select a Problem. Get your group together and discuss how a school or community problem influences you. Make a list and choose one problem to focus on. To help you decide, ask the following questions:

- Which problem affects your school or community the most?
- Which would be most interesting to work on?
- Which could be worked on most easily?
- Which would you learn the most from?

Step 2: Research the Problem. The more you know about a problem, the more you’ll understand how to approach it. Try to find out as much as you can about these questions: What causes the problem? What are its effects on the community? What is being done about the problem? Who is working on the problem or is interested in it? To find answers to these questions, try the following:

- Use the library and Internet. Look up newspaper and magazine articles. Ask the reference librarian for help.
- Survey community members. Ask questions of people you know. Conduct a formal written survey of community members.
- Interview experts. Call local government officials. Find people at non-profit organizations that work on the problem.

Step 3: Find and Analyze Policies Related to the Problem. As you have been gathering information, you may have come across policies designed to address the problem. A policy is a clearly defined way of dealing with a problem. It can be a course of action, or it can be a law.

- Find policies that deal with the problem you have chosen to address.
- Use Handout O—Seven Questions About Policy to evaluate the policy (or policies) you have found.

Step 4: Decide on an Action Project. Think of project ideas that would address the problem your team has chosen. Make a list. As a team, decide on the top three project ideas. Think about the pros and cons of each project idea. Evaluate each in terms of your available time, materials, and resources. Select the most suitable one.

Step 5: Plan the Project. To prevent false starts or chaotic results, you need a plan. Use Handout P—Project Planning as a guide to plan your project.

Step 6: Do the Project.

Step 7: Evaluate the Project. While implementing the project, it’s important to evaluate—to think about how you are doing and figure out how you can do things better. At the end of the project, you’ll want to evaluate how you did. To make evaluating easy, you’ll need to plan for it. In addition to evaluating the project’s results, be sure to examine how well your group worked together and what you learned as an individual.
Government policies can profoundly affect people’s lives. In a democracy, you have a say on these policies. It’s important to know how to evaluate them. Listed below are seven questions you can ask about a policy to evaluate its effectiveness.

1. **What is the goal of the policy?** If you know what a policy is supposed to do, you can measure its success or failure.

2. **What groups or individuals support or oppose the policy? Why?** Knowing who supports or opposes the policy can help you in two ways. First, the supporters and opponents are an incredible resource. They can help provide answers to all seven of these questions. Second, you can find out what private interests are involved and who might be helped or hurt by the policy.

3. **What are the policy’s advantages?** What are its benefits? Will it achieve its goal? (See Question 1.) Will it achieve the goal efficiently? Is it inexpensive? Does it address the causes of the problem? Does it treat some of the effects of the problem? Does it protect people from harm? Does it ensure their liberties?

4. **What are the policy’s disadvantages?** What are its costs? Is it inefficient? Does it fail to address the causes of the problem? Does it fail to alleviate effects of the problem? Does it cause harm? Does it intrude on people’s liberties? Does it have any potential negative consequences?

5. **What are the alternatives?** Most serious problems have more than one policy proposal.

6. **How do the alternatives compare?** Look at their goals, advantages, and disadvantages.

7. **Which policy do you favor?** Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the policies and decide.
On paper, create a project plan that includes these 10 parts.

1. **Project name.** Invent a catchy name for your project. Use it on everything you create for the project—posters, fliers, etc.

2. **Team members.** Write down the names of your team members. Consider the strengths and talents of each team member so you can make the best use of everyone on the project.

3. **Problem statement.** Give a brief description of the problem you are concerned about.

4. **Project goals.** Goals help chart your course. What do you want to achieve? Keep your goal statement clear and simple.

5. **Project Description.** In two or three sentences, summarize the project. How will it address the problem?

6. **Possible supporters.** List different organizations and individuals who might help you with your project. Government, non-profit, and business groups may already be working on the problem, or they may be interested in it.

7. **Possible obstacles.** Think of what might hinder your project or who in the community might oppose your goals. List them.

8. **Action steps.** Your project goals tell you where you want to go. What steps do you need to take to get there? Write down the details of your plan step-by-step.

9. **Task chart.** Once you have decided on the steps to your plan, break the steps down into tasks. Try to think of everything that needs to be done. Then assign people jobs that they want to do and can do. Put someone in charge of reminding people to do their tasks. Set a deadline for each task.

10. **Evaluation plan.** How will you measure the success of your project? Here are three ways to evaluate a project. Pick the best ways and figure out how to do them for your project.

   - **Before-and-After Comparisons.** You can show how things looked or how people felt before your project, and then show how your project caused change. You might use the following to make comparisons: photos, videos, survey results, or test scores.

   - **Counting and Measuring.** You can count or measure many different things in a project. For example: How many meetings did you have? How many people attended? How many voters did you register? How much time did you spend? Numbers like these will help you measure your impact on the community.

   - **Comparisons With a Control Group.** You may be able to measure your project against a control group—a comparable group that your project does not reach. If, for example, you are trying to rid one part of town of graffiti, you could compare your results to another part of town with the same problem.
Key Terms

1 common law
constitution
constitutional government
democracy
divine right of kings
English Bill of Rights (1689)
John Locke
limited government
Magna Carta
natural rights
popular sovereignty
rule of law

2 Articles of Confederation
Bill of Rights
checks and balances
constitutional amendment
Declaration of Independence
Enlightenment
liberalism
Protestant Reformation
separation of powers
state constitutions
U.S. Constitution

3 confederal system
direct democracy
federal system
monarchy
parliamentary system
political authority
politics
representative democracy
republic
system of shared powers
unitary system

4 authoritarian government
civil society
common good
justice
liberty
private sector
Progressive era
Puritan work ethic
totalitarian government
voluntary associations

5 affirmative action
commerce clause
diversity
establishment of religion
14th Amendment
free exercise of religion
secular
separation of church and state

6 eminent domain
just compensation
loyal opposition
police powers
Prohibition
property
public use
zoning

7 domestic policy
executive branch
Federal Communications Commission
Federal Reserve Board
flat tax
graduated tax

8 bicameral
city
concurrent powers
county
municipality
reserved powers
special district
state
10th Amendment
unicameral

9 appellate courts
civil courts
criminal courts
due process of law
equal protection
impeachment
independent judiciary
judicial review
mediation
negotiation
ordered liberty
recall

10 independent federal regulatory agency
judicial branch
legislative branch
presidential veto
progressive tax
regressive tax
Securities Exchange Commission
trade policy
value-added tax
Key Terms

10
- distorted evidence
- emotional appeal
- factual accuracy
- logical validity
- margin of error
- media
- political parties
- political platforms
- public policy
- public agenda
- public opinion
- public opinion polling
- random sample

11
- Democratic party
- Federalist party
- ideology
- initiative
- motor voter
- political independent
- referendum
- Republican party
- third parties
- two-party system
- voter registration

12
- at-large election
- compelling government interest
- gerrymander
- minority-majority district
- public policy
- Voting Rights Act of 1965

13
- Cold War
- foreign policy
- human rights
- imperialism
- isolationism
- Marshall Plan
- Monroe Doctrine
- most-favored nation
- national security
- national interest
- NATO
- Organization of American States
- power to declare war
- self-determination
- superpower
- treaty

14
- GATT
- General Assembly
- intellectual property
- international governmental organization
- international nongovernmental organization
- International Red Cross
- multinational corporation
- Roman Catholic Church
- Security Council
- tariff
- U.N. Charter
- UNICEF
- United Nations
- World Trade Organization

15
- alien
- ambassador
- citizen
- deport
- economic rights
- Immigration and Naturalization Service
- naturalization
- Northwest Ordinance
- personal rights
- political rights
- right to privacy
- supremacy clause

16
- citizen movements
- civic responsibilities
- non-political volunteering
- patriotism
- personal responsibilities
- political action
- public service
Sources for Student Text


