



PRE-PROGRAM CURRICULUM: LESSON 2

EXAMINING THE PREAMBLE AND POLITICAL VALUES IN OUR DEMOCRACY

GOAL: Students will learn a set of core American political values which act as a foundational concept in much of the instruction they will receive during their program week. Students will be introduced to the idea that the source of political disagreement in the United States is most often rooted in our differing perspectives on shared democratic ideals rather than irreconcilable differences.

TIME: 50 minutes

MATERIALS: Attachments 1-7

PROCEDURES:

Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

1. Ask students to recall their responses to the exit ticket question from the previous lesson: What do you believe to be the most important responsibility the government has toward the people it governs?
2. Record students' responses somewhere they can easily be seen/compared to a display of ATTACHMENT 1.
3. Display the plain version of the Preamble to the Constitution. Explain that the Preamble serves to lay out the fundamental purpose of the Constitution and lists the key responsibilities of the government it establishes. Ask students to review the Preamble and note any responsibilities they see identified.
4. Take student responses and ask for reasoning/explanation as needed. Once you have taken and recorded a few responses, display the annotated version of the Preamble from ATTACHMENT 1. Emphasize the responsibilities of government the students identified in their first reading that match the annotated version as well as any responsibilities students listed from their exit ticket responses.

Direct Instruction (15-20 minutes)

1. Explain that by looking at the purposes the framers of the Constitution laid out for government in the Preamble, you can also get a sense of the values they felt were most important to shaping American democracy. Founding documents like the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence form the basis of our democracy and therefore can speak to the ideals that citizens in our democracy share.
2. Refer back to ATTACHMENT 1 for the values in the Preamble. Ask students to think-pair-share on how they would define each of these values in their own words.
3. Take some responses as a check for understanding to establish a classwide set of working definitions for the values. (You can also refer to ATTACHMENT 2 if needed.)
4. Explain to students that even though watching the news or looking at social media makes it seem clear that the country is very divided on many issues, the root of disagreements is not usually that people have completely different values. Instead, it is that they have different priorities when it comes to those

values. Understanding the tension between these values and people's individual priorities can help to build understanding and respect between people who hold differing opinions on a particular issue.

5. Display ATTACHMENT 3. Explain that the values students have just been discussing can be in tension with each other. This does not mean that one particular value is "good" or "bad," but that in prioritizing one you often deprioritize another.
6. Display ATTACHMENT 4 and sort students into small groups (4-5 students per group). Ask students to read over the scenario in ATTACHMENT 4. Give them a few minutes to discuss as a group which of the six values they see as being prioritized in the scenario. Once students have correctly identified the value, ask them to explain (1) why they see that value as the priority and (2) how that same scenario is deprioritizing another value in tension with the first. Reiterate that this does not mean that the value that isn't prioritized is "bad" or "less important," but that the emphasis of one value necessarily trades off with the value it is in tension with. When people have disagreements on political issues, a similar tension can exist that people sometimes mistake for a simple "one or the other" conflict.

Small-Group Work (15-20 minutes)

1. Distribute a copy of ATTACHMENT 5 to each small group. (Alternatively, you can create matching cards using ATTACHMENTS 6A and 6B.)
2. Instruct the groups to discuss each scenario and work together to determine which value is prioritized in each. Explain that they may be able to make an argument that more than one value applies to a particular scenario, but there is an IDEAL pairing for each.
3. Once students have completed matching the scenarios and values, have a whole-group share-out and clarify any incorrect pairings.

Wrap-Up (5-8 minutes)

1. Distribute ATTACHMENT 7 as an exit ticket.
2. Explain to students that the values they have learned about today will be referred to again when they take part in the Close Up program.

ATTACHMENT 1

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish **Justice**, insure **domestic Tranquility**, provide for **the common defence**, promote the **general Welfare**, and secure the **Blessings of Liberty** to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Justice = equity/fairness

Domestic Tranquility/Common Defence = security/peace

General Welfare = common good

Blessings of Liberty = liberty/freedom

ATTACHMENT 2

EQUALITY

Equality means that all people should be treated the same. What the government does to or for one person, it must do to or for everybody.

EQUITY

Equity means that various factors, such as age, race, gender, or income, should be considered when policy decisions are made. The government can provide assistance to one person or group that most needs it without providing the same assistance to other people.

LIBERTY

Liberty means the freedom to act without constraint or interference. In political debates, it means the ability to act without government interference. In other words, as long as people are not directly hurting others, they should be able to do what they want.

SECURITY

Security is the idea that the government must provide order and stability. In political debates, security means that government needs the authority to encourage people to behave in certain ways and stop people from behaving in other, harmful ways.

PRIVATE INTERESTS

Private interests refer to the government's responsibility to protect each person's private property and other interests. This means that the government should protect the interests of businesses and individuals.

COMMON GOOD

The common good is the idea that the government should act in the interests of the entire citizenry (this can be a town, county, state, or country). This means that, sometimes, governments will act in ways that harm one or a few people but are good for many.

ATTACHMENT 3: VALUES IN TENSION

EQUALITY ←→ **EQUITY**

LIBERTY ←→ **SECURITY**

PRIVATE INTERESTS ←→ **COMMON GOOD**

ATTACHMENT 4

The state legislature creates sentencing guidelines to ensure that people convicted of similar crimes get similar sentences.

1. Which of the six values is prioritized in this scenario?

2. How does this scenario deprioritize the value that is in tension with your answer?

ATTACHMENT 5

<p>EQUALITY: All people should be treated the same. What the government does to or for one person, it must do to or for everybody.</p> <p>Matches with:</p>	<p>A. A series of protests in the community causes the city council to vote to create a temporary curfew. Groups of six or more people gathered in public spaces after 10 p.m. will be arrested.</p>
<p>LIBERTY: The freedom to act without constraint or interference. In political debates, it means the ability to act without government interference. In other words, people should be able to do what they want as long as they are not directly hurting others.</p> <p>Matches with:</p>	<p>B. The county creates a special fund to provide health care for elementary school students who qualify for free school lunches.</p>
<p>PRIVATE INTERESTS: Government's responsibility is to protect each person's private property and other interests. The government should serve the interests of individuals and businesses.</p> <p>Matches with:</p>	<p>C. The state legislature creates sentencing guidelines to ensure that people convicted of similar crimes receive similar sentences.</p>
<p>EQUITY: Various factors, such as age, race, gender, or income, should be considered when making policy decisions. The government can provide assistance to a person or group that most needs it without providing the same assistance to other people.</p> <p>Matches with:</p>	<p>D. The city forces three homeowners to sell their homes and relocate in order to build a new hospital.</p>
<p>SECURITY: The government must provide order and stability. In political debates, this means that the government requires the authority to encourage people to behave in certain ways and to stop people from behaving in other, harmful ways.</p> <p>Matches with:</p>	<p>E. The owner of a petting zoo is upset because the city introduced new health codes that harm her business, even though there is no evidence that her zoo poses a public health concern. She sues the city and wins.</p>
<p>THE COMMON GOOD: Government should act in the interests of the entire citizenry (a town, county, state, or nation). This means that, sometimes, governments will act in ways that harm a few people but benefit many.</p> <p>Matches with:</p>	<p>F. A state decides to abolish its law that all people must wear seatbelts while in a moving vehicle.</p>

ATTACHMENT 6A: VALUE CARDS

EQUALITY

Equality means that all people should be treated the same. What the government does to or for one person, it must do to or for everybody.

EQUITY

Equity means that various factors, such as age, race, gender, or income, should be considered when policy decisions are made. The government can provide assistance to one person or group that most needs it without providing the same assistance to other people.

LIBERTY

Liberty means the freedom to act without constraint or interference. In political debates, it means the ability to act without government interference. In other words, as long as people are not directly hurting others, they should be able to do what they want.

SECURITY

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PRIVATE INTERESTS

Private interests refer to the government's responsibility to protect each person's private property and other interests. This means that the government should protect the interests of businesses and individuals.

COMMON GOOD

The common good is the idea that the government should act in the interests of the entire citizenry (this can be a town, county, state, or country). This means that, sometimes, governments will act in ways that harm one or a few people but are good for many.

ATTACHMENT 6B: MATCH CARDS

<p>The state legislature creates sentencing guidelines to ensure that people convicted of similar crimes get similar sentences.</p>	<p>The county creates a special fund to provide health care for elementary school students who qualify for free school lunches.</p>
<p>A state decides to abolish its law that all people must wear seatbelts while in a moving vehicle.</p>	<p>A series of protests in the community causes the city council to vote to create a temporary curfew. Groups of six or more people gathered in public spaces after 10 p.m. will be arrested.</p>
<p>The owner of a petting zoo is upset because the city introduced new health codes that harm her business, even though there is no evidence that her zoo poses a public health concern. She sues the city and wins.</p>	<p>The city forces three homeowners to sell their homes and relocate in order to build a new hospital.</p>

ATTACHMENT 7: EXIT TICKET

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Of the six American political values you reviewed today, which do you consider to be particularly important?
2. What is a local issue, a state issue, or a national issue that you think relates to this value? Explain how your chosen value applies.
3. How might someone who prioritizes the opposing value apply it to this same issue? (Example: If you prioritize liberty and chose gun ownership as an issue, how might someone who prioritizes security view that same issue?)