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THIRTEEN
RELEVANCE EXERCISES
FOR

GOVERNMENT

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THESE MATERIALS PUBLISHED BY

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COPRIGHT – JULY, 1992, REVISED MARCH, 2006

One afternoon when I was in college, I was walking across the campus and a ten-year old boy stopped me. He was doing a survey for his social studies class and he wanted to know if I could name the three branches of the government. I remember responding, “initiative, referendum, and recall.”

As ignorant as this response sounds, I find it interesting today to note that the three terms I remembered were ones that allowed for the direct participation of the citizens in the political process. As Government teachers we have an obligation and responsibility to not just make our material relevant but to show our students that their direct participation makes a difference. Moreover, we need to make it clear that government is relevant to their lives not just some time in the future but right now. Too often we have gotten caught up with the principles of democracy and the checks and balances system. These principles are very important but what we need to do is clarify to young people what government really is. It is simply all of the issues that are important to people at a given time.

I remember a few years ago that a student was questioning the relevance of government to his life. I asked him if he had a job. He responded that he did and I pointed out that then President Ronald Reagan was proposing to cut the

minimum wage to \$2.00 an hour! That student very quickly understood the relevance of Government.

There are a myriad of issues similar to these that are very relevant to young people. Issues like labeling objectionable recordings, mandatory helmet laws for bikers, and parental consent for abortions for young ladies under eighteen are just a few that relate directly to our students.

This book is filled with cooperative learning activities that will help students to see the relevance of government in their lives by having them examine their positions on a wide variety of issues.

Certainly one of our responsibilities as Government teachers is to help our students become good citizens. We always hear that the most fundamental component of being a good citizen is exercising our privilege to vote. I believe that, as Government teachers, our job goes much beyond instilling this idea in our students. We need to make sure that first, our students are informed on the issues so that they will be knowledgeable voters. The book provides activities on most of the major issues today and provides the flexibility for students to express their own points of view. The students love these activities because they do not require the use of the text. You will love them because it gets the students to utilize their higher levels of critical thinking.

Being a good citizen involves one more vital quality. That is the belief that your active involvement can make a difference. Our government does not want us to be blindly patriotic. The government is our servant and we must tell our servant when our needs are not being met. In the Spring of 1991, the Seniors at Duarte High in Southern California showed that, even youngsters that are not old enough to vote, can make a difference. After finding out that the principle of “separation of church and state” would not allow prayers at their baccalaureate ceremony, the students decided to protest. They organized a rally that was covered not only by the newspapers but by the local T.V. stations as well. Through their active involvement, they were able to get some changes made that allowed prayers at this ceremony.

The book includes many activities that require your students to become actively involved. My students enjoy these a great deal and also get a chance to see how they can truly make a difference.

Included also in your booklet is an activity called “Pass The Paper And Pen.” I highly encourage you to use this lesson prior to having the students perform the cooperative learning activities. It is necessary for them to learn to work as a team and “Pass The Paper And Pen” will help to promote this.

All of the activities can be completed in one or two class periods depending on your needs. Each activity includes a thorough explanation that

will make the procedures clear to both teachers and students. I am confident you and your students will have as much success with these activities as I have had with mine.

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California Social Science Standards

Topic	Standards
Freedom and Rights	12.1,
Good Citizenship	12.2, 12.3
Making A Difference	12.2, 12.3
Conservatives And Liberals	12.6, 12.10
Political Parties	12.6
The Ideals of Democracy	12.1
Picking a Perfect President	12.4, 12.6
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Senate Simulation	12.4
Planning Our Nation's Budget	12.4
How Do You Feel About Your School	12.7
Rating Your Community	12.7

Government
Pass The Paper And Pen

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Our society has traditionally put a premium on self-reliance. Schools and businesses alike have practiced a Social Darwinian survival of the fittest mentality in theory. Today our life styles have brought about more and more service industries. Our ability to work with others and communicate effectively has become essential. Skills such as being a good listener, being polite, sharing responsibility, and having a good sense of humor are just as important as your competence. This class will incorporate activities in which you will work in groups. The success of your group and your own grade will be determined by your ability to cooperate. As in all businesses and athletic teams, your success can be impaired by just one weak link. With this in mind, it is in your best interest to be dependable. There are a few important considerations for you to remember when working in your group. First of all, there will be no putdowns. Do not belittle your team members' ideas. All of us work best with encouragement. When individuals in your group make good suggestions, tell them so. Second, you need to be a good listener. Let your colleagues finish their explanations before commenting. Often times, the people who are considered the best conversationalists are those that do little more than listen.

Directions:

Before a group or team can work efficiently, camaraderie or good feelings must be built up amongst the group. In order to promote this we are going to periodically play extra credit games called "Pass The Paper And Pen." Each group will have one of these papers and a pen. I will ask you, for example, to list all the different name brands of clothing your group can think of in one minute. The two groups with the most on their list will get extra credit. The rules are that you must pass the paper and pen to another group member after you have written an entry on your list. If your team member cannot think of anything, the other group members can help. However, you should be relatively quiet so other groups do not hear your answers. This type of activity will be done several times before your group works on an official cooperative learning lesson. In addition, we will periodically play "Pass The Paper And Pen" to keep your group working cohesively.

List:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

Government
Freedom And Rights

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

The Declaration of Independence has become one of history's most cherished statements. For 200 years freedom-seeking people all over the world have been inspired by its noble ideas and remarkable eloquence. Thomas Jefferson stated clearly the principles of democracy when he wrote: "...all men are created equal, ...they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, ...among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

These ideals are beautifully expressed. However, over the years it has become increasingly difficult to allow people liberty in all matters. At times, one person's freedom can infringe on the rights of others. Many people believe that your "rights end where my nose begins." There are many issues today where the government has suspended personal liberties. Theoretically this is done for the common good of every one.

Directions:

Below are listed some areas where people find restrictions in their personal lives. You are to, first, decide whether these restrictions are protections for the majority or unnecessary infringements on your freedom. Then explain why you feel the way you do.

Explanation

1. Laws which prohibit marijuana smoking

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

2. Laws which prohibit drinking and driving

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

Explanation

3. No gum chewing in class

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

4. Mandatory use of seat belts law

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

5. Laws which prohibit smoking in public places

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

6. Laws that require helmets for bikers and cyclists

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

7. Laws that limit your car's speed to 65 M.P.H.

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

8. Closed campus policies at lunch

Protection__ Unnecessary Infringement__

Conclusions:

1. One of the inalienable rights that Thomas Jefferson spoke of in the Declaration of Independence was the pursuit of happiness. What are some ways that the freedoms in America allow you to pursue happiness that would not be allowed in a more restrictive country?

2. Americans today enjoy liberty as much as Thomas Jefferson intended for them to experience it. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Government
Good Citizenship

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Often times it is said that one of the goals of a government class and schools, in general, is to produce good citizens. What does it mean to be a good citizen and display good citizenship? It can involve a variety of endeavors from charity to active involvement in making your community, state, and country better places to live.

Directions I:

Discuss the following questions in a group and be prepared to discuss them with the rest of the class.

1. List as many responsibilities and characteristics as you can think of that are related to being a good citizen.
2. Our country tries to create a loyal and patriotic citizenry by having a country in which to take pride. Do you feel loyalty to your country? Why?
3. Do you feel a sense of pride and loyalty to your school? Why? What would you do to create more loyalty and pride in your school?

4. Our country protects your right to protest and demonstrate against causes that you're against. Do you feel that those that protest, in general, are being disloyal to our country? Why?
5. Some people feel that volunteering and charity work are integral to being considered a good citizen. Do you agree? Why?
6. List three charitable causes in your school and community that you feel are worthy causes. (Examples could be recycling of aluminum cans or creating a memorial garden on campus to honor deceased prominent alums.) What makes these causes particularly significant to your group?

Directions II:

1. Spend 1-2 weeks actively involved in a cause as a class, small group, or individual. Report how your participation influenced you? Did you feel you made a difference? Explain.

Government
Making A Difference: Active Participation
In School

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

One part of being a good citizen is becoming actively involved in community service to make change where improvement is necessary. This is called social responsibility. We are going to become actively involved in raising the level of spirit on our high school campus.

(**To the teacher:** This is a great activity to use with your seniors during homecoming or spirit week. Collecting trivia about prominent alums, faculty members, old traditions, and years of team championships is a great way to get students actively involved in making a change in their environment. This is easily related to how important it is for them, as citizens, to become just as involved actively in their local and national politics. This is very good to use while studying political parties, good citizenship, or grass roots efforts in politics.)

Directions:

Answer the questions below within a group and fulfill the responsibilities designated in the assignment.

1. List actions we could take to create more spirit for Homecoming or school pride.
2. List three traditions that we could begin that would be inexpensive and raise the level of spirit.
3. Name five prominent alums of our high school and what they did to acquire fame.

4. Name as many employees of our school that you can think of that attended our school.
5. List as many teachers as you can that have taught at the school at least fifteen years.
6. In which sports and years did our school win league championships? In which years did our school win state titles?

Directions II:

Choose two activities from the list below and begin working on these immediately.

1. Make a clever or humorous poster encouraging our school to defeat our homecoming or upcoming opponent. It should be painted and artistic. It will be displayed in the classroom or on campus.
2. Make copies of the alma mater and distribute at a pep rally. (Memorize it if you do not already know it. You will be quizzed!)
3. Attempt to bring back an old tradition or create a new one for homecoming or an upcoming rally. (An example could be that your school has a victory bell or victory flag that hasn't been used in awhile. Bring it out for the next rally or game.
4. Advertise homecoming or an upcoming event in your local community. If you have businesses like car dealerships in your community, you could

approach them about the possibility of advertising your event on their electronic message boards.

5. Invite a prominent alum to address your class or the student body.

Conclusions:

1. What were the obstacles or problems that you encountered in your attempts to make change?
2. Do you feel that our efforts had an impact on the student body and the level of enthusiasm for homecoming, spirit week, or the pep rally? Explain.
3. How did your active participation in this project affect your own enthusiasm and pride in the school? Explain.
4. Do you suppose it would be more difficult or easier to make a difference in our society through the type of active involvement we demonstrated in this assignment? (For example, if you got involved in Students Against Drunk Driving, would you be able to make an impact like we did in our homecoming project?) Explain.

Government
Conservatives And Liberals

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Most people have a tendency to categorize other people. They like to label them so they can predict how they will act or perform in the future. Politics works in a similar fashion. Voters and candidates are labeled as being either conservative or liberal. Originally, conservatives were those that were satisfied with the status quo. They did not want changes. The liberals were those that wanted some new systems implemented.

Today, the term conservative, refers normally to the haves in society. These people are usually very well off. Traditionally, they are against government spending with the exception of the military. They believe strongly in the Protestant Work Ethic. It states that hard work and thrift will pay off in the long run. Those that don't work hard deserve to suffer the consequences. Generally, they are concerned with moral and correct behavior. Generally, they are willing to sacrifice fairness and rights in order to prevent immoral or wrongful behavior. In recent years, their focus on correct behavior has seen a strong emphasis on family values.

Liberals, on the other hand, are generally the "have-nots" in society. They tend to be more willing to see the government spend its money on the poor and be sympathetic to the needy. Unlike the conservatives, they are very concerned with protecting a person's civil liberties, equal rights, and freedoms except in the area of gun ownership. They are much more likely to be in favor of a person's rights to an abortion, view pornography, rehabilitate criminals, and protect the rights of gays.

Directions I:

Below are some issues that are popular and controversial in the United States today. Within a group, decide which positions are liberal, conservative, radically liberal, or extremely conservative.

1. Listening to rap music

- ___a. This style of music encourages violence and degrades women. It causes young people to behave in inappropriate and immoral ways. People under eighteen should not be allowed to listen to this music.
- ___b. Rap music is no more harmful than rock and roll or jazz music from earlier eras. Young people can listen to this music and behave in a gentlemanly or a ladylike manner.
- ___c. Young people should be not only encouraged to listen to rap music but to write and dance to the music as well in order to develop into a “normal” youth.
- ___d. Not only rap music should be banned but all Ipods and head sets so that adults can monitor children’s listening choices.

2. The elimination of pornography

- ___a. The viewing of pornography is a natural urge that should not be repressed. It is a right that is protected in the first Amendment to the Constitution.
- ___b. The viewing of pornography causes rapes and degrades women. All forms of pornography should be removed.
- ___c. The belief that people should be taught at a young age that nudity and sexuality are beautiful parts of life.
- ___d. Viewing pornography is immoral, sinful, and should be illegal. All viewers and distributors will be prosecuted and imprisoned for one year.

3. The death penalty

- ___a. The death penalty should be used for more crimes and gradually most crimes would disappear.
- ___b. The death penalty is cruel and inhumane and should never be used against any criminals.
- ___c. The death penalty should not be used because of the possibility we may be killing an innocent person.
- ___d. Jury trials are a waste of time. Violent criminals should be hung without a trial.

4. Abortion

- ___a. Human life is priceless. Life starts at conception and any one who chooses to terminate a pregnancy is murdering a child.
- ___b. A woman's body is her own. A woman has a right to choose to have an abortion because unwanted children are a burden to mothers and society.
- ___c. Abortion is just one of many effective methods of birth control.
- ___d. Women who have abortions and the doctors that perform them should be prosecuted for taking a life.

5. The homeless

- ___a. People that are homeless are lazy. There are plenty of jobs and if they would be willing to work hard, they could get a job and a home.
- ___b. Society has failed the homeless. Most of them want to work but deal with mental illness, drug/alcohol dependency, or disabilities from serving in the military.
- ___c. Downsizing and outsourcing of jobs as well as increasing rents has made every one vulnerable to becoming homeless. With just a little bit of bad luck any one in our society, even those college educated and rich, could end up homeless for awhile.
- ___d. People that are homeless, sleeping on park benches, and panhandling should be prosecuted as criminals. They are a eye black eye to the community where they stay and should be incarcerated.

Directions II:

Take an issue like Euthanasia, gun control, stem cell research, fighting terrorism, national health care, or any current issue of interest to your group and create your own examples of what conservatives and liberals might believe. Provide two examples of liberal beliefs and two examples of conservatives.

Issue: _____

Radical Liberal:

Liberal:

Conservative:

Extreme Conservative:

Conclusions:

1. Would you consider yourself more liberal, more conservative, or an eclectic (liberal on some issues and conservative on others)? Why?

2. The late great former Prime Minister of Great Britain believed it was ridiculous to be a conservative at the age of twenty and a liberal at the age of forty? Why do you suppose he felt that way?

Government
Political Parties: Taking A Stand

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

It is the position that candidates take on specific issues that makes them attractive to their voters. In general, liberals tend to be more sympathetic to the have-nots or needy in society. They are more willing to spend the government's money to provide basic necessities to those that may not be able to help themselves. In contrast, conservatives feel that the have-nots deserve the consequences of their laziness. It is hard work that gets you ahead in our country and any one who is willing to sacrifice can get ahead. Consequently, they are less likely to spend the government's money on these causes.

Candidates for office must formulate a position or ideology on all major issues so the electorate can decide who they will support.

Directions:

You are a member of a committee to determine the issues that will be important in the election. Rank the issues below in order of priority. You are free to add an issue if you desire. Then provide a position (a couple of sentences) on your top fifteen issues.

The Issues

Your Position

___ Crime

___ School Funding

___ Prayer In Public Schools

___ Fighting Terrorism

___ Euthanasia

___ The Military

___ Public Transportation

- ☐ Scholarships For College
- ☐ Making Homes More Affordable
- ☐ Abortion
- ☐ Illegal Immigration
- ☐ Guest Worker Program
- ☐ Job Creation
- ☐ Raising The Minimum Wage
- ☐ Environmental Protection
- ☐ Disaster Relief/Emergency Preparedness
- ☐ Trade Deficit
- ☐ Budget Deficit
- ☐ Special Programs For The Handicapped
- ☐ Stem Cell Research
- ☐ Other

Conclusions:

1. Do you feel that the positions your group took would be popular today in America? Why?

2. What is the most important problem facing our country today? What would your group do to address this problem?

Government
*The Ideals Of Democracy: The
Pursuit Of Happiness*

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Many years ago Thomas Jefferson spelled out for us in the Declaration of Independence that Americans would be guaranteed “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Many court cases and battles have been fought to spell out our guarantees of life and liberty. However, most people have taken for granted that we all understand what is meant by the “pursuit of happiness.” We are going to investigate some factors that impact on our chances of achieving happiness in our society today.

Directions:

Answer the following questions within a group and be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

1. The great philosopher, Socrates, once asked the brilliant men of his day, “What is pleasure?” They said, “It is the absence of pain.” Socrates was not satisfied. Write a definition for pleasure or happiness that would satisfy most Americans today.
2. Years ago Americans fought for and won a battle to reduce working hours and make the forty-hour workweek the standard. The cost of living today has caused the average American to work forty-eight hour weeks, reducing leisure time. How does this reduction of leisure time impact on our ability to pursue happiness?
3. Some psychologists suggest that most of pleasure is derived from looking forward to events rather than the actual participation in them. List ten material possessions or accomplishments that you are looking forward to attaining in your future.

4. The “pursuit of happiness” implies that possibly true joy is in the journey of seeking accomplishments. That is to say that most of our satisfaction comes from the challenges we face in our pursuit of happiness. Do you think you experience more joy when you have finally achieved your desired goal or in facing the challenges and struggles that are involved in the journey? Explain.

5. John F. Kennedy once said, “Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.” He implied that happiness could not be pursued but was a by-product of helping others and making a valuable contribution to the world. Do you agree? Explain.

6. Write an equation or recipe including the ingredients for happiness.

Government
Picking A Perfect President

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Many people believe that the most important as well as most difficult job in the world is serving as President of the United States. A major problem is finding an individual who has both the background and personal qualities for the position. While it seems that a law background or a career in politics would be a likely preparation to be President, recent occupants of the Oval Office have included a former actor and former owner of a major league baseball team. What careers, experiences, or educational backgrounds are the most beneficial in preparing a person to be a President of the United States? We will investigate this topic in the questions below.

Directions:

Discuss the following questions within a group and be prepared to discuss them with the rest of the class.

1. Describe the experience and background that your perfect President would possess.
2. What type of educational background would your perfect President have? Would a college degree be essential? Why?
3. What age range would be ideal? Why?
4. Would his/her religion play a factor in your selection of a perfect President? If so, which one(s) would you prefer? Why?

5. What personality characteristics and other qualities should he/she possess? Explain.
6. In recent years, many domestic programs have been cut to lower taxes or to provide more money to fight terrorism. Would your perfect President continue in this direction? Explain.
7. What other important requirements would you desire for your perfect President? Why?

Conclusions:

1. Will it be possible to find a man/woman that fulfills your group's requirement for a perfect President? Why or why not?
2. Who, in your group's estimation, are the two most highly qualified people for President today? (Your choices do not have to be running for office or actual politicians.) Why?

Government
The Electoral College

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

The founding fathers of the United States believed that the people were not capable of directly electing the President. Therefore, the Electoral College was set up in which each state was given a number of electors to decide the Presidency. The number of electors each state is given is based on the total number of Representatives and Senators in that state. After the popular vote is held for the Presidency, the candidate who wins a plurality of the popular vote in each state receives all of its electoral votes. Under this unusual system, it is possible for a candidate to win the popular vote but lose the election. This has actually happened three times, most recently in 2000 when George W. Bush defeated Al Gore. Many people question whether this system is still necessary.

Directions I:

You are to play the part of a registered voter in a state. For our purposes your group will constitute a state. We are going to divide into five separate states or groups. You are to participate in a Presidential election and choose among three candidates the one best qualified for the Oval Office. Each candidate has ten major issues that will form the basis of his party platform. The candidates are similar in some areas so this could be a difficult decision. However, choose the one candidate you feel is most qualified. (The positions of each candidate on the issues are listed on the last page.) We are going to conduct a popular vote and then calculate the results in the style of the Electoral College. As is the case in an actual Presidential election, there is a chance that we could have a different winner in the popular vote than in the Electoral College. You may discuss the candidates with your group members but you do not have to agree with their selections.

(To The Teacher:) You will need to consult a government almanac or contact your local library to see how many electoral votes each of the fifty states have at this time. (As you know, this can fluctuate every ten years.) After the students conduct a popular vote in their state or group, they will need to find out which state they represent. Since we are only using five states instead of fifty, select states with small and large amounts of electors to increase the chances of ending up with a different winner in the electoral college than in the popular

vote. You may want to have each group draw out of a hat to determine which state they will represent.

Directions II:

Calculate how many members in your state voted for each candidate and record the results on a scratch sheet of paper. These papers will be collected for each group to calculate the results of the popular election. Record the results in the appropriate blanks under “Popular Vote” below.

Directions III:

A student from each group will draw a slip of paper out of a hat (Each paper has the name of a state and its amount of electoral votes on it.) to determine which state they are representing. Now calculate how many electoral votes each candidate will receive. Keep in mind that the Electoral College is a “winner-take-all system.” (For example, let’s say your group represents Nevada and it has three electoral votes. If your group members gave four votes to candidate A, three votes to candidate B, and zero votes to candidate C, the results in the Electoral College would be as follows: candidate A receives all three electoral votes, candidate B would get no electoral votes, and candidate C would get no electoral votes.) Record the results in the blanks provided below for the “Electoral Vote.”

Results:

State	Popular Vote			Electoral Vote		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Winner of popular vote: _____

Winner of electoral vote: _____

Conclusions:

1. Was there a difference between the winner of the popular vote and electoral vote? If so do you feel this is fair? Why?

2. What are some advantages and disadvantages of the continuing utilization of the Electoral College to determine the President?

3. The founding fathers believed that the average citizen was not intelligent enough to determine who the best candidate was for the President and that is why they developed the Electoral College system. Do you feel that the average citizen is informed and intelligent enough to select the President today? Why?

The Candidates And Their Platforms:

Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
1. Against gay marriages	For gay marriages	For gay marriages
2. Against euthanasia	For euthanasia	against euthanasia
3. Pro-life on abortion	Pro-choice on abortion	Pro-choice on abortion
4. For gun ownership	Against gun ownership	For gun ownership
5. Against raising minimum wage	For raising minimum wage	For raising minimum wage
6. For death penalty	Against death penalty	Against death penalty
7. Raise graduation requirements	Keep requirements same	Keep requirements same
8. Increase military spending	Maintain current levels	Reduce military spending
9. No new taxes	Increase taxes for every one	Increase taxes on rich
10. Against national health care	For national health care	For national health care

Government
Senate Simulation

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Both houses of congress have the responsibility of making laws for the United States. Once a bill or proposed law is read, it is sent to an appropriate standing committee. The committee analyzes the bill and hears from various lobbyists and special interests before making recommendations to the rest of the house. Once the bill is brought before the rest of the house, it is discussed and debated. Then a voice vote is taken and if it passes, it is sent to the other house of congress. If the bill passes in the other house, it is sent on to the President. This process requires a long time but has served to prevent many bad bills from becoming laws.

Directions:

Your group is going to serve as a standing committee in the U.S. Senate. You are going to be assigned a bill to consider. You will analyze the bill and then recommend to the rest of the Senate to pass or reject the bill. Answer the questions below within a group and be prepared to give a one-page recommendation to the rest of the Senate.

(To The Teacher: You may either assign or permit your students to select the bill they will analyze on a first come first serve basis. After each committee has written their recommendation for the bill, have th students return their seats to their regular configuration and serve as the Senate in session. You may serve as the President of the Senate or assign a student to do so. Each group will present their recommendation to the other Senators. The students (Senators) may then make comments and debate the recommendations of the group. After affording enough time to hear various points of view, take a voice vote on the bill. If it is close, you may have to take an official count. Record the decision on the next page. Each bill will be handled in a similar fashion. Additional Note: You do not have to use all the bills listed or you may want to assign two bill to your groups depending on your students' abilities and the time that you have available.

The Bills:

- S1: A bill to bring female's income in line with male's income in female dominated fields. (Nursing, teaching, secretarial)
- S2: A bill that would require government/employer paid child car for every business.
- S3: A bill to allow a "guest worker" program inviting workers from across our borders to take jobs that Americans "do not want."
- S4: A bill to prevent businesses from "outsourcing" their jobs unless they cannot find suitable Americans to do the work.
- S5: A bill to shorten the school week to four days.
- S6: A bill to raise minimum wage to \$10.00 an hour.
- S7: A bill to make all forms of pornography illegal.
- S8: A bill to provide tax deductions for families whose children maintain a certain performance level in schools.
- S9: A bill to require all eighteen to twenty year olds to serve two years in the military.
- S10: A bill to provide full scholarships to any student who has earned a 3.5 G.P.A. or higher.

Questions for Each Committee To Answer:

1. List two positive aspects regarding your bill.
2. List two negative aspects regarding your bill.
3. Write a one page summary (You can write it on a separate sheet of paper.) which will be presented to the rest of the class explaining why the bill should or should not be passed.

Results:**Passed****Rejected**

S1

S2

S3

S4

S5

S6

S7

S8

S9

S10

Conclusions:

1. The ability to compromise and be persuasive are two qualities that are extremely beneficial to politicians. Assess your committee and the rest of the Senators on their abilities in these areas.

2. Some people complain that our checks and balances system takes too long to get necessary changes implemented. Others believe that the long process that is required in our checks and balances system prevents many bad laws from being enacted. With which of these positions do you more closely identify? Why?

Government
Planning Our Nation's Budget

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

There is no doubt that the cost of running a city, a state, or a country is quite an expensive operation. There are many areas that need to be taken care of, but some areas are more important than others. It is the task of our government, representing the interests of its people, to decide which areas will be given more money. They must determine the budget. The Office of Management and the Budget is assigned the responsibility of planning the priorities to determine which areas need more money than others. They give their recommendations to the President of the United States. As evidence that this is a difficult assignment, much more often than not the United States adds billions of dollars each year to a debt that is astronomical.

Directions:

Your group is to become the Office of Management and Budget and determine the spending priorities for the coming year. Rather than provide a fixed amount of money, we will deal with percentages. For example, you might make the military your highest priority and give it 25% of the money. Public transportation might be a lower priority and you might give it only 2 % of the money.

You are to first, rank in order of importance, the areas that you will prioritize from one to fifteen. Second, you will decide what percentage of your money will be appropriated for each area. Finally, you must give a short explanation as to why you ranked the area high or low.

Areas	Rank	Percent	Explanation
1. Health Care	_____	_____	
2. Job Creation	_____	_____	
3. Disaster Relief	_____	_____	
4. Fighting Terrorism	_____	_____	

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| 5. The Military | _____ | _____ |
| 6. The Environment | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Public Transport | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Public Education | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Illegal Immigration | _____ | _____ |
| 10. College Scholarships | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Criminal Detention | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Fighting Crime | _____ | _____ |
| 13. Paying The Debt | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Social Security | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Public Housing | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Other | _____ | _____ |

Conclusions:

1. How do the rankings of other groups compare to the ranking of yours?
How are they similar? How are they different?

2. During Bill Clinton's two terms in office the administration was able to balance the budget. The desire to cut taxes makes it difficult to accomplish this. Does our country benefit more with low taxes or a balanced budget? Why?

Government
How Do You Feel About Your School?

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

At one time, schools were primarily used to develop well-rounded people and to create good citizens. Today schools are expected to prepare young people for colleges and careers, teach values, and promote healthful living. The disenchantment some have had with their local schools has prompted a drive to allow parents to be able to receive a pay voucher from the government. This would allow them to send their children to a public or private school of their choice.

Directions:

Below are some statements regarding your school. Within a group, you are to first, circle the number that most accurately reflects your attitude towards the statement. Second, your group will give an explanation for why they felt the way they did about the category. Third, compute your overall attitude by adding your ratings and refer to the table to interpret your results. Finally, answer the conclusions at the bottom of the page and be prepared to discuss your conclusions with the rest of the class.

1. Our school has a successful athletic program

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

2. The classes provide a sufficient challenge for me academically.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

3. There are a variety of electives offered that I find interesting.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

4. Overall, the teachers take a personal interest in the students.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

5. The school provides sufficient social activities to promote my own personal development.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

6. The facilities, equipment, and books are adequate in providing a worthwhile educational experience.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

7. The staff (teachers, coaches, administrators) demonstrates a high level of competence in their respective areas.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

8. Many of the skills and experiences I have learned in this school will be an aid to me in the future.

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

Explanation:

Total Score: _____

Interpretations:

18 - 24 = Highly Favorable

10 - 17 = Quite Favorable

1 - 9 = Favorable

0 = Neutral

-18 - -24 = Highly Unfavorable

-10 - -17 = Quite Unfavorable

-1 - -9 = Unfavorable

Your Category: _____

Conclusions:

1. Do you feel that your score accurately reflects your group's opinion towards the school? Why?
2. What other categories about your school do you feel are important and should have been included in determining your attitude?
3. What are some experiences you have had at this school that you might not have had at another school?
4. What did you not experience at this school that you feel you might have received at another school?

Government
Rating Your Community

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

Most people would like to live in a community that is perfect in every way. Unfortunately, most cities have both good and bad features. Today we are going to evaluate your community.

Directions:

Below are listed categories specific to your community. Within a group you are going to rate each category based on its superiority or inferiority from +3 to -3. Second, you are going to rank each category in terms of the priority with which you would like to see it improved. Third, your group will provide an explanation for your ratings for the various categories. Finally, you will compute your ratings, answer the conclusions, and be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

Category	Rating	Rank
1. Safety	<u>-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3</u>	_____
Explanation:		
2. Beauty	<u>-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3</u>	_____
Explanation:		
3. Modern Stores	<u>-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3</u>	_____
Explanation:		
4. Parks & Recreation	<u>-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3</u>	_____
Explanation:		

5. Public Transit -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 _____

Explanation:

6. Traffic -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 _____

Explanation:

7. Housing -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 _____

Explanation:

8. Friendliness of
Neighbors -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 _____

Explanation:

9. Quality of Schools -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 _____

Explanation:

10. Entertainment -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 _____

Explanation:

Your Total: _____

Interpretations:

20 - 30 = Superior

-20 - -30 = Very Inferior

10 - 19 = Good

-10 - -19 = Unsatisfactory

1 - 9 = Moderate

-1 - -9 = Poor

0 = Neutral

Your Category: _____

Conclusions:

1. What is your overall attitude toward your city? Why?

2. Explain why your first two priorities would improve your community.

Government
AIDS And The AIDS Virus

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

In 1981, a few cases of a horrible disease that breaks down the body's immune system began to appear in the United States. AIDS or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, as the dreaded disease is known, seemed to be most common in gay men. Later it was discovered that it could be transmitted through blood transfusions and shared needles of I.V. drug users. Although a growing number of very painful deaths were occurring, public sympathy and support were slow to come. When famous celebrities such as Rock Hudson and Liberace died of AIDS, the people and the government seemed to change their attitude.

Today we know that in addition to the methods of transmitting the disease mentioned above, it can be transmitted through heterosexual intercourse as well. Magic Johnson's revelation in 1991 of getting the AIDS virus through "casual sex" cast a huge spotlight on the disease. Through his efforts much progress has been made but the problem is still a major one. We will analyze the progress that has been made and what still needs to be done.

Directions:

Answer the following questions within a group and be prepared to discuss them with the rest of the class.

1. A recent study found that singles above the age of forty are more likely to engage in unprotected sex than teenagers. Most people would think that teenagers would be the less responsible ones. With all the warnings over the years regarding this behavior, why do you suppose mature people are so irresponsible?
2. Many parents and administrators have been against schools distributing "rubbers" or prophylactics in schools. They claim that instead of

promoting safe sex it would encourage those that otherwise would not have sex to be sexually active. Do you feel this is true? Explain.

3. Magic Johnson spent much time over the years promoting the practice of “safe sex.” His former teammate, A.C. Green, remained a virgin until his wedding day and publicly promoted sexual abstinence until marriage. Do famous role models have a positive impact on young people in their decision-making when it comes to sexual discipline? Explain.
4. Oprah Winfrey has made huge contributions to address the AIDS epidemic in Africa. Countless children are left without parents because of the devastating impact of AIDS in this region. Many of these people could have been saved if they had access to the medications available in the United States. Does America have an obligation to take a larger role to address this disease internationally? Explain.
5. It has been many years since Magic Johnson found that he had the HIV virus. At that time it was assumed he would die in the next few years. Technology, medication, and practicing healthy habits have allowed him and many others to continue to live prosperous lives. Would it be incorrect to conclude we have won the fight against AIDS in the United States? Explain.
6. The movies, commercials, clothing styles, music, and video games have become more and more sexual in recent years. Do you think our society and the fight against AIDS would benefit from toning down sexuality in these areas? Explain.

Government
*Civil Rights And The Progress of African
Americans*

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

During the 1950's and 1960's tremendous effort was made by both black and white people to bring full civil rights to blacks. The civil rights movement began when a black woman, Rosa Parks, refused to follow a southern law which required blacks to ride on the back of the bus. At that time, blacks were denied fairness in every segment of American life. Through the efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr., a black minister who believed in peaceful protests, great progress was made in the area of civil rights for blacks. Following his assassination in 1968, blacks began to enjoy opportunities in the U.S. that were unprecedented.

Although much progress was made, the momentum seemed to slow down during the 1980's. Much of this seemed to arise from rulings that determined that Affirmative Action programs to help blacks were a form of reverse discrimination. Despite those setbacks we have seen people like Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell, and Condoleeza Rice set new standards for achievement and success. Have we reached a point where the vast majority of Americans judge people not by the color of their skin but the content of their character? We will investigate this in the questions below.

Directions:

Answer the following questions within a group and be prepared to discuss them with the rest of the class.

1. Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell, and Condoleeza Rice are just a few of an enormous amount of minorities prospering in the United States. Do you feel confident that the barriers that once prevented opportunities to succeed are gone? Explain.
2. Today one third of marriages in the state of California are interracial. Until 1967 in the state of Virginia, a marriage between an African

American and Caucasian was illegal. Do you believe that most members of society today accept interracial marriages? Explain.

3. The late great Bear Bryant, former coach of the University of Alabama football team, had an interesting interpretation on the progress of integration in the South. He believed that the 1970 performance of the black U.S.C. running back, Sam Cunningham, against Alabama had a bigger impact on integration than the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. Why does sports competition help to break down prejudices and discrimination?
4. The presence of African American in major league baseball players has decreased considerably over the last decade. To reverse this trend, major league baseball has spent money to revive inner-city amateur baseball. Do you think these efforts will lure African-American athletes away from football and basketball? Explain. Do you think other professions should make efforts like this to attract more minorities? Explain.
5. Formulate a pie and include the ingredients that will eliminate racism.
6. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used to say, "I have a dream." He believed that one day we would assess people not by the color of their skin but the content of their character. Has that day arrived? Explain.