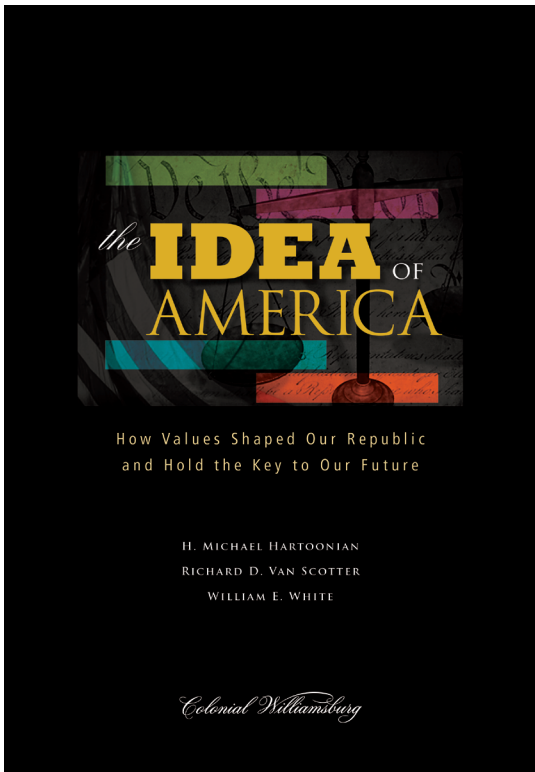


# *the* **IDEA** OF AMERICA

How Values Shaped Our Republic and Hold the Key to Our Future



## Reading Group Questions

1. If America is an idea sustained through debate, what's the argument about?
2. Can a nation be formed, maintained and preserved on the principle of continuous argumentation and, if so, how?
3. What is freedom? Why should it be limited?
4. What does democracy mean to you, and what are the obligations of citizenship?
5. "The rule of law" is America's watch word. However, when and under what circumstances is it appropriate to break the law?
6. Describe ways you are a citizen in society and ways you are a subject.
7. Winston Churchill said we first shape our dwellings, and then our dwellings shape us. How does this apply to the human environment and physical landscapes of America?
8. What challenges does a comprehensive immigration policy present to the American republic, and what opportunities does it hold?
9. Is it possible to have a coherent, stable culture that allows the complete freedom of religious and political thought and expression?
10. We tend to think of the common wealth as material and physical, but should it also be measured in terms of civic and civil behavior?
11. If citizenship is not an innate ability, how and where should it be developed?
12. Why has it been so difficult for Americans to hold and balance the opposing democratic values of freedom and equality?
13. How does America struggle for comprehensive healthcare reform reflect the tension between freedom, or healthcare as an individual responsibility, and equality, healthcare as social good?
14. How can understanding value tensions help bridge our partisan divide?