

# Contents

	Page	Handouts
Introduction .....	v	
Teacher Notes .....	vii	
Cross-Reference Section .....	ix	
<b>Part 1: The Political Process and Elections</b>		
1 Understanding Liberalism and Conservatism .....	3	1, 2
2 Who Is a Republican? Who Is a Democrat? .....	9	3
3 The Nature of American Political Parties .....	15	4
4 The Role of Third Parties .....	19	5
5 The Media and the Elections .....	27	6, 7
6 Campaign Finance Reform .....	35	8, 9, 10
7 Electing the President .....	43	11, 12, 13
<b>Part 2: Focus on Foreign Policy</b>		
8 Presidents as Peacemakers .....	55	14
9 The United States and the United Nations .....	59	15, 16
10 The End of the Cold War .....	67	17, 18, 19
11 Foreign Affairs .....	75	20
12 National Security or Special Interests? .....	79	21, 22
13 The Global Economy .....	85	23, 24
<b>Part 3: Economics and the Federal Government</b>		
14 The Taxes We Pay .....	93	25, 26
15 The Federal Income Tax: Why Is Reform Desirable? .....	103	27
16 Social Security: The Myth and the Reality .....	111	28, 29
17 The Federal Budget .....	119	30
18 Creating a Balanced Budget .....	125	31
<b>Part 4: Influencing the Federal Government</b>		
19 The Role of the U.S. Supreme Court .....	131	32
20 The Role of Special Interest Groups .....	139	33, 34
21 Lobbyists .....	145	35
22 Homelessness .....	149	36
23 Welfare Reform .....	153	37
24 Environmental Concerns .....	157	38
25 Energy .....	161	39

**Part 5: State and Local Governments**

26	State Government: Prison Reform .....	165	.....	40
27	The Roles of State Governors .....	169	.....	41
28	Alternative Education Programs .....	173	.....	42, 43
29	The Trend towards Regional Government .....	179	.....	44, 45
30	The Functions of Local Government .....	183	.....	46
31	City Government in Operation .....	187	.....	47
32	Solving the Problems of the Central City .....	193	.....	48
33	Privatization .....	197	.....	49

**Part 6: Individual Involvement in Government**

34	Why Don't More Americans Vote? .....	201	.....	50, 51
35	Initiative and Referendum .....	211	.....	52, 53, 54
36	You <i>Can</i> Influence Congress .....	217	.....	55
37	One Person, One Vote .....	221	.....	56
38	Voting in America .....	231	.....	57
39	Analyzing Issues .....	235	.....	58
40	Government of the People and by the People .....	241	.....	59

# Introduction

*U.S. Government, Book 2: Government of the People and by the People* is intended for use with average high school students. Students are required to process information in order to understand the content and use a variety of sources, including graphs, charts, cartoons, illustrations, and readings. These materials help students to understand the relationship between unit themes and concepts. The activities are interesting, developmental, skill-related, and promote critical thinking.

*U.S. Government, Book 2* is divided into six parts, each focusing on a major aspect of the practical workings of our government as opposed to its general structure. Part 1, *The Political Process and Elections*, focuses on political philosophies, parties, and presidential elections. Part 2, *Focus on Foreign Policy*, concentrates on the end of the Cold War, the relationship between the United States and the United Nations, and the importance of the development of a global economy. Part 3, *Economics and the Federal Government*, deals with the tax structure, the need for tax reform, Social Security, and the budgetary process. Part 4, *Influencing the Federal Government*, emphasizes the role, techniques, and effects of special interest groups. Issues such as homelessness, environmental concerns, energy problems, and welfare reform are addressed. Part 5, *State and Local Governments*, examines the roles of state and local governments and the critical problems, such as prison reform, privatization, and the trend towards regional government, facing our states and cities. Part 6, *Individual Involvement in Government*, illustrates the importance of an informed electorate and why involvement in government is crucial to the effective functioning of a democracy. Book 2 instructs students in how government works in practice and how individual citizens can have an impact upon the direction of government.

## Goals

This approach uses concepts to teach American government and reflects these assumptions:

1. American government requires the active participation of its citizens. To understand how to function as responsible citizens, students need to examine how and why changes have occurred.
2. American government illustrates recurring themes. To understand the place these themes hold today, they must be analyzed and conclusions drawn about them.
3. Finally, government as a discipline requires skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking. Practice leading toward mastery in each of these skill areas is an integral part of learning the unit content.

## Objectives

1. To understand the practical workings of the American political system
2. To study government and draw conclusions about it
3. To understand personal values and their relationship to governments
4. To practice writing skills in order to communicate ideas clearly to others
5. To explore our heritage as a means of understanding ourselves and our role in government today

# Lesson 1

## Understanding Liberalism and Conservatism

### Objective

- To understand important distinctions between liberal and conservative philosophies

### Notes to the Teacher

Ideological differences, based upon the individual's readiness or reluctance to accept change, distinguish our political parties. Unfortunately, the terms *liberal* and *conservative* often confuse as much as they clarify these basic differences. Although candidates are labeled liberal or conservative, few take either position to the same extent on all issues. Moreover, individuals in each major political party defy the position of their parties on some issues. Recognizing these inconsistencies, Americans often cast their votes on the basis of personalities rather than a careful analysis of candidates' positions on the issues. Still, students should understand that important differences do exist between liberals and conservatives on freedom, equality, and the proper role of government.

On the left side of the political spectrum are liberals, who share an optimistic outlook and a basic belief in the goodness of humanity and the inevitability of progress. Liberals trust people to act responsibly, and they, therefore, favor increasing individual freedom and strengthening democratic processes. Liberals prefer evolutionary reforms. Those on the far left, or radicals, favor immediate revolutionary steps to accomplish needed changes. On the other hand, conservatives, including both moderates and the more extreme reactionaries, focus on the need to restrict individual freedoms in order to preserve the traditional moral values of American society.

Radicals help to define the direction of change, while reactionaries point out past accomplishments and strive to preserve the cherished heritage of our past. In European countries, such as France and Italy, proportional representation allows extremist groups to win seats in the legislature. However, in our two-party system, voters traditionally select

more moderate candidates, the liberals and conservatives, rather than either radical or reactionary candidates.

Over time, American society has moved toward the left; as a result, conservatives today readily accept ideas once considered radical. Women's suffrage is one example. Individuals tend to become more conservative as they grow older and often feel comfortable with the ways of the past. They recognize the difficulty of making major changes in our system. This shift to the right with age, coupled with the impossibility of changing all the institutions of government in one election, does indeed help to explain why change in this country typically comes very slowly.

In this lesson, students complete a survey of political attitudes, discuss the meanings of the terms *liberal* and *conservative* and exchange surveys to rate each other's liberalism or conservatism. The class concludes with a debriefing of this activity and an assessment of the degree to which students are either liberal or conservative. Finally, students research and report on current leaders who reflect the various positions of the political spectrum.

### Procedure

1. Ask students to define the following political philosophies.

*radical*—favors extreme changes or reforms

*liberal*—favors progressive changes or reforms

*conservative*—inclined to oppose change in national institutions

*reactionary*—favors a return to previous, usually conservative, state of affairs

List the definitions on the chalkboard or on an overhead transparency for comparison later in the lesson.

2. Distribute **Handout 1**, and have students mark their opinions on the lines at the left of the statements. Put the papers aside until later in the lesson.

3. Distribute **Handout 2**, part A, and complete it as a group.

**Suggested Responses:**

*Political spectrum, from left to right, should read radicals, liberals, conservatives, reactionaries.*

- 1. The ideas of radicals and reactionaries are too extreme to gain acceptance among the majority of Americans.*
- 2. Aspiring political candidates should probably gear their campaign pledges to the views of moderates.*
- 3. Most teenagers tend to be more liberal than the population as a whole because they have optimistic hopes of a better future.*
- 4. Older persons tend to become more conservative as they realize the difficulty of accomplishing major changes; they often become content with things as they have been in the past.*
- 5. Since most political offices are held by older persons, young voters may sense a generation gap between their own views and those of elected officials.*

Have students compare the definitions generated in the first procedure of this lesson. Ask students to determine how accurate their definitions were and what was omitted or not understood correctly.

4. Have students exchange the opinion polls in **Handout 1**. Discuss the items in relation to the discussion on who is a liberal and who is a conservative. Have students mark each item on the right of the survey to indicate whether the student has taken a liberal or a conservative position. To conclude, have students total the liberal and conservative scores and return them to the students who did the survey.

The following will serve as a guide in marking the papers:

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. conservative | 7. liberal       |
| 2. liberal      | 8. liberal       |
| 3. conservative | 9. conservative  |
| 4. liberal      | 10. liberal      |
| 5. conservative | 11. conservative |
| 6. conservative | 12. liberal      |

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 13. liberal      | 16. liberal      |
| 14. conservative | 17. conservative |
| 15. liberal      | 18. conservative |

5. Discuss the following points based on the survey:
- Poll the class to find how many students found their positions to be conservative, how many liberal, and how many middle-of-the-road. Is the class typical of the tendency of young people to be generally more liberal than the population as a whole? If not, how might students account for the difference?
  - Did the poll confirm students' beliefs about themselves, or were they surprised by the results?
  - Did the activity change or enlarge their concept of the terms *liberal* and *conservative*? If so, how?
6. Distribute **Handout 2**, part B, and have students complete it. Emphasize the importance of listing individuals from all three levels of government: local, state, and national.
7. Have students share their choices of political leaders for each group on the political spectrum. Have them state specific reasons for their choices for a particular group. Discuss why students experienced ease or difficulty in placing persons under the various headlines.

**Enrichment/Extension**

1. Have students administer the survey in **Handout 1** to other students or family members and report their findings.
2. Have students visit Web sites of both conservative and liberal organizations and report on their findings. Some potential sites are as follows:

Conservative

- The National Rifle Association (<http://www.nra.org>)
- CATO Institute (<http://cato.org>)

Liberal

- National Organization for Women (<http://www.now.org>)
- People for the American Way (<http://www.pfaw.org>)

U.S. Government, Book 2  
Lesson 1  
Handout 1 (page 1)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Are You a Liberal or a Conservative?

Put a check in front of each statement below with which you agree. Disregard, for the moment, the lines to the right of the statements.

	<b>L</b>	<b>C</b>
_____ 1. The government should encourage rather than restrict prayer in the public schools.	_____	_____
_____ 2. The federal government has an obligation to regulate businesses in order to preserve the environment for future generations.	_____	_____
_____ 3. Affirmative action programs deny equality of opportunity to whites in hiring.	_____	_____
_____ 4. The federal government should provide funds to improve public schools and make college possible for more young adults.	_____	_____
_____ 5. The individual is basically responsible for his own well-being, so the government should make welfare recipients go to work.	_____	_____
_____ 6. The federal government should limit its spending so that individuals enjoy the maximum freedom of choice in spending their income.	_____	_____
_____ 7. Unregulated free enterprise benefits the rich at the expense of the poor.	_____	_____
_____ 8. The government should guarantee medical care for all citizens.	_____	_____
_____ 9. The Supreme Court should reverse its decision to legalize abortions in order to protect the right to life for a fetus.	_____	_____
_____ 10. The federal government should guarantee the rights of homosexuals.	_____	_____
_____ 11. Present federal laws effectively guarantee the rights of women and make passage of an Equal Rights Amendment unnecessary.	_____	_____
_____ 12. The federal government has an obligation to guarantee full employment.	_____	_____
_____ 13. The federal government should take any steps necessary to eliminate discrimination.	_____	_____
_____ 14. The government should uphold the morals of the past.	_____	_____
_____ 15. The government must provide a sort of insurance against catastrophic illness and unemployment.	_____	_____
_____ 16. The government should not try to manipulate the social values of the citizenry.	_____	_____

U.S. Government, Book 2  
Lesson 1  
Handout 1 (page 2)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>L</b>	<b>C</b>
_____ 17. The government should be less concerned with rights of the accused and more concerned about maintaining law and order.	_____	_____
_____ 18. The government should stop being permissive with student protesters.	_____	_____
	<b>Total</b>	_____
_____ 19. I consider myself		
a. liberal		
b. conservative		
c. don't know		

U.S. Government, Book 2  
Lesson 1  
Handout 2 (page 1)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Liberalism and Conservatism

### Part A.

Historians locate political philosophies on a continuum from left to right on the basis of the individual or group's readiness for change. Read the following information. Then write the political philosophies in the appropriate place on the political spectrum and answer the discussion questions.

*Radicals*—These individuals on the extreme left favor basic change accomplished through any means, even revolution.

*Liberals*—These individuals favor peaceful reforms.

*Conservatives*—These individuals prefer to leave things as they are.

*Reactionaries*—These individuals on the extreme right favor a return to things as they were in some earlier, and presumably better, time.

Americans' basic belief in the concept of progress has resulted in a collective shift to the left over time. One might understand this by considering the changing positions Americans have taken on the issue of women's suffrage. In 1848, only a tiny minority of radicals suggested such a drastic change in the rights of women. By 1900, several states had adopted suffrage for women, and liberals looked ahead to the time when women would vote in every state. Conservatives readily accepted women's right to vote but opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. Only the tiniest minority of reactionaries would favor a return to an earlier time when women did not have the right to vote.



### Political Spectrum

1. Why don't radicals and reactionaries get elected in this country?
2. In view of your answer to question 1, what advice would you give to an aspiring political candidate?
3. In general, where on the political spectrum would you locate most teenagers? Why?
4. In general, where on the political spectrum would you locate older persons? Why?
5. Do your answers to questions 3 and 4 give you any insight into the reason that many young people become impatient with the political system? Explain your answer.



U.S. Government, Book 2  
Lesson 1  
Handout 2 (page 2)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B.**

List current political leaders on all three levels (local, state, and national) for each category. Give specific reasons to support your choice. Then answer the questions.

**Liberal Leaders**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Office Held \_\_\_\_\_

Level (local, state, or national) \_\_\_\_\_

Why considered liberal? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Conservative Leaders**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Office Held \_\_\_\_\_

Level (local, state, or national) \_\_\_\_\_

Why considered conservative? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Radical and/or Reactionary Leaders**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Office Held \_\_\_\_\_

Level (local, state, or national) \_\_\_\_\_

Why considered radical/and or reactionary? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Under which political spectrum category was it easiest to list leaders? Why?

2. Under which political spectrum category was it most difficult to list leaders? Why?