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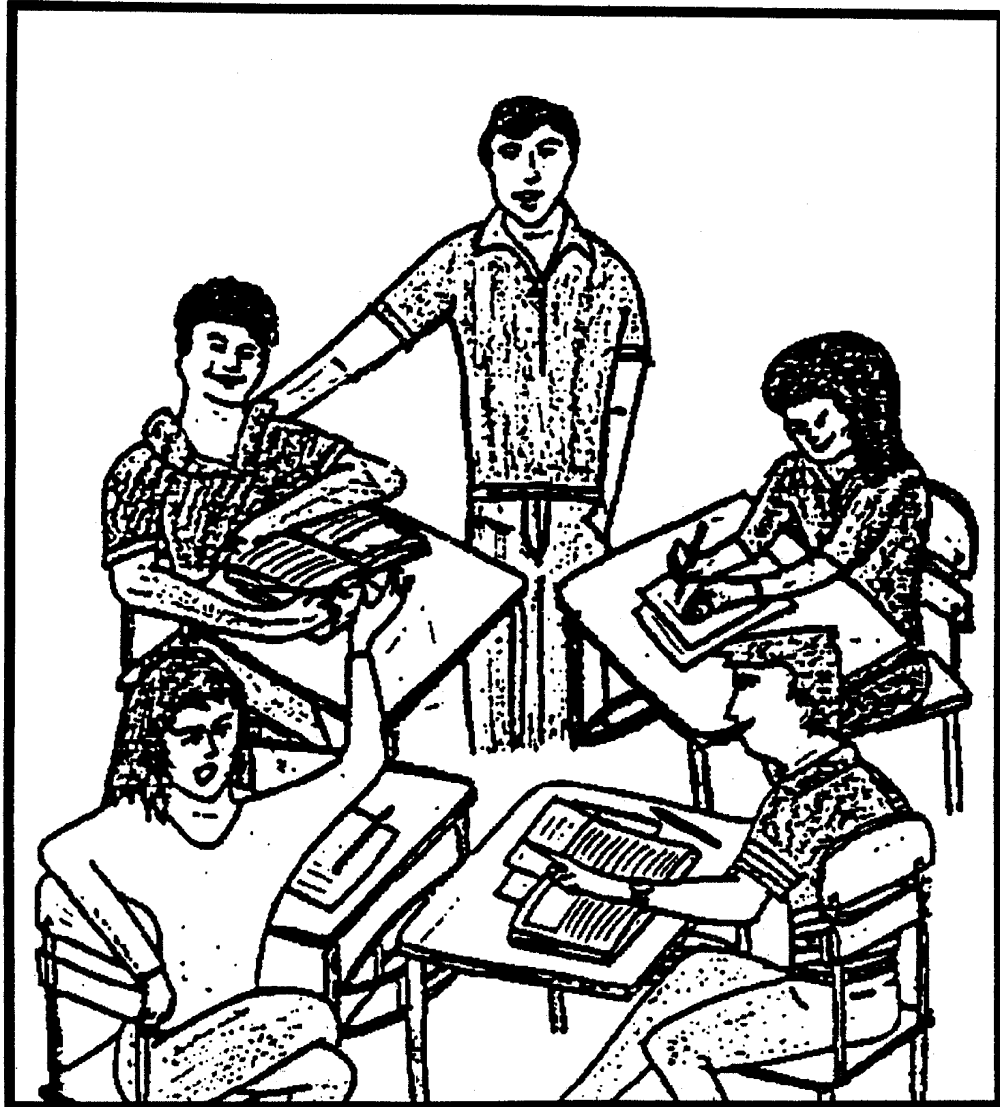
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Making World History Fun and Relevant

*by
Robert Leach*



Relevance, Inc.

TWELVE
RELEVANCE EXERCISES
FOR
WORLD HISTORY

PREPARED BY

ROBERT B. LEACH
MENTOR TEACHER
DUARTE HIGH SCHOOL

THESE MATERIALS PUBLISHED BY

RELEVANCE
1149 #2 CALLE DE LA LUNA
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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

LILIBETH GANADEN
ALMA D. GONZALES
TZEITEL PARAS
ENRILE TANDO
ROSE LEACH
BENJAMIN LEACH
HARLENE STANLEY

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When I was in high school, I can remember being so intimidated by the thought of taking chemistry that I did not want to take the class. The horror stories that my older sister as well as others told me made this class seem overwhelming! Today, however, when I think of complex subject matter, there seems to be nothing that could rival the difficulty of learning and understanding World History.

The Los Angeles Times newspaper reported a few months ago that, at this time, there are forty seven civil wars taking place around the world! One of the things most of us felt sure we could count on was that when Communism fell, we would have a safer more stable world. If recent events are an indication, nothing could be further from the truth. The civil wars that have taken place, particularly in what was formerly Yugoslavia, have shown that the world and its stability is still precarious. Despite the good intentions of the United States to stop global problems like communism, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing, we are a long way from achieving the dignity of human rights for every one.

What is it that makes the task of understanding World History such a difficult one? The animosity that is present between the Turks and Armenians, Hungarians and Russians, Arabs and Jews, to name just a few rivals goes back hundreds and in some cases thousands of years. I thought I had a pretty good grasp on understanding the war in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia until I met a woman who worked for the United Nations. She was stationed in Croatia and I met her while we were both vacationing in Jamaica. My perception was that a specific ethnic group was the perpetrator of most of the problems. My friend assured me that a historical investigation would show

that none of the various ethnic groups involved are totally innocent.

The tension that has taken place in recent years around the world has not excluded the United States. The incidence of hate crimes perpetrated against various ethnic groups has been on the rise the past ten years. Whether it is due to the troubled economic times, mass immigration, or, as some suggest, Ronald Reagan's views which made it acceptable for racists to come out of the closet,, it is difficult to say. One thing that is for certain is that our young people need to appreciate and understand people from different cultures.

I am confident that the activities in " Making World History Fun and Relevant" will give your students an appreciation of other cultures as well as a background in world history. Also they will see that we are all much more similar than different. Each lesson begins with an introduction that explains the importance of the specific topic in World History. Questions follow that are related to the topic but are more thought-provoking and relevant to your students. As you look through the book, you will see that the activities are geared towards values clarification, critical thinking, and discovery learning. The students love the activities because they do not require the use of a text. However, these activities do bring about much discussion and divergent thinking. Most importantly, they incorporate the higher levels of critical thinking.

I recommend that, after you introduce each lesson, you have the students discuss the questions in small groups before writing their answers. The activities are ideally suited for cooperative learning, although they may also be used very effectively as individual assignments. I also recommend that you, after giving students approximately a half an hour for group discussion, have a class discussion. The

beauty of this method is that, no matter who you call on, all of them will have an answer. Believe me, once the class gets started, you will have plenty of volunteers and you will not need to call on anyone.

Included 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 encourage this.

All of the activities can be completed in one or two class periods depending on your needs. Each activity includes a thorough explanation which 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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World History
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 put downs. 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, comaraderie 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. _____
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13. _____
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22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____

World History
The Reformation And Religion Today

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

During the Reformation, many people protested the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. People like Martin Luther and John Calvin began their own religions. Luther protested the practice of selling indulgences. He advocated following your own conscience rather than the ritual and dogma of Catholicism. Calvin, like Luther, did not agree with the Roman Catholic Church. He believed that whether one was going to heaven or hell was pre-determined. Our salvation would not be determined by our good works. However, he did believe that those that put their life to good use and were prosperous were most likely the ones that would be saved. There seems to be a resurgence in the role that religion is playing in the lives of Americans today. Many more people are turning to organized religions to solve personal problems as well as to address the concerns of society.

Directions:

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

1. Traditionally, adolescence is a time of rebelliousness and many teenagers fall away from the religion of their parents. Today more teenagers are staying involved in or being attracted to organized religions. Why do you suppose this is the case?

2. A controversy today involves whether or not schools should distribute condoms to protect teenagers from unwanted pregnancies and control the spread of AIDS. Most religious groups are against this while advocating abstinence. Do you feel encouraging abstinence(refraining from sex) can be an effective approach to reduce premarital sex amongst teenagers? Explain.

3. Most religions today are "pro life" on the abortion issue and actively fight to overturn the Roe vs. Wade court decision that permits abortions. Fewer religions are as vocal about fighting to end homelessness. Is our society being immoral in neglecting many of the homeless? Explain. Why do you suppose religious groups are not as actively fighting this problem?

4. Our society today is, for the most part, based on an idea that comes from religion. That idea is the Protestant Work Ethic which states that if you work hard and save your money you will be a success. Do you believe this is a good principle to live by and is it true in our country today? Explain.

5. Family values, an idea that has religious origins, is a term that we hear advocated by many politicians today. They believe there are certain principles that parents should teach their children that will make them responsible and productive members of society. List as many values as you can think of that you believe parents should teach their children.

6. One of the reasons our forefathers came to this country was to have religious freedom. Many people advocate that this freedom should permit students to pray in public schools. Do you feel this would help or hurt the practice of freedom of religion? Explain.

World History

Greek History: Relating Past To The Present

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Introduction:

The Ancient Greeks have made many contributions to western society not the least of which has been the Olympic Games. There are many legends regarding the various competitions and it is very difficult to separate fact from fiction. For example, it is believed that the distance of the marathon race of 26.2 miles results from a legend involving a Greek warrior. It is believed that he ran 26.2 miles to warn the Greeks of an attacking rival. After his arrival and warning, he collapsed and died.

The Olympics ceased for many years but were resurrected in 1896. The Olympics took place again in Greece in that year. All of the Olympics that have followed are known as the "Modern Olympics".

Directions:

Today there is much controversy surrounding the Olympics. Discuss the following questions within a group and be prepared to share your information with the rest of the class.

1. In the 1988 Olympics, drug testing revealed that sprinter Ben Johnson of Canada had used steroids. He was consequently stripped of his gold medal in the One Hundred Yard Dash. Research has shown that steroids can produce many harmful side effects. Why do you suppose so many top athletes are willing to risk disqualification as well as their health in order to win a gold medal?

2. Do you feel that the use of steroids is unethical and should be penalized? Why?

3. Over the years it has become increasingly difficult to keep politics out of the Olympics. Both the United States and Russia have boycotted the Olympics in the not too distant past due to political events. In 1972, several athletes from Israel were murdered by terrorists in the "safe" surroundings of the Olympic Village. Do you feel that it is still worthwhile to continue the

Olympics despite the real threats of terrorism that exists? Why?

4. Due to numerous rule changes, professional athletes like Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan were able to compete in the 1992 Olympics. Their landslide victories which led to their gold medal caused many to believe that the honor of Olympic participation should be left to amateur athletes. Do you agree? Explain.

5. Due to decreasing interest in the Winter Olympics, a new format provides that the Summer and Winter Olympics will take place in different years. Do you believe that the events of the Winter Games(skiing, ice skating, etc.) are less entertaining than those of the Summer Games(track and field, basketball, etc.)? Why?

6. Do you feel the events of the Summer Games require more athleticism than those of the Winter Games? Why?

7. In 1984, patriotism for Americans during the Olympics was at an all time high. The Russians boycotted that Olympics and the United States led the way in gold medals. Do you feel that success in the Olympic competition affects the pride that you have in your country? Explain.

World History
Marriage: Yesterday And Today

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

During Medieval times people married at a young age. It was a custom that the parents would select the marriage partner. Often times the selection was made while they were still babies. Every father tried to arrange a dowry for his daughter, some amount of money, land, or goods that she took to her marriage. Without a dowry, it was almost impossible for a girl to get married.

Directions:

Below are questions related to marriage yesterday and today. Answer the questions as thoroughly as you can within a group and be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

1. List three reasons why marriages today do not last as well as in previous years.
2. Parents, with all their wisdom, can make a better choice for a marriage partner than their son or daughter. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
3. The over-emphasis of physical attractiveness leads people to marry incompatible partners and is the main reason that marriages fail today. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
4. Do you believe that the fact that most women today have to work outside the home has a positive or negative impact on marital happiness? Why?

5. Can we assume that, because earlier marriages lasted longer, the husband and wife were happier? Why?
6. List three essential characteristics you would be looking for in a marriage partner. Why do you feel that these qualities are so vital?
7. Develop a formula for marital happiness.

World History
Social Class And The Caste System Of India

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Social class consciousness has been prevalent in our country since its inception. Status has always been ascribed to people based on their occupation, family background, position, and accomplishments. People have been able to increase their status through marriage, education, or the attainment of wealth.

In India, people do not move from one level of status to another. The boundaries are extremely rigid. Their complex system of social status through marriage is called the caste system. Their divisions are based on skin color, politics, place in society, kind of work, wealth, and religion. Members of each caste have to follow its rules for marriage, work, and religious rites. People have to marry within their own caste. The system of social status in the United States allows for much more flexibility and the boundaries are much less clearly defined.

Directions:

We are going to examine social status in the United States today. Discuss and answer the following questions within a group and be prepared to share your answers with the rest of the class.

1. Ideally, the social status of an occupation would be determined by the contribution that a certain profession makes to society. Some professions like doctors are well paid and definitely make a valuable contribution. Other professions like acting and professional athletics are well paid and prestigious but their contribution to society is questionable. List three variables you would use to determine which jobs would have the most prestige and receive the highest salaries.
2. List five occupations that you feel are highly overrated and five that are underrated in our society.

3. What are the variables used to determine status at your high school? Do you consider these ways fair? Explain.
4. It would be better to be a mediocre doctor than an excellent teacher. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
5. List two advantages and two disadvantages to a society in assigning a higher status to certain occupations.
6. Ideally, people will work in an occupation that is challenging, fun, and profitable. If you had a choice between a job that was fun but low paying or one that was high paying but unfulfilling, which would you choose? Why?

World History
Confucius And Your Philosophy Of Life

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Great philosophers have attempted to guide the lives of others by making simple but wise sayings for people to follow. Perhaps one of the greatest and most widely known philosophers of all time, Confucius, was of Chinese ancestry. The Chinese as well as many others have lived by his beliefs for centuries. Other philosophers such as Socrates from Ancient Greece and Benjamin Franklin of the United States have been instrumental in simplifying and guiding the lives of people for many generations. Sayings such as "A penny saved is a penny earned" and "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" are attributed to Franklin and are still with us today.

Directions:

Within a group, you are going to play the role of Confucius. Below are listed a variety of topics in which you and your group members will develop two philosophical sayings for each area. Be prepared to share your sayings with the rest of the class.

1. Happiness:
2. Love:
3. Worry:
4. Health:
5. Dealing With Your Enemies:

6. Peace:

7. The Future:

8. Success:

Conclusions:

1. List three advantages to having personal philosophies or sayings to live by.
2. Do you feel those that have philosophies to live by are happier and more successfull? Why?

World History
The Status Of Women In China

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

In the Chinese culture, women were considered to be of much less importance than men. Wives were considered no more than ornaments in their husband's homes. This attitude appears to be still prevalent today. Due to severe over-population, the Chinese government penalizes families that have more than one child. Many parents choose to kill their child if it turns out to be female. If they only get one child, they reason, it would be much better to have a male.

Although our society is much further advanced than the Chinese society, many people believe that American women are still second class citizens. In many facets of life, there seems to be a double standard that exists.

Directions:

Below are several questions related to female equality in our society. Discuss these questions within a group and be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

1. Attempts have been made in the last two decades to bring spending for girl's sports programs in schools up to the level of the boy's programs. Do you feel that the girl's program in your school is comparable or equal to your boy's program? Explain.
2. In the late '70's and early '80's a proposed Equal Rights Amendment for women failed to be ratified by three-fourths of the state's legislatures. This is evidence that our society wants to keep women second class citizens. Do you agree? Explain.
3. Occupations such as construction and police protection are too dangerous for women. Do you agree? Explain.
4. Women in traditionally female occupations such as secretaries and

teachers believe they should be paid comparable salaries as those in traditionally male occupations like plumbers and electricians. They believe that they are making comparable contributions to society and should be paid accordingly. Do you agree? Explain.

5. Women's liberation supposedly brought many new rights to women. Do you feel that parents today, as a result, treat both their sons and daughters equally in terms of opportunities and privileges? Why?

6. Most men in the United States accept women as their intellectual equals and are willing to work with of for a woman. Do you agree? Explain.

7. Today it is perfectly acceptable in our society for a wife to make more money than her husband? Do you agree? Explain.

World History
Hieroglyphics: Telling A Story With Pictures

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Thousands of years ago, before written languages evolved, the ancient Egyptians used a form of communication known as hieroglyphics. Pictures were used to represent sounds and to tell a story.

Directions I:

You are to draw a sequence of, at least five pictures to communicate a story to some one. You can use cartoon characters or even stick people to tell the story.

The Story and Drawings:

Directions II:

Give the pictures to another group to examine for three minutes. On another sheet of paper they will translate the story. Continue exchanging

papers until every group has had a chance to translate each story.

Directions III:

Have the groups volunteer to give their translation of each story. The group whose story is being translated will then disclose what story they were telling. Record the accuracy of the various groups under interpretations below.

Interpretations:

Group #	# Of Correct Translations
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____
6.	_____

Conclusions:

1. Which group was most effective in translating the stories. Why do you suppose they were so efficient?

2. Many people complain that people rely on the television rather than books or newspaper for entertainment and information. Do you feel that the pictures provided by television or words provided by papers and magazine give a more accurate account of events? Explain.

World History
Exploration or Imposition

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

During the Age of Exploration, many European countries claimed to "discover" new areas in North and South America. In actuality, these had long been the home of native American Indians. The Europeans overtook these natives by force and imposed their religion and way of life on them. They used their natural resources for the profit of their mother country.

Directions:

Today the United States has been accused of imposing their ways on other countries. Read the questions below and, within a group, answer them as thoroughly as possible. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

1. Many countries around the world are unjustly restrictive and punitive. People are detained without knowing charges against them, imprisoned without a trial, and often times tortured for no valid reason. What are three aspects of our country that you feel should be utilized in other countries?
2. In general, would you say that the United States intervention in other countries is an imposition or a protection of other countries? Why?
3. The United States has been an advocate for human rights in all countries. Do you feel that America can judge what is right for other countries? Why?
4. There has been a belief that the United States only intervenes in other countries when major investments are on the line. Do you feel that this is true? Explain.

5. Our country today, as many other countries in earlier times, invests a great deal of money in assistance to other nations. This is done while neglecting the plight of truly needy people in our own country. If you were President of the United States, how would justify this?

6. The United States has sent troops to Somalia to help make sure food gets to the starving people. Some feel we should also take action in Serbia and Bosnia to prevent the concentration camps and "ethnic cleansing" taking place. Would you see an action like this as an imposition or a humanitarian effort? Explain.

World History

The Origins Of The U.S. Legal System

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Introduction:

During the reigns of Henry II (1154-1189) and King John (1215-1239), tremendous progress was made in bringing freedom and justice to the people. Henry was determined to unite England under his rule. He wanted all people to look to him for justice and protection. Because it was the same to everyone, it was fairer than the many different types of law in use then. Common law, as it was later called, was based on custom and previous court decisions. From this system evolved the ideas of trial by jury, precedent, and many other legal principles.

King John was a cruel and unreasonable ruler. Because of this, his nobles rebelled and forced him to sign the Magna Carta. This document limited his power and protected the nobles' rights.

The legal system and the bill of rights that Americans have today are a result of these events in English history. Many people believe that we have been free of oppression and persecution in the United States because of the system we inherited from England. Others feel that this system goes too far in protecting the rights of evil Americans.

Directions:

Below are questions related to our American justice system. Discuss the questions within a group and be prepared to share your feelings with the rest of the class.

1. Does the legal system go too far in protecting the rights of criminals instead of the rights of victims? Give evidence to support your opinion.

2. Plea bargaining is a procedure in which lawyers get a defendant to plead guilty in exchange for a lesser sentence. Do you feel that this procedure is a benefit or detriment to our legal system? Explain.

3. A lawyer must try to get his/her client acquitted (found innocent) even though he/she is certain that the client is guilty. What is your evaluation of this procedure?
4. In a criminal trial, the prosecutor must prove "beyond a shadow of a doubt that the defendant is guilty. Then a unanimous verdict must be returned. Does this grant too much protection to the accused? Why?]
5. The most fundamental philosophy of our legal system is that the accused is assumed innocent until proven guilty. Would it be more beneficial to society if we presumed that the accused was guilty and he/she had to prove innocence? Why?
6. Some people feel that the death penalty is an effective method of crime deterrence while others think it is an infringement on your protection against cruel and unusual punishment? How do you feel and why?

World History

Welfare And Africa's Lineage System

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Introduction:

Today our government has to appropriate a large part of its budget to needy people. The aged, the sick, single mothers, the unemployed and many others are aided by government funds. In Ancient Africa, the lineage would take care of these people. A lineage is several generations of a people who are all descended from the same person. Most people in Africa belonged to the lineage of their father. If a family member needed food and money, the lineage (relatives) would contribute. Widows, orphans, the old, and the sick were taken care of by their lineage.

In our society, young people grow up at an early age. They are considered adults at eighteen years of age and many leave home at this time. Some parents encourage this and no longer feel responsible for their children at this age. In regards to the aged, some people have opted to put their elderly parents in rest homes rather than attend to them in their own homes.

Directions:

Below are some questions related to our welfare system and attending to needy family members. Answer the questions within a group and be prepared to discuss them with the rest of the class.

1. President Clinton has claimed that most people on welfare were "aching for the chance to move from dependence to dignity." He suggested most want to get the fulfillment that one gets from work and are not "just lazy." Do you agree? Explain.

2. Complaints about welfare have led to President Clinton's plan to change the system from one of entitlement to empowerment. He plans to give them about two years of training and then expects them to be ready for jobs. Do you feel this is a good plan? Do you feel it will effectively reduce welfare recipients? Explain.

3. It has long been believed that opportunities existed for poor people to "pick themselves up by the boot straps" and rise out of their poverty. Do you believe those opportunities still exist? Explain.
4. Many people believe that there has been too much of an incentive for welfare recipients to have more children because of increased benefits. Some states have decided to penalize these parents for having more children. Do you feel this is fair and reasonable? Explain.
5. Minorities have tended to have larger percentages of their ethnic background on welfare than caucasians. Affirmative action programs were brought about because some believed job discrimination was making it more difficult for them to be hired. Do you feel job discrimination still exists? Is affirmative action still necessary? Explain.
6. There has been widespread concern about the "feminization of poverty" in recent years. The increase in out of wedlock births, the problem of "deadbeat fathers"(those that dodge child support), and the fact women make sixty two cents for every dollar a man earns has contributed to this. Do you feel it is the government's responsibility to attempt to correct these problems? Explain.
7. In the Ancient African lineage system, the aged, the sick, and the out of work were taken care of by the family. More of this seems to be taking place in America with adult children returning home and extended families living together because of financial problems. Do you think we would see less financial difficulties in our society if it became more common for extended families(parents, grandparfents, aunts, etc.) to live in one household? Explain.

World History
The Luck Of The Irish

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

St. Patrick's Day is a traditional Irish holiday but is also celebrated throughout the world. People wear green and drink green beer and Irish Coffee in celebration of the heritage of the Irish. A part of that heritage is the special "luck of the Irish." Legend has it that there are leprechauns that bring good fortune to Irish people.

In our society, many people get a great deal of enjoyment from risk taking ventures that involve at least some degree of luck. Gambling, investing in real estate or the stock market, skydiving, and bungee jumping are just a few endeavors that require good fortune or luck. Today we are going to look at the role that luck and good fortune plays in reaching your goals.

Directions:

Answer the following questions below and be prepared to discuss them with the rest of the class.

1. Some people believe that success has a lot to do with "being at the right place at the right time." Do you feel this is true? Explain.

2. Many Americans spend much income each year in an attempt to become rich by winning the lottery. Since their chances of winning are remote it would take a great deal of luck to win. Is this a worthwhile expenditure? Do you feel their happiness would be increased if they win? Explain.

3. Athletes as well as many other people have a lucky rabbit's foot or other superstitions that will supposedly bring good fortune. List five superstitions that are common. Why do you suppose so many people believe in superstitions? Explain.

4. There is an old saying in sports that goes "I'd rather be lucky than good." So many times outcomes of sporting events can be determined by luck such as a "bad hop" single in baseball or a "kind bounce" on the rim in basketball. In your own life, would you prefer that your successes come from good fortune or hard work? Explain.

5. Branch Rickey, the owner of the Dodgers when Jackie Robinson broke the color line, once said that "luck is the residue of design." He meant that people that work hard are much more likely to receive good luck in life than those that wait for things to happen. Do you feel this is true? Explain.

6. Psychologists claim that people either have an "internal locus of control"(you determine what happens to you in life) or "external locus of control(other people and events determine what happens to us). Which is more accurate? Explain.

7. Sometimes people do not reach their goals because they experience "bad luck." Many people rationalize this by saying there was a lesson to be learned. Do you feel that we do learn from bad fortune or is this just an expression to make us feel better for the time being? Explain.

8. The stock market and real estate are investments that involve a great deal of risk and certainly some luck in order to make money? Would you rather put your savings and investments in guaranteed accounts like money markets or municipal bonds or take the risks that could lead to much larger profits? Explain.