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TWELVE
RELEVANCE EXERCISES

FOR
GOVERNMENT

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Political Pundits claim that there has never been a time in our history quite like what we are experiencing today. Our two political parties are more polarized than ever. Democratic ideals have always encouraged the expression of diverse opinions and interests including extremes at both ends of the political spectrum. Most often positive outcomes resulted from a spirit of compromise in which conservative and liberal interests were both served.

Today, however, this spirit of compromise seems to no longer exist. Much of the reason for this can be attributed to the genius of the Republican leadership team for the re-election of President George W. Bush. His campaign strategy for the 2004 election was not to attempt to convince undecided voters but to motivate those of strong conservative convictions. The advisers persuaded President Bush that, rather than trying to win over some democrats by sounding not “too” conservative, he would be more successful by focusing on the traditional conservative voters. Consequently, he was not afraid to express his strong Christian beliefs. As it turned out, his Christianity was the biggest issue for voters in deciding the Presidency.

As high school Government teachers this presents an interesting challenge. How do we discuss current topics without riling up a portion of our students? We can take the least attractive or the

easy way out, skip probing questions as well as spirited debate, and avoid controversial issues. If you want to engage your students, provide an intellectually curious and stimulating environment, and prepare well-informed citizens for the tough issues of the 21st Century, I wouldn't recommend that approach.

“Making Government Fun and Relevant, III, provides you with a myriad of topics that are current, relevant, and of interest to your students. Issues such as the hazards of driving while using a cell phone, dress codes on high school campuses, political correctness, and service in the armed forces are critically analyzed. Will your students prove to be as polarized as our current politicians? Maybe. More likely they will see that on some issues their beliefs reflect traditional conservative values and on others they will turn out to be a little more liberal. Most important, through the use of these activities, they will not only gain the confidence to express their beliefs but the skills to formulate their position on significant issues.

How will “Making Government Fun and Relevant” accomplish this for you and your students? The book provides numerous cooperative learning activities that examine many major issues today. Most questions are formulated in a manner that encourages divergent thinking to open-ended inquiries. The students love these activities because they are relevant

to their lives and 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.

Each activity is very easy to implement. I would recommend that you go over the introduction and each question with the students before having them align into groups. You might want to set up the groups yourself, mixing them in a manner that you feel would accomplish the most productivity. I like to assign a leader who has the responsibility of getting input from each member before an answer is written down. You want to make it clear that the discussion is equally important if not more so than the actual answers that are recorded.

The day after the group discussions I recommend that a representative from each group present their findings to the class. Other members are free to add their input as each question is answered. I also recommend that each group research one or more of the questions that they have answered. You might want to assign each group a different question to research further. This should provide plenty of information for a very stimulating class discussion. I have had tremendous success with these activities with my students and I am confident you will too.

Finally, each activity is aligned with the standards for Social Science curriculum. We are all sensitive to and accountable for what we teach to our

students in the 21st Century. I am confident that, through the use of my cooperative learning activities, you will go a long way in helping to develop the critical thought necessary for producing informed citizens in the new millennium.

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Alignment with History-Social Science Standards*

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Steroid Use: The Government Cracks Down	12.1,3; 12.2,3; 12.2,5

* These standards are based on the History-Social-Science Content Standards for California Public Schools

Government
Dress Codes: Appropriate School Attire

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

A debate that continues across the country is how much freedom should students be afforded in their clothing styles while on school grounds. Do today's current fashions present a distraction that makes the focus required in learning difficult? Some schools believe this is the case and have required uniforms. Do schools have a right and responsibility to demand that students show modesty in their clothing selections? Are we infringing on a student's first amendment right to freedom of expression when strict dress codes are enforced? We will examine these issues and related topics in the questions below.

Directions:

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

1. List three advantages for students at schools that have switched to requiring uniforms for all students.
2. List three disadvantages for students at schools that require uniforms for all students.
3. Trends in female clothing have included low cut tops and low wasted pants. Many schools have dress codes that do not allow these styles to be worn on campus. Predict how strict you would be with clothing selections if you were a parent of teenage girls. Explain.

4. Baggy pants have been in fashion for male students for a considerable time. This style makes it difficult for students who choose this look to keep their trousers up. Is this showing poor taste or is it showing style? Explain. Should schools restrict this fashion selection? Why?

5. Hats have been worn for centuries to show style but also to protect the wearer from the sun. Today the use of hats is so popular for both sexes that they are often worn at night whether indoors or outside. Tradition and etiquette has called for people to remove their hats when inside a room. Yet most people at concerts, sporting events, malls, and university classrooms leave them on. Many middle schools and high schools either don't allow the wearing of hats or require that they be removed while inside. Why do you suppose some schools impose such restrictions on the wearing of hats? Explain.

6. At one time it was required that male teachers wear a coat and tie and female teachers wear dresses. Today it is common around the country for teachers to wear a very "casual" style of dress. It was believed that a teacher who was dressed in formal attire would get more respect from students. Do you think whether a teacher looks hip and cool or chooses to dress more formally has an impact on how effective he/she is with students? Explain.

7. Today's current fashions are a distraction from the learning environment and stricter enforcement of dress codes would improve education. Do you agree? Explain.

Government
Driving Under The Influence Of A Cell Phone

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

According to the legendary former UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, all progress comes from change but not all change is progress. This certainly might be said about the invention of the cell phone. In the opinion of Coach Wooden, it is the worst invention of the last twenty years. While it has provided convenience it has also become a huge distraction. The sound of its ring going off in churches, classrooms, theatres, and meetings has proved to be an annoying reality in today's world. More significantly, the use of the cell phone while driving has caused numerous accidents and deaths. Some states have already enacted legislation to make it unlawful to operate a cell phone while driving. Is this a law that needs to be nation wide? We will investigate this issue 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. List three advantages of being able to use a cell phone while driving.
2. List three disadvantages of being able to use a cell phone while driving
3. It is no more distracting to drive and talk on a cell phone than it is to talk to a passenger that is riding with you in a car. Do you think that is true? Explain.

4. Some evidence suggests that people under the age of twenty-five who are talking on a cell phone drive as effectively as a seventy year old who has had five alcoholic beverages. Why do you suppose that drivers under the age of twenty-five might be so much less focused than older drivers? Explain

5. Some people believe that, since the younger generation has grown up with “multi-tasking,” they are more focused than older drivers that use cell phones. Do you agree? Why?

6. Recent statistics show that eight percent of the cell phone owners in the United States operate their cell phone while driving. This makes them four times more likely to have an accident. Yet many people use the cell phone while driving to serve as a way to keep up with friends and prevent them from being bored during long commutes in traffic. Certainly the longer one is on the cell phone, the more dangerous they are. Do you agree that these people are creating a danger for themselves and other drivers? Explain.

7. Approximately forty countries now prohibit the use of cell phones while driving. It is time that this policy become law in the United States. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Government
Dogs: Man's Best Friend?

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Dogs have long been considered man's best friend. Whether used as a pet for companionship, a seeing-eye dog for a blind person, or a guard to one's property, dogs have long been regarded as a huge asset to their owners. Studies have shown that dog owners not only live a more enriched life but also tend to live longer. Occasionally, however, large dogs can become aggressive and are a danger to their owner and others. Does our government do enough to protect the innocent victims of these attacks? We will investigate this and related issues in the questions below.

Directions:

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

1. Pit Bulls, Rottweilers, and German Shepherds commit the large majority of attacks on people that lead to death. On average, eighteen people die from attacks by dogs each year. Leash laws exist to try to protect people from these attacks. Should these types of dogs be outlawed from public streets and facilities? Why?
2. Certainly small dogs can be aggressive and bite humans but the smaller dog's bite is less likely to break a victim's skin. Young children tend to be most frequently the victims of dog attacks. Would you feel safe having a large or aggressive dog if you were an adult with young children? Why?
3. In 2005, a woman took her infant child with her to check on her parent's dog while they were away on vacation. The dog snatched the infant from the mother's arms, mauled the child, and the toddler died. The mother is not

being held responsible and the dog was put to sleep. Do you feel this was the right course of action? Why?

4. Some large dogs are bred to be aggressive because they are used as guard dogs. With the advanced security systems available for homes, would you feel safer with a large and aggressive dog or the advance security system? Explain.
5. A stray dog is taken to an animal shelter until the owner claims him/her. Some people go to these shelters to “adopt” a new pet. Unfortunately many of these pets must be put to sleep because of the huge over-abundance that go unclaimed. Animal rights activists have protested this action. Should the government protect these dogs from this fate? Explain.
6. The government has leash laws to protect us from stray dogs, “pooper-scooper” laws that force owners to clean up after their pets, and laws to protect dogs from owners who want to put them in the flat bed of their truck while driving. List three additional laws that you would like to see enacted regarding pets.
7. Dogs are said to be man’s best friend. I would find it very difficult to enjoy my life as much without a dog. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Government
Mandating Health: Should Schools Do This?

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

It is no surprise to any one that the physical condition of children and adolescents in America needs significant improvement. Over thirty percent of children are considered overweight. There are certainly many factors that have brought about this problem. The prevalence of computer use and television watching makes for more time spent in sedentary rather than physical activity. The traditional home-cooked evening dinner with the family has become less common. Youngsters often times are eating fast food or frozen dinners that are much higher in fat and less nutritious. Do schools play a part in the problem and should they take measures to restrict fattening choices on school grounds? Some school districts are beginning to eliminate soft drinks, chips, candy, and other fattening foods to improve student health. In a democratic society that tries to provide as much freedom as possible, is this an infringement on the rights of students? We will investigate these issues in the questions below.

Directions:

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

1. Some schools have already replaced soft drink machines with more healthy choices such as fruit juice drinks, water, and sports drinks. Do you think this is a good decision? Explain.
2. In addition to posing significant health risks, some experts argue that low self-esteem, embarrassment, and lack of friendships result from being an overweight student. Do you think this is true or an exaggeration? Explain.

3. If schools regulate food selections of students to more healthy choices do you think most students would be more likely to purchase the more nutritious foods or bring so-called junk food from home? Explain.
4. Some high schools are reluctant to impose these healthy restrictions because much of their funding for extracurricular activities comes from the profits they make from candy and soft drink machines. What's your reaction to this?
5. In addition to offering poor food choices, many schools have reduced the requirements for physical education. Studies show that exercise is just as important as diet in being your optimum weight and performing your best. Rank the following in terms of who/what is most responsible for the poor health of our youth:
- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor nutritious selections of schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduction of importance of physical education | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of self-discipline of individual students | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High fat content of traditional American foods | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture of watching TV/working or playing at the computer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junk food tastes much better than healthy food | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health problems that restrict an individual's activity | |
6. Since good health and fitness are so valued in our society, there must be many benefits. List as many benefits as you can think of to both individuals and our society when more people are in good shape.

Government
Educating America's Youth

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

One of the biggest responsibilities of the federal, state, and local governments is to provide a quality education for our youth. Today there is much debate over how to provide the best education possible so that “no child is left behind.” The experts have established state and federal standards for each subject and require proficiency on standardized test in order to reach the objective of a quality education for every one. The budget cuts that many states have suffered have provided an extra challenge to meet this goal. Are educators and students meeting the challenge? Are the educational opportunities that public schools provide comparable or better than what is offered at private schools? We will investigate issues central to our education system in the questions below.

Directions:

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

1. Many people believe the challenges for students today make it more difficult to excel in school and go to a quality university. Rank the categories below in terms of which ones provide the biggest challenges:

- ___ Colleges with higher entrance requirements
- ___ Growing up in a home where education is not a priority
- ___ Teachers who are not proficient in their subject matter
- ___ Many more students coming to American schools from foreign countries
- ___ Emphasis on academic rather than vocational classes
- ___ Lack of self-discipline and motivation for students
- ___ Promotion of students in lower grades who are not proficient in basics
- ___ High cost of going to college
- ___ Lack of enough encouragement to pursue a college education
- ___ Other

2. Many studies have shown that the basic skills of our youth are inadequate. Despite this evidence, there are very qualified students that are being rejected by the best universities. Students with excellent grade point

averages, S.A.T. scores of over 1300, and involvement in many extracurricular activities are often rejected by some of the top schools. Do you think it has become too difficult to get into the best universities? Explain.

3. Standardized tests and exit exams are being used by many states in an attempt to get the students and teachers to perform at their best. The logic is that the tests will increase the abilities of students. Do you think that this is the most effective way to achieve this goal? Explain.
4. In 1954 the Supreme Court passed the Brown vs. the Board of Education case to eliminate the segregation of schools. It was shown that schools were deliberately segregation and a lower quality of education was provided for minorities. Despite various attempts to integrate schools there are many that still largely consist of minorities. Do you think that our government has done enough to make sure students at these schools get as good of an education as those with predominantly white student bodies? Explain.
5. At various times proposals have been made to allow students and their parents to select the public school that they would like to attend. This is called the voucher system and students could select a school rather than having to attend the one in their neighborhood. Do you think your school would lose or gain students under this type of a system? Why?
6. Most experts suggest that the lower performances we see from students today have to do with poor writing skills. It is believed that in order to write better, students need to do more reading. Is it possible to get more students to turn off the televisions, computers, and CD players to read for pleasure? Explain.

7. One of the factors that helps private schools send so many of their students to top universities is that they have entrance tests that eliminate unqualified students. Do you think public high schools should also require entrance exams to get admitted to the school? Why?

Government
Legislating Morality: Is This Possible?

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

The United States was founded by a group of people seeking religious freedom. They wanted to escape the religious intolerance that they found in many European countries. Despite the efforts of our founders to “separate church and state,” much of our legal system is based on Judeo-Christian principles. However, it has been very difficult for our government to impose morality on the masses. At one time, our government outlawed the sale and consumption of alcohol. This amendment to the constitution was later repealed because Americans ostensibly didn’t want to give it up. In a country that stands for freedom, is it possible to restrict human vices that various segments of society enjoy? We will investigate this topic 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. It is believed by a significant segment of our population that a decline in morality has taken place in our society. Assuming that this is true, rank the following in terms of which of these has contributed the most to our demise:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decriminalization of marijuana smoking | <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of profanity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growing popularity of alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> Decline of family unit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> De-emphasis on religious values | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking among teens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growing acceptance of gambling | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative lyrics of songs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revealing clothing styles | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

2. In recent times, the Federal Communications Commission has toughened its enforcement policies. Janet Jackson’s outfit “malfunction” during a Super Bowl half time show resulted in fines that were as much as a half million dollars. Popular disc jockey, Howard Stern, has been removed from broadcasting over the airwaves in some areas due to questionable language and content. Do you feel the government is infringing on freedom of expression or the media has gone too far? Explain.

3. The National Education Association reports that a growing problem on high school campuses is the use of profanity by both male and female students. Discipline for this misbehavior varies from teacher to teacher. Should teachers and schools consider this a serious offense that requires significant consequences? Explain. If you were a teacher what form of punishment would you use? Why?
4. The enforcement of a curfew has become more and more prevalent in local communities. Ten o'clock tends to be the most common limit in most cities. Do you think the government or parents are more suited to determine how late children can stay out at night? Explain.
5. It has been argued that the cursing and violence in the lyrics of rap music has influenced young people in their attitudes about society and women. In addition, the violence we see in a certain genre of movies aimed at young male audiences is believed by some to have led to violent behavior and even murder. Would the censoring of these movies improve the behavior of young people? Explain.
6. At one time gambling in the United States was limited to Atlantic City, Las Vegas, state lotteries, and horse racing. Today, many states are finding it is more acceptable with their citizens to allow gambling casinos and lotteries to generate revenue rather than to increase taxes. Is gambling a vice that will eventually haunt Americans? Explain.

Government
Using The Media To Formulate Opinions

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

The early stages of the 21st Century has become known as “The Information Age.” Numerous sources particularly the internet can bring us information immediately. At one time Americans became informed with half hour nightly TV news broadcasts. Today CNN and Fox Cable News can give us updates twenty-four hours a day. Investigative journalism shows such as “60 Minutes” probe current controversial topics in a manner that didn’t take place years ago. Do we use new technologies for becoming informed citizens or do we prefer using them for entertainment? Are we becoming much more knowledgeable or overwhelmed? We will investigate this topic in the questions below.

Directions:

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

1. Rank the following sources in terms of which ones you would put the most faith in to rely on to formulate your opinions:

___ Opinions of teachers
 ___ Opinions of peers
 ___ Pundits on TV
 ___ Internet research
 ___ Your personal experience
 ___ Bloggers on the internet
 ___ Newspapers

___ Opinions of parents
 ___ Pundits on radio
 ___ Other

2. Most teenagers have regular access to computers and use them frequently. Rank the following in terms of which computer functions would be most popular with teenagers:

___ Downloading music
 ___ Communicating with friends by e-mail
 ___ Word processing

___ Staying current with news
 ___ playing video games
 ___ Visiting in chat rooms

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buying concert tickets | <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for dating partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing e-bay products | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gathering information for research | |

3. Referring back to question number two, how high did “staying current with the news” rank? Are you surprised at all with where it ranked? Explain.

4. Television has been criticized very much over the years. Many people believe it takes away from more serious and productive pursuits like reading, doing homework, spending quality time working for the community or talking to family and friends. Do you agree? Explain.

5. At one time people relied on the radio and newspapers to keep updated and informed. Television and the internet have become very popular today. Which source do you find the most beneficial for reliable information? Why?

6. Advanced technology has given us over two-hundred television stations and, because of remote control, the capability of watching several programs seemingly at one time. Many Americans flip during commercials to another program and return to the original moments later. Some people would say we’ve become expert “multi-taskers” while others say we have short attention spans. Can you absorb and retain the information of several different programs at one time? Explain.

7. During this information boom in our society, are we utilizing the various mediums to become more knowledgeable citizens or are we being flooded with information that is too overwhelming to be useful? Explain.

Government
*The American Citizen: Are We Good
 Citizens?*

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

In recent years, Americans have witnessed courageous efforts that make us very proud of our country. The firemen and policemen of New York, many who gave their lives, showed tremendous courage in rescuing those trapped in the World Trade Center September 11, 2001. On the same day, passengers deliberately crashed their hijacked plane to prevent it from destroying the White House. We would like to believe that any good American citizen would have overcome their fears and performed accordingly if put in these situations.

Unfortunately, we have also seen evidence in recent times of many American showing the qualities of bad citizens. The CEOs of companies like Enron, Worldcom, and Adeptia Cable inflated the values of their companies, costing investors billions of dollars. The Catholic Church has covered up incidents of child molesting to protect their priests. In addition, a man selected to be the Notre Dame football coach lied on his resume to make his qualifications look more impressive.

Which portrait of the American citizen is more accurate? Are we courageous people willing to give our lives when necessary? Or are more of us willing to cheat and lie to others to get our personal and financial needs met? 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.

- Below are listed possible qualities of good citizens. Rank them in order of importance.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courage | <input type="checkbox"/> Unselfish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donates time & money for the needy | <input type="checkbox"/> Votes regularly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps home & yard neat & attractive | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-informed on issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does not drink to excess or use drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks to self-improve |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Works on good family relations | <input type="checkbox"/> A good neighbor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trusts in higher power | <input type="checkbox"/> Profession is stimulating &
better society |

2. In the above introduction there were two descriptions of American citizens. One reflected the heroism and courage while the other depicted the dishonesty. Which feeling about Americans has been more dominant in your thinking over the last few years? Explain.

3. None of us are perfect and we all face temptations each day. Being a good citizen involves making good choices. Teenagers face choices that involve not only being good people but responsible citizens. Rank the seriousness of the choices listed below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not returning a pen you borrowed | <input type="checkbox"/> Telling a secret about a friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheating on a boyfriend/girlfriend | <input type="checkbox"/> Not breaking up a fight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheating on a test | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking alcohol at a party |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copying some one else's homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving while intoxicated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not going to church on Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

4. Our most respected citizens have violated the trust we give them in recent times. The sexual molestation of young boys by priests, ex-President Clinton's mistresses, and a female teacher who had two children fathered by one of her students captured much headlines. Do the poor examples set by these "role models" make it difficult to create good citizens out of the teenagers today? Explain.

5. A young, unemployed man found a bag filled with hundreds of thousands of dollars that had fallen off of a brinks truck. Although tempted to keep it, he turned the money into the police. Did he make the right choice? Explain.

6. In the past few years we have seen much dishonesty associated with the greedy CEOs of major companies that has cost investors billions of dollars. Although many have lost huge amounts of money, there has not been a public outcry to "get" the greedy CEOs. In fact our society seems to attach a greater stigma to the "laziness" of the homeless than the "greediness" of the

CEOs. If you were teaching young people to be good citizens which would you see as a bigger crime? Why?

7. The Supreme Court ruled to exclude the words, “under God,” from the Pledge of Allegiance. A public outcry resulted and the elimination of these words has yet to take place. Do you think a belief in God influences the concept of good citizenship? Explain.

Government
Political Correctness: Limiting Offensiveness

Name _____
 Date _____
 Period _____

Introduction:

Political correctness is a term that has evolved into our vocabulary over the last few decades. It appears to be attributed to liberal thinkers who are concerned with offensive terms that label people in a derogatory manner. Some people think we are becoming overly sensitive to others, limiting our freedom of expression. Are we developing an ability to see things from another's perspective or are some people becoming overly sensitive? We will examine these topics in the questions below.

Directions:

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

- Below are listed some terms that have been considered offensive. Write a euphemism or expression that says the same thing in a less offensive manner.

Offensive Expression

Politically Correct

Midget

Mentally Retarded

Crippled

Bald

Fat

- Over the last few decades Native Americans have been critical of athletic teams having Indian mascots. As a result, Stanford University changed their nickname from Indians to Cardinal and St. John's University changed from Redmen to Red Storm. Some schools like the San Diego State Aztecs transformed the look of their mascot to a more "Respectable" outfit. While mascots are chosen for their positive qualities, the Native Americans look at this as degrading. Why do you suppose they feel this way? Explain.

3. Some athletic teams that call themselves “Indians” or some derivative such as “Braves” or “Redskins” have chosen not to change their nickname. In fact, the Cleveland Indians continued to use as their logo a smiling Indian that Native Americans claimed looked like a “laughing half-wit.” Were these teams being insensitive? Why? Do you think the Cleveland Indians should change their logo? Why?
4. Over the years, the slang expressions used to describe another’s heritage has evolved because they were actually intended to be offensive by the user. All ethnicities have been victimized by this at various times. When you are a parent, what would you tell your child if you heard him/her use one of these derogatory expressions?
5. Over the years we have seen tremendous improvements for handicapped people. Handicapped parking, sidewalk ramps, lifts on buses, and larger restroom stalls have made it much easier for physically challenged people to live a better life. During this same time we have seen the terms that we use to describe them change. At one time they were referred to as crippled. We have evolved into using the terms handicapped, disabled, and physically challenged. Do you think that these more politically correct labels helped to bring about these improvements? Explain.
6. Political correctness has brought about more sensitive Americans who are able to see things from the perspective of others. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Government
Separation Of Church And State

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

During the 2004 Presidential debates between President Bush and Democratic candidate, John Kerry, a question regarding their faith was brought up. Although both candidates answered the query quite well, President Bush's response resonated much more powerfully with voters. As it turned out, religious conviction turned out to be the most important factor in re-electing President Bush.

Our founding fathers believed strongly that there should be a separation of church and state clause in our constitution. How much or how little religion should be allowed into government has been a very sensitive issue throughout our nation's history. Most of these issues have been left up to the Supreme Court to decide. In many instances they allow some religion in government institutions and in others they do not. We will investigate some of these instances and other matters related to the concept of separation of church and state in the questions below.

Directions:

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

1. List three current issues in which ones position might be influenced by the belief in a religion.
2. During the 1920's the Supreme Court ruled on the teaching of the theory of evolution in public schools. They decided in favor of teaching it and many proponents of creationism were furious. President Bush feels that the theory of evolution can now be taught along with the belief of "intelligent design." Intelligent design proposes that a supreme being was integral in the evolution of the world. If this issue goes before the Supreme Court, do you think they will agree with President Bush? Explain.

3. George W. Bush was once asked if he relied on his father, former President George H.W. Bush, for advice. He replied that he actually depended more on his heavenly father. President Bush combines his faith and reason in making his decisions. If you were President, do you think you would incorporate a similar style? Explain. Do you think previous Presidents made decisions in this manner? Explain.
4. Much of our law is based on Judeo-Christian beliefs. As a result some courts have posted the Ten Commandments within or outside their building. The Supreme Court has had to rule if this is a violation of church and state. If your group were the Supreme Court how would you decide? Explain.
5. In 1960, John F. Kennedy's belief in Catholicism was seen as a liability. He had to claim that he wasn't, essentially, going to be a "puppet" for the pope before he could get widespread support. In contrast, President George W. Bush's religious faith was an asset in getting elected. Do you feel the founding fathers would find this acceptable? Explain. Do you think voters will continue to prioritize this in future elections? Explain.
6. At one time, people were told that, when socializing, the two topics that should be avoided were religion and politics. That's because people have such strong feelings about these issues and they can cause some serious arguments. Were your group members able to discuss these topics calmly while expressing differing points of view? Explain.

Government

The All-Volunteer Armed Forces: Can It Continue?

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Introduction:

President George W. Bush's desire to spread democracy around the world and stay the course in the Iraqi War caused many people to question our military capabilities. Since the ending of conscription or the military draft in 1973, the United States has relied on volunteers to fulfill our defense needs. Initially it appeared that the quick ending to the Iraqi War would make that country's transition to democracy easy. However, the difficulties that insurgents have presented, has necessitated a continuing military presence in Iraq. Many soldiers have had their tour of duty lengthened because of shortages in our ranks. Will our country be able to continue the spread of democracy and the war on terrorism without bringing back a draft? We will examine this topic and related matters 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. When American participation in World War II began in the early 1940's, most American youths rushed to enlist in the armed services. A few decades later during the Vietnam War, teenagers were much less eager to join the military. Since 9/11 we have seen a reawakening of patriotism. If our leaders felt it necessary to bring back the draft, do you think the majority of Americans would support it? Explain.
2. Ideally, people will select careers for which they have a passion. A career in the armed services has plenty of rewards as well as risks. List three rewards and three risks in this profession.

3. Do you think that the various career, college, and military recruiters that visit high schools give a balanced portrayal of the opportunities and challenges that a future in their program entails? Explain.

4. We often hear the expression that we owe a debt of gratitude for the soldiers from earlier generations that have sacrificed to provide the freedom we enjoy in America. Do you think most teenagers understand and appreciate their heroic contributions? Explain.

5. One of the benefits promoted over the years of military service is that it helps immature teenagers to grow into highly disciplined and well-mannered adults. Do you think this is true? Explain.

6. The military has provided many incentives such as college tuition, home loan discounts, and good salaries to encourage military service. List three other benefits the military could provide that teenagers would find attractive and taxpayers would support.

Government
National Health Care: Has Its Time Come?

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

The increasing costs of health care and insurance has had a dramatic impact on our country. More than half of all bankruptcies are triggered by medical costs for people who have lost both their jobs and medical insurance. The downsizing and outsourcing of jobs that has resulted in millions of Americans losing their employment is often attributed to rising health insurance premiums. At one time, former President, Bill Clinton proposed a national health care system but it did not gain enough support.

Is it time to re-consider a nationalized health care system? Would this system provide top quality care and reduce costs to individuals? We will examine this issue 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. List two advantages and disadvantages of having nationalized health care for every one.
2. Countries like India and Thailand are providing low cost surgeries and procedures to Americans. A heart surgery that would cost over \$100,000 in the United States is about one-tenth the cost in those counties. What type of impact will this have on our medical system and economy?
3. One of the expenses driving up the cost of medicine is malpractice insurance. Some doctors have actually amputated the wrong leg or

performed surgeries on the wrong patient. It's estimated that 200,000 people die each year as a result of medical "mistakes." Many people want to reduce the awards for these types of claims by patients or their survivors to decrease insurance expenses. Do you agree that malpractice awards should be reduced? Explain.

4. The CEO of Health South, an HMO medical insurance company, made 267 million dollars in salary from his company between 1996 and 2002. The profits made by these companies are enormous. Is this gouging or just the rewards of the capitalist system? Explain.
5. Many businesses have outsourced jobs to other countries because they say the cost of paying medical insurance for employees is far too expensive. Do you think that a national health care plan in which the government and not the employers paid health care would stop the outsourcing of jobs to other countries? Explain.
6. In 1993 former President, Bill Clinton, assigned his wife, Hilary, the task of building support for national health care. She was not successful at gaining enough momentum with congress and the American people to develop this program. Would the results be the same today? Explain.

Government
Steroid Use: The Government Cracks Down

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

Introduction:

Over the past decade the credibility of the game of baseball has been called into question. The popularity of the game has ebbed and flowed due to over-inflated salaries, rising prices, and a strike that cancelled half of the season and the World Series in 1994. The 1998 season seemed to bring back many disappointed fans when Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire chased baseball immortality and the single season home run record of Roger Maris. The chase ended in McGwire setting a new record with 70 home runs and Sosa eclipsing the old record of 61 with 66 of his own.

Barry Bonds later surpassed McGwire's record with 73 home runs in the 2001 season. The fact that these three players gained significant weight, strength, and muscle over a short period of time made many people question if weight lifting alone brought about their tremendous accomplishments or steroid use might have been a factor.

When the late Ken Caminiti and Jose Conseco, two outstanding former players, admitted to steroid use and accused several others of using the illegal drug, the federal government got involved. The House Committee on Ethics questioned McGwire, Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro, and Curt Schilling about whether they used it and its prevalence in baseball. Should the use of this drug, if proven, taint the accomplishments of these players? Does its use have an impact on the young people in America? Does baseball do enough to penalize players that use it? We will investigate these topics 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. Many people are convinced that the awesome records set by today's players must have required some sort of drug to allow them to attain such incredible feats. List three other possible factors that might have been responsible for such large increases in home runs aside from the possibility of steroid use.

2. While many question the validity of McGwire and Bonds home run records, some people say that because discrimination did not permit African-Americans to play during Babe Ruth's era, his records are not legitimate. Their point is that Ruth set the record while not having to face the best players in the world. What's your reaction to that assertion?
3. Cheating has been common in baseball, football, and basketball for years. The commonly held belief was that if the officials didn't catch you, it was acceptable to take advantage of your opponent. Do you see this type of cheating as any different than using steroids? Explain.
4. Rafael Palmeiro was suspended for ten days after a test showed that he had ingested a type of steroid. Palmeiro said he unknowingly must have gotten it from a supplement that didn't list it in the ingredients. Palmeiro had previously denied ever using steroids at the congressional hearing. Do you believe him? Explain. Should this influence his possible selection to the baseball Hall of Fame? Why?
5. Testifying before the House Committee of Ethics in congress were some parents who claim that steroid use led to the suicide of their sons. Many experts have pointed out that steroid use has very harmful side effects that show up later in life. Why do you suppose that teenagers and professional athletes risk their long-term health for the quick "benefit" that steroid use may provide? Explain.
6. The House Committee on Ethics felt it necessary to investigate because baseball's new steroid use policy to penalize first time steroid use offenders was "only" a ten day suspension. The committee felt this penalty was not severe enough to deter players from using the drug. Major League Baseball

decided on a 50 game penalty for a first offense, 100 for a second, and a lifetime ban for a third. Do you think these penalties will be effective? Explain.

7. Roger Maris broke Babe Ruth's single season home run record with 61 in 1961. An asterisk was placed by his achievement because he did it in a 162 game season. Ruth achieved it in 154. The asterisk was later removed. Should asterisks be placed by records set by Barry Bonds indicating his steroid use was a factor? Explain.