

# CONTRIBUTION



## Suggested Launch Activity TEACHER'S NOTES

### *About Launch Activities*

This optional introductory activity is designed to support you in the classroom. However, the primary narratives and photos in the section that follows can be used with or without this introduction.

**CENTRAL QUESTION: How can one person's talents and passions affect society?**

### **Part I: Contributions & Benefits**

Lead a class discussion based on the question above. As discussion becomes focused on the way society can benefit from an individual person's talents, introduce the term "contribution" and its definition: *To discover your passions and talents and to use them to create what is beautiful and needed. To work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.*

Assign students to groups of 4 or 5 and distribute the **Contributions & Benefits** handout, one per student. First, allow time for individual students to complete questions 1 through 3. After students have completed that portion, have each small group discuss their responses to the questions and to the table each student completed.

Have each group report, via their chosen reporter, the "contributions to society" statement they drafted.

## Part II: My Contributions: Who Benefits?

Distribute one **Our Contributions: Who Benefits?** handout to each student.

Conduct a “round robin” activity to complete the handout, as follows:

- 1st. Each student writes his or her name in the “My Name” space at the top of the table and in the “\_\_\_\_’s contribution” row at the bottom of the table.
- 2nd. Students pass their paper to the left (clockwise). The next person to hold the paper completes it about the person whose name is at top, adding notes in row 1, in similar fashion to how they completed the previous activity.
- 3rd. Students pass their paper to the left (clockwise) again and repeat Step 2, completing the next row.
- 4th. When the paper gets to the person immediately to the right of the person whose name at the top of the table, that person reviews all the previous information and writes a summary statement about that person’s contribution to the class, school, or community.

Each row need not be a new trait, but might expand on a previous person’s notes.

Conclude with the following questions:

- What talents, skills, and priorities (or passions) did you identify among the people in your group?
- What kind of work does it require to develop those skills?
- In what ways do you already see yourselves as having contributions to make to society?
- Do our contributions need to be only charitable? Are they limited to such fields as medicine or education? How do other professions or vocations benefit communities?
- How do we benefit from farmers? ...from people who transport food to supermarkets? ...bankers? ...the person who wakes up at 4 a.m. to bake bagels for the people in his neighborhood?
- Describe the relationship between individual freedom and the individual contributions we can make to society.
- Make some predictions about the kinds of contributions your classmates might make to their communities in the next five years, ten years, and twenty years.

# Contribution & Benefits

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



**Contribution:** *To discover your passions and talents, and to use them to create what is beautiful and needed.  
To work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.*

1. Name someone who is really good at something, who works hard at it, and whose work creates something that is beautiful, needed, or beneficial to others. This might include either tangible or intangible benefits. For example, excellent filmmakers, actors, and comedians contribute valuable thoughtfulness, beauty, and levity to our culture in many ways.

2. How does the third criteria (creates something beautiful, needed, or beneficial to others) affect how easy or difficult it is for you to respond to the question?

3. How do other people benefit from that person's skill, passion, and hard work (or **contribution**)? Complete the following information about that person, to the best of your knowledge.

**Name:**

Talent/Skill/Trait	Priorities/Passions	Benefit to Others

**Write a statement about this person's contribution to society:**

**With your small group:** Report to your group as follows:

If the person you have identified is known to the others in your group, describe the person and his or her skills and contribution to society and let the group guess who it is. If the person is not known, name the person and report on what you have noted about that person. Discuss your responses to questions 1 through 3.

Compare the statements you wrote in the bottom row of your tables. Discuss similar themes and write a statement that sums up the ways society has benefitted from the contributions of the people named by members of your group. Write that statement below:

Select one person from your group who will share that statement with the class.

# Our Contributions: Who Benefits?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



**My Name:**

	Talent/Skill/Trait	Priorities/Passions	Benefit to Others
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

\_\_\_\_\_’s contribution to our class / our school / our community:

*What is my “contribution”?*

When I discover my passions and talents and use them to create what is beautiful and needed, and when I work hard to take care of myself and those who depend on me.

Refer to this completed handout  
when you complete the “Contribution” journal prompt later in this chapter.

# CONTRIBUTION

## *The Schechter Brothers*



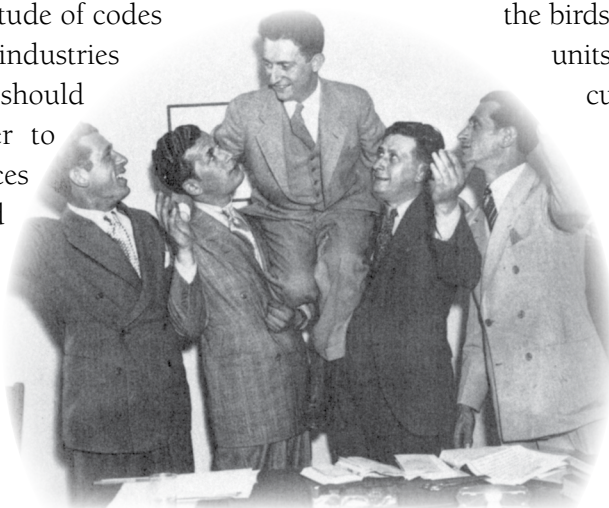
The year was 1934, and Joseph, Martin, Alex, and Aaron Schechter found themselves in jail. The four brothers were businessmen who operated two poultry butcher shops in Brooklyn, New York. As observant Jews, their butcher shops were kosher and adhered to the Jewish laws of *kashruth*. Swindling customers, committing fraud, and embezzlement—these are a few of the crimes that normally send a businessperson to prison. The Schechter brothers, however, were not in jail for such dishonest behavior. Rather, they were penalized for offering safe, reliable merchandise to their customers.

During the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, many who wielded political power were afraid that if businesses competed too much, the prices of their goods would stay too low. They thought that if the prices of goods and services were too low, incomes would also remain low. As part of the New Deal, Congress passed legislation called the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), which they believed would help the faltering economy recover and grow. The National Recovery Administration (NRA) was an agency established by the Roosevelt Administration to craft a multitude of codes and regulations for different industries to tell them how they should conduct their affairs in order to keep competition low and prices high. The NRA was also tasked with making sure that all of these regulations and codes were followed. The goal of these new agencies and regulations was to prevent “unfair competition.”

The codes governing businesses were minute and specific. The one that applied to the Schechter brothers was called the “Code of Fair Competition for the Live Poultry Industry of the Metropolitan Area in and About the City of New York.” This code so strictly regulated the operations of the Schechter brothers’ butcher shops that it required them to violate some laws of *kashrut* that, as a kosher establishment, they were morally bound to uphold.

The laws of *kashrut* were concerned with more than dietary standards alone. They also ensured that the animals being dealt with were treated humanely and that no animal would pose a health risk to consumers. One of these customs, for example, required that the Schechter brothers perform inspections of the birds’ lungs to prevent unhealthy poultry from being sold to customers. Similarly, the customers themselves could also inspect the birds and reject any that seemed unfit to purchase. This double inspection helped ensure that the customer was purchasing healthy poultry. One of the NRA codes, however, specified that no customer could choose or refuse in-

dividual birds; customers could purchase the birds only in whole- or half-coop units. This meant that, by law, customers were not allowed to check the chickens’ lungs for signs of tuberculosis. The Schechter brothers’ own internal inspection process—which was one reason many in the community chose to buy chicken from them—was now illegal.



*Image courtesy the Granger Collection*

When the government regulations forced the Schechter brothers to violate the requirements of their Jewish tradition, the quality and safety of their products were compromised. Understandably, they lost a number of their devout Jewish customers. Those customers lost the benefits that came with the Schechters' contribution to the community, as they had one less business from which to choose.

The Schechter brothers' poultry shops underwent numerous inspections by the National Recovery Administration in 1934, and eventually they were taken to court for multiple violations of the NRA codes. Ironically, one of the violations cited against them was selling "unfit" poultry. They were accused of allowing customers to select their own chickens, refusing inspections by regulators, and selling chickens to unlicensed purchasers. Other accusations included "competing too hard" and keeping prices "too low." The brothers were found guilty and sentenced to serve a short time in prison.

The Schechters knew that they had been providing a safe and affordable product to their customers. They believed the government had stepped outside its constitutional boundaries and not only prevented them from adhering to their Jewish traditions and doing their jobs well, but penalized them for it. The four Schechter brothers



and their lawyer persevered. Their fight did not make them popular. Politically-connected competitors who wanted to drive them out of business tried to intimidate them. The brothers even found their truck damaged and vandalized on one occasion.

But the Schechters' determination eventually propelled their case, *A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corporation v. United States*, to the Supreme Court. In 1935, the Supreme Court decided in favor of the Schechter

brothers and ruled that the National Industrial Recovery Act was unconstitutional. The Court reasoned that Congress had gone too far in delegating (or assigning) its lawmaking power to the President. The National Recovery Act did not make regulations; it simply empowered the President to do so. This violated the Constitution's separation of powers.

The Court also held that many of the rules, regulations, and codes put in place by the NRA were beyond the limits of what the national government could constitutionally regulate. While the Commerce Clause permits Congress to regulate interstate commerce, the Schechter brothers' business operated only within New York. Congress had stepped outside its constitutional bounds. Not a single justice dissented.

—JANDI HEAGEN  
*Bill of Rights Institute*



## *Defining Civic Virtues: Contribution*

To discover your passions and talents, and to use them to create what is beautiful and needed. To work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

# Discussion Guide



*Directions: Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. Note the definition of “contribution” as a civic virtue that follows the **Contribution: Schechter Brothers** narrative. Describe the various ways the Schechter brothers **contributed** to their communities.
2. With what crimes were they charged?
3. Describe your reaction to learning of the crimes with which they were charged. What does your instinctive response reveal about whether what happened to the Schechter brothers was right or wrong? How does this affect your ideas about whether an objective right and wrong exist?
4. How do contributions like those that the Schechter brothers made to their community, when multiplied by many citizens around the country, contribute to society in general?
5. How did the court rule in the case of *A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corporation v. United States* (1935)?
6. Which of the following might constitute “unfair competition”? Explain.
  - Remaining open on Sundays when most other businesses are closed (because your religion’s Sabbath is on a different day).
  - Keeping labor costs down so your prices stay low as well—lower than those of your competitors.
  - Secretly agreeing with one of your competitions not to lower prices below a certain level.
  - Stealing from your distributors.
  - Bribing an employee at your rival’s soup company to give you his secret recipes.
  - Others?
7. One scholar notes that, at the time the Schechter brothers’ case was being heard in court, much of the coverage of the case was biased against them: “[c]overage of the case ... was highly tinged with the standard anti-Semitism of the time, especially because the Schechters were ... immigrants with their Eastern European cadences and traditional Jewish dress.” How does this information help you understand this historical event?
8. How do the Schechter brothers’ actions help you understand **contribution** as a civic virtue? Given the economic conditions of the time, how could many other individuals like the Schechter brothers contribute to the social fabric of the whole United States?
9. In what ways does their story also help you understand courage? Or perseverance? Explain.

10. Explain how the level of freedom in a society relates to a person's ability to maximize his or her **contribution** to society.
11. Why might the U.S. Founders have believed that this virtue was essential in a constitutional republic?
12. Given the unprecedented crisis of the Great Depression, would it have been more or less virtuous for the Schechter brothers to set aside their personal religious beliefs in order to obey laws that were meant to improve economic conditions for all? Explain.
13. *Take a stand:* Whose **contribution** to society was greater during the Great Depression: the National Recovery Administration or individuals like the Schechter brothers? Whatever your response, be prepared to defend it based on historical facts.
14. Think about your own interests and talents. How do you use them to make a contribution to your family and community?



# Virtue In Action



Discover your passions and talents, and use them to create what is beautiful and needed. Work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

- Work hard to develop your natural talents. It's important to have a broad base of knowledge, but focus on developing skills where you can make a special contribution.
  - ⇒ Make a list of all the things you enjoy doing.
  - ⇒ Go through that list and determine the ones you are already good at, or in which you could truly excel.
  - ⇒ Of those, make a plan to develop some into courses of study or a career, and develop some into hobbies.
  - ⇒ This school year, use this list to help you plan to make a special contribution to improve your school.
- Take an inventory of the ways you contribute to your family's welfare. Broaden that list to include all those who depend on you in other ways. Finally, broaden it to include people who may depend on you in the future, including possibly a spouse and children. What are some ways you can and will uniquely contribute to take care of those people?

## Sources & Further Reading

*A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corp. v. U.S.* 55 S. Ct. 837. Supreme Court of the U.S. 1935.

*Panama Refining Co. v. Ryan.* 293 US 388. Supreme Court of the U.S. 1935.

## Virtue Across the Curriculum

Below are corresponding literature and film suggestions to help you teach this virtue across the curriculum. A sample prompt has been provided for the key corresponding work. For the other suggested works, or others that are already part of your curriculum, create your own similar prompts.

### ***Apollo 13* (1995), directed by Ron Howard**

Describe the various roles held by individuals at NASA. How did each person use his or her individual strengths to make a unique contribution to the mission? How did they adapt in response to the changing crisis? Are there characters who tried to undermine the contributions of others? Who among these individuals acted virtuously? Why?

### ***Particle Fever* (2014) directed by Mark Levinson**

Describe the various roles of the people highlighted in this documentary. How does each person use his or her individual strengths to make a unique contribution to the CERN project? How do they, as individuals or as a team, respond and adapt when problems arise? How do you see each person's particular set of skills, temperament, and passions influence the project? When the discovery is made and those in the auditorium rise in a standing ovation, who wipes away tears? Why? How is his **contribution** affirmed by that moment and by that response?

### **OTHER WORKS**

*Lost Moon: The Perilous Journey of Apollo 13* by Jim Lovell and Jeffrey Kluger

*Moneyball* directed by Bennett Miller (2011)

*The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway

*I Hear America Singing* by Walt Whitman

## Contribution

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



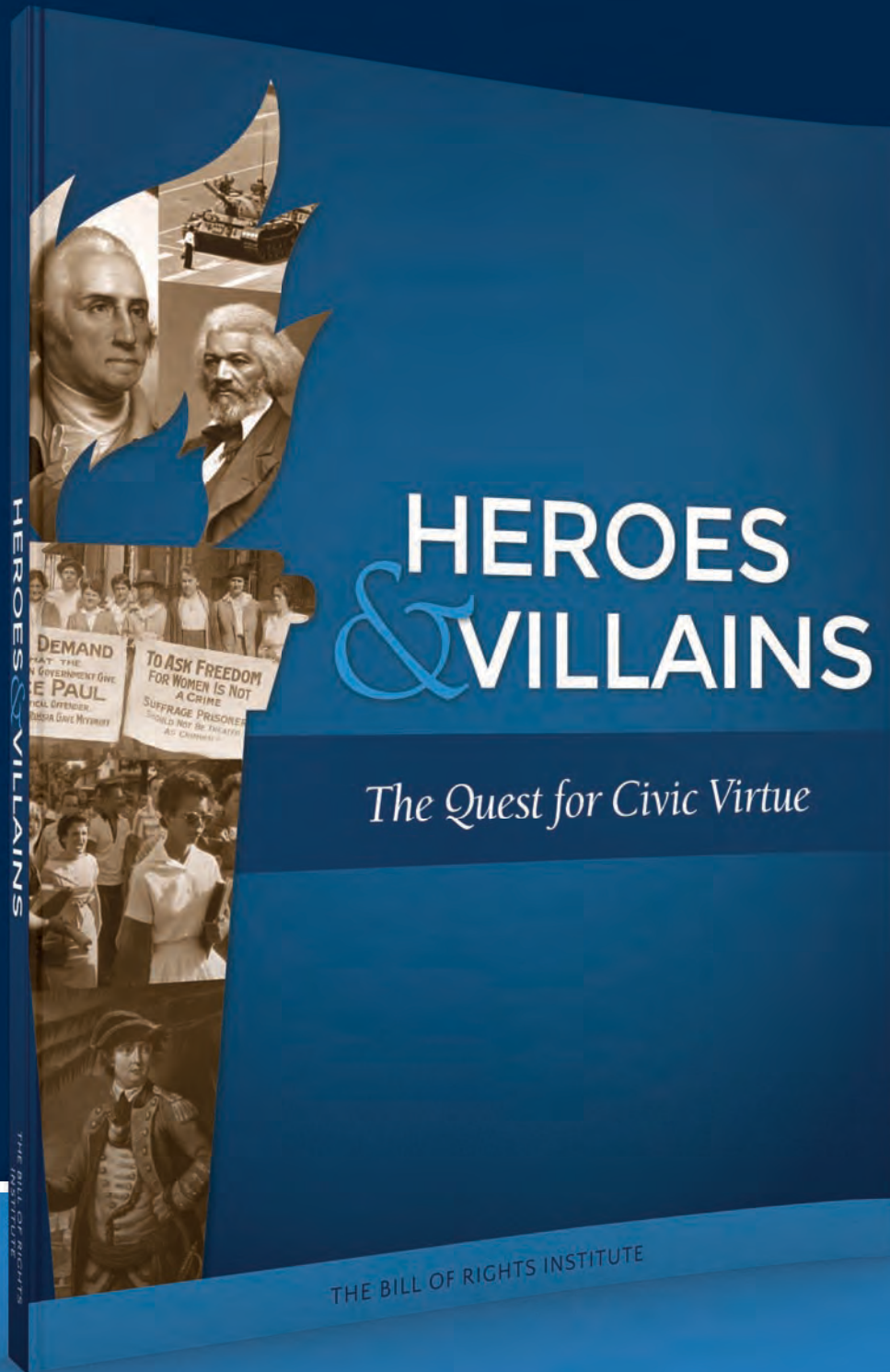
*Vocation* is a strong desire to spend your life doing a certain kind of work. *Contribution* is when you use your passions and talents to create something beautiful and needed in the world and work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

*Directions* Read the quotation below, then choose an area of your life in which you work hard and (generally) enjoy doing so. Describe a way that this could possibly become a vocation in which your passions meet some need in the world. It may or may not be humanitarian. Remember: the Schechter brothers' contribution was a business that met an important need for their neighbors.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

“Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.”

—FREDERICK BUECHNER



# A CHARACTER EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



*Equip teachers for character education that lets them do what they do best, in the context of subjects they already teach.*

# CHARACTER EDUCATION SIMPLIFIED

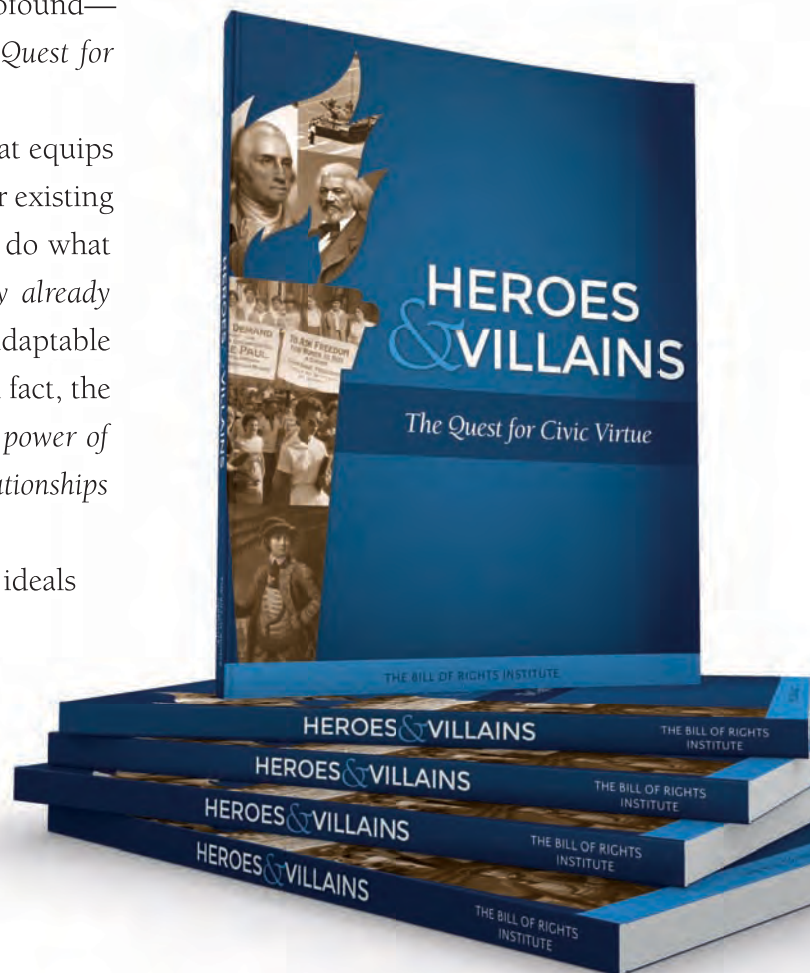
## *Introducing Our New Resource*



What are the deepest, truest aims of character education? Think about the character education you already do at your school—whether formal or informal. What are you really trying to accomplish? Though we value our students’ character formation, it can seem a daunting task. So many expectations are laid at our doorstep. So many demands pull at our time. How do school leaders ensure that, amidst competing demands, our highest aims aren’t pushed aside? Could it be less complicated? Yes, it can. Satisfying character education can be profound—and as uncomplicated as *Heroes & Villains: The Quest for Civic Virtue*.

*Heroes & Villains* is a curricular supplement that equips teachers to integrate character education into their existing curriculum, then gets out of the way to let them do what they do best ... *in the context of the subjects they already teach*. Teaching civic virtue can be robust, yet adaptable enough to tailor to your teachers and students. In fact, the more flexible it is, the more you can *harness the power of the strongest element your school already has: the relationships among faculty, students, and staff*.

At the Bill of Rights Institute, the ideas and ideals of the Constitution are at the heart of our work. This is why we developed a resource to reinvigorate the teaching of civic virtue based on primary sources, grounded in critical thinking, and focused on history. Better yet, because we know the constraints teachers face daily, we designed it to be easily





tailored to your existing curriculum, to your own school, and to the students who walk its hallways.

Character education is often viewed as an “add-on program” that distracts from “real teaching”. But it should be a rich teaching experience, not a demand—and certainly not a costly, off-the-shelf “add-on”. Even more, it can be a seamlessly integrated part of curriculum and instruction. The key? Simplicity. *Heroes & Villains* is neither costly nor an add-on. Instead, it is *a straightforward and adaptable curricular supplement*. Based on the content history and English teachers are already teaching, it provides a clear framework for extending that very content into the realm of character and civic virtue.

We respect that you and your faculty—not any one program or book—bring the most vital elements to the character-education table: *knowledge of your own school, its faculty, and its students*. This guide is for faculty who supervise curriculum and character education. With a small investment of time up-front, you can determine how your colleagues and students can get the most out of *Heroes & Villains*. The “Working Notes” section will get you started as you tailor this surprisingly simple resource to your own school.

Look at the *Heroes & Villains* overview and see how you can bring the virtues of Aristotle and the Founders to your students. Start with the “Working Notes” on page 11.

If you don’t already have a copy of *Heroes & Villains*, contact us at [info@billofrightsinstitute.org](mailto:info@billofrightsinstitute.org). We’ll get it into your hands so you can get started.

WE BELIEVE  
*that increased  
understanding of  
virtue will lead to  
more individuals  
acting virtuously in  
school, and these  
changes will pay  
dividends in improved  
school climate.*

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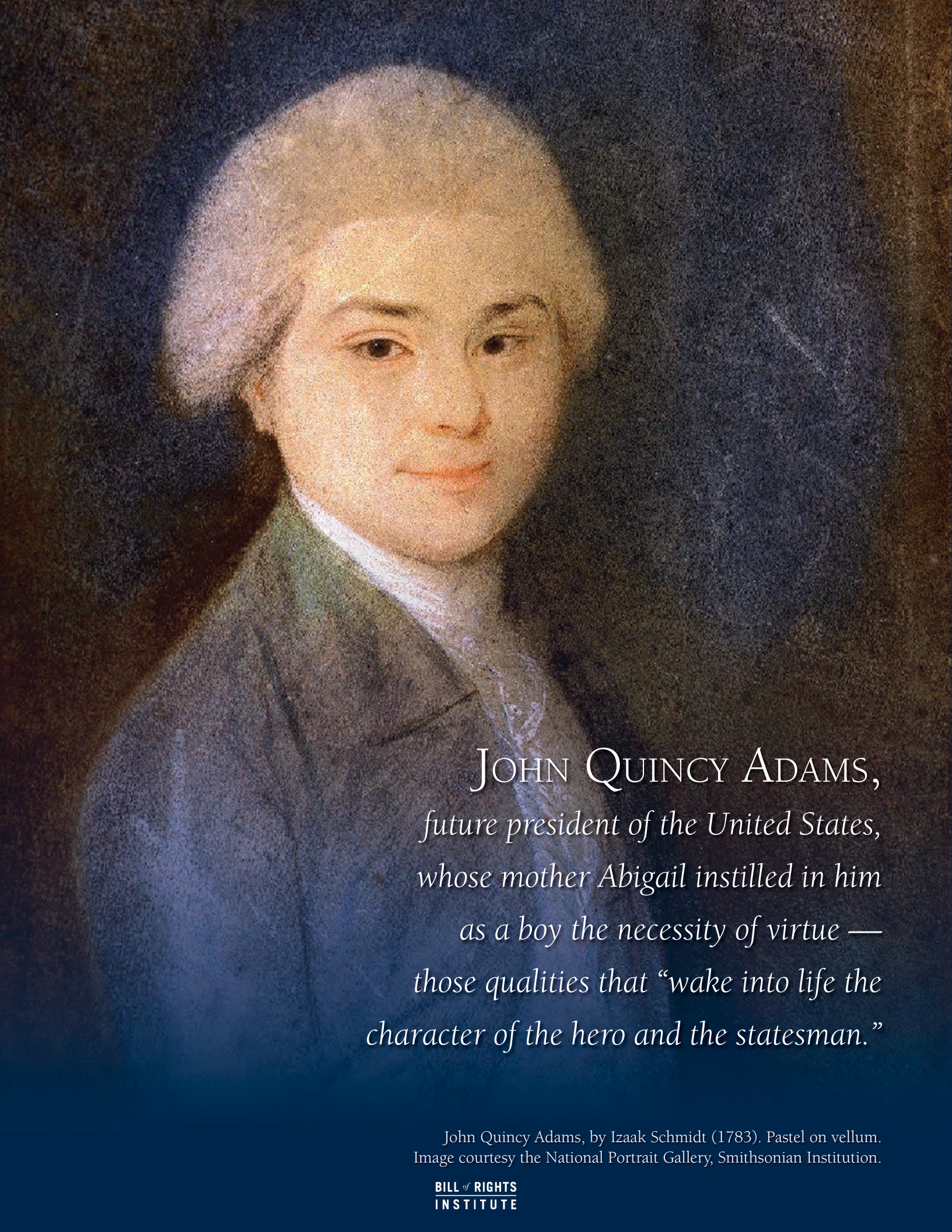


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JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,  
*future president of the United States,  
whose mother Abigail instilled in him  
as a boy the necessity of virtue —  
those qualities that “wake into life the  
character of the hero and the statesman.”*

John Quincy Adams, by Izaak Schmidt (1783). Pastel on vellum.  
Image courtesy the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.



# HEROES & VILLAINS

## *Program Overview*



At an age when most children today are beginning their high school education, young John Quincy Adams was practicing French along with statesmanship skills on a diplomatic trip to Europe with his father. He had not wanted to go. His mother Abigail wrote him a wonderful letter expressing her hope that he would not regret the journey. She wrote:

“Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities, which would otherwise lie dormant, wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman.”

Mrs. Adams knew that her son held those qualities in his heart and closed her letter with this stirring admonition:

“The strict and inviolable regard you have ever paid to truth, gives me pleasing hopes that you will not swerve from her dictates, but add justice, fortitude, and every manly virtue which can adorn a good citizen, do honor to your country, and render your parents supremely happy.”

Indeed, to the Founding generation, virtue was inseparable from freedom; self-government depended on a virtuous people. Abigail Adams’ son, as an adult, said, “Public virtue cannot exist in a nation without private [virtue], and public virtue is the only foundation of republics.”

But what happens to a republic when virtue withers? In a nation founded on principles such as



IMBUING  
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aspect of school life  
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individual liberty and consent of the governed, civic and character education must be central to all that we teach. Indeed, to teach civic virtue is to help preserve our republic.

In his Second Inaugural Address, President Barack Obama alluded to the need for citizens to live virtuously every day:

“What makes us exceptional, what makes us America, is our allegiance to an idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...’ History tells us that while these truths may be self-evident, they’ve never been self-executing. That while freedom is a gift from God, it must be secured by his people here on earth. ...You and I, as citizens, have the obligation to shape the debates of our time, not only with the votes we cast, but the voices we lift in defense of our most ancient values and enduring ideas.”



## Ancient Values, Enduring Ideas, Daily Difference

Those “most ancient values” include commitments to justice, perseverance, initiative, and other virtues of citizenship that allow a free people to govern themselves. These are among the citizen virtues that the Founders believed were necessary for self-government.

The goals of the narratives, discussion guides, lists of resources, and journal prompts in this program include an increased understanding of civic virtue on the part of both students and teachers. We invite you to engage students with the resources not only in U.S. History, but also in World History and English classes, as well as the wider school community through department meetings, faculty meetings, lunch-and-learns, assemblies, or other creative options that could work best for your school. We believe that imbuing civic virtue into every aspect of school life will lead to deeper understanding, and that greater understanding will lead to an improved school climate and culture.

We can address challenges common to the school environment with a richer and more complete understanding of civic virtue. For example, does bullying occur because a student is seeking “respect”? Does cheating or plagiarism take place because students lack understanding of—or experience with—perseverance? A deeper and historically-grounded understanding of virtue can be arrived at through discussion in which *all* take part. When all in the school, students and adults, discuss the deepest and historically-grounded understandings about civic virtue, both the whole school and the community benefit.



*The lessons were  
valuable because  
they made the  
students reevaluate  
their own ethics.  
Although many  
of our students  
are “good” people,  
these lessons help  
reinforce the virtues  
and standards that  
we would like our  
students to embrace  
and display as  
citizens.*

—FIELD-TESTING  
TEACHER

# WHY STORYTELLING?



*“If history were taught in the form of stories,  
it would never be forgotten.”*

—RUDYARD KIPLING

The same is true of virtue. People of all ages are naturally drawn to stories. While Mrs. Adams wrote to her son about “scenes that engage the heart,” her son was living those scenes in two countries in revolution, the fate of the new nation at stake. Her lesson—that trying times are tests of virtue—endures when young peoples’ minds are raised by studying historical examples. Within the selection of visual and historical narratives in this program are examples of civic virtue to be identified, discussed, analyzed, and evaluated. In the stories of villains from history are opportunities to analyze the actions of individuals who perhaps strove for virtue, but failed.

The materials in this resource were selected to engage the heart as well as the mind. Through

discussion of all the narratives, students will implicitly judge: Why do we admire heroes? On the other hand, why do we harshly judge individuals like Benedict Arnold? The virtues (and lack thereof!) highlighted in these stories—along with self-reflection, discussion, and journaling—encourage teachers and students to make these virtues a habit.

Educators don’t simply reach students in their schools and classrooms; their influence extends beyond into times and places unpredictable and unknown, and may shape the lives of generations. As Abigail wrote to her son in 1780, we hope these materials on civic virtue will help you “transmit this inheritance to ages yet unborn.”

*These lessons serve a vital purpose and prompt interesting conversations  
that connect past events to current events and to students themselves.*

—FIELD-TESTING TEACHER  
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*The lesson—that trying times are tests of virtue—endures  
when young people study historical examples.*



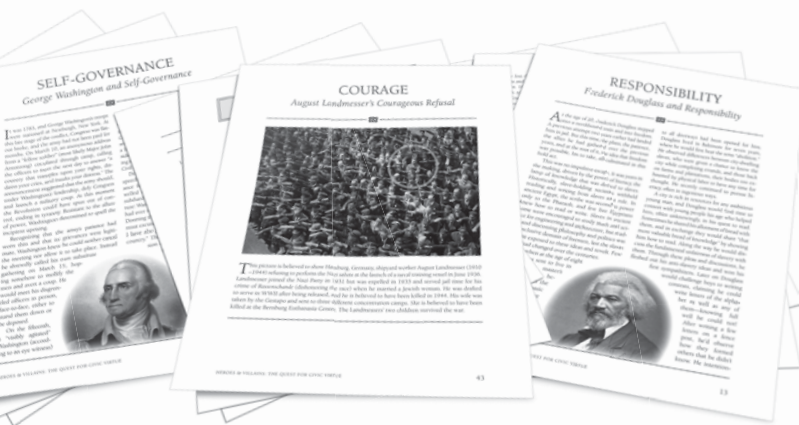
# HEROES & VILLAINS

## Materials Overview



This civic education resource stays away from shallow topics, instead inviting teachers and students to dive straightforwardly into robust, history-based topics. Through rich narratives, critical questions, meaningful discussion, and personal application, teachers and students will examine the “civic virtue” assumptions of our nation’s Founders and their relevance today.

- Ten narratives, photo-narratives, or primary sources convey stories of individuals who faced crises of civic virtue—including Benedict Arnold, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Eckford, and more.
- Journaling exercises engage individual students’ hearts and minds.
- “Virtue in Action” supplements provide ideas for demonstrating civic virtue in schools and communities.
- Cross-curricular connections make it easy for faculty and staff to work together toward the same character goals within the context of their own classrooms.
- Suggestions for further reading from literary and historical primary sources.



*These exercises, based on historical events, are definitely more effective in getting students to examine their own commitment to these virtues.*



# *Working Notes and Ideas for Implementing* **HEROES & VILLAINS**





## *Laying the Groundwork with Your Faculty*

- As you introduce *Heroes & Villains* to faculty and staff for the first time, ask them to recall their favorite stories from childhood or early adulthood.
- Transition to a discussion about successful storytelling in the classroom. Chances are teachers are already comfortable with a storytelling approach. (e.g., history narratives, Supreme Court cases, stories of science discoveries, or lab reports done as story structure).
- Maintain an atmosphere that allows faculty to feel confident discussing virtue with students. Assure them that when discussing with students, they can emphasize that civic virtue may include, but does not require, religious belief.
- In keeping with the above, affirm for teachers that they can encourage students who do have a faith tradition to relate their thinking about virtue to it. Allow those who wish to do so to reflect on examples from their own faiths. (For example, individuals from sacred texts who acted virtuously, religious teachings, etc.)
- Acknowledge that all schools and all curricula do teach values or virtue, whether implicitly or explicitly. You are merely providing a language that enables free and open discussion.
- Request that teachers review the materials and hold “listening sessions” for them to come to you with any questions about their use of *Heroes & Villains*.
- Encourage teachers to share information with families, and invite parents to come to class for discussions.

# Civic Virtues Based on the Thinking of the Founders



First things first. Let's define our terms. In *Heroes & Villains*, virtue is defined as:

*Conduct that reflects universal principles of moral and ethical excellence essential to leading a worthwhile life and to effective self-government. For many leading Founders, attributes of character such as justice, responsibility, perseverance, etc., were thought to flow from an understanding of the rights and obligations of men. Virtue is compatible with, but does not require, religious belief.*

Next, what virtues do we include and how do we define them? Based on writings of the U.S. founders, we could have chosen a number of civic virtues that were important to their understanding of the running of a constitutional republic. Of that number, *Heroes & Villains* addresses the following:

**Contribution:** The discovering of your passions and talents, and the use of them to create what is beautiful and needed.

Working hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

**Courage:** Standing firm in being a person of character and doing what is right, especially when it is unpopular or puts you at risk.

**Humility:** To remember that your ignorance is far greater than your knowledge. To give praise to those who earn it.

**Integrity:** To tell the truth, expose untruths, and keep your promises.

**Justice:** To stand for equally applied rules and to make sure everyone obeys them.

**Perseverance:** To stay the course, choosing not the easy path, but rather the right one.

**Respect:** To protect your mind and body as precious aspects of your identity. To extend that protection to every other person you encounter.

**Responsibility:** To strive to know and do what is best, not what is most popular. To be trustworthy for making decisions in the best long-term interests of the people and tasks of which one is in charge.

**Self-Governance:** To be self-controlled, avoiding extremes, and to not be influenced or controlled by others.

# THE QUESTION

*How can we make character education seamless and integral to our school's culture?*



Get outside the “character curriculum box.” Instead, stop to think about the following three aspects of your school: **Leadership**, **Understanding**, and **Informing Instruction**. As you do, you’ll naturally discover ways to weave the themes of *Heroes & Villains* into the processes and culture that already exist among your faculty, students, and staff.

As you, with your faculty, plan to integrate *Heroes & Villains* into your school’s teaching and culture, these three areas will provide you with the clearest path to implementation.



## WORKING NOTES:

### *Our Current School Climate and Culture*

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Before using *Heroes & Villains* at your school, describe the current school culture, character strengths, and areas for growth. Use the following prompts to help you do just that.

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#### **Our School's Best Cultural Attributes Are...**

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#### **Our School Culture Could Be Improved by a Focus On...**

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**Our Ideal School Culture Would Be...**

# *Let's start with...* Leadership

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Below, and on the following pages, are some leadership-related items to consider as you integrate *Heroes & Villains* into the curriculum and civic education at your school.

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## **Faculty Ownership**

- Among your faculty, who are the key influencers whose leadership can help make this happen?
- How will we incorporate staff feedback to tailor this to our school?
- How might that feedback inform your use of *Heroes & Villains*?

## **Integration with Existing Character-Education Efforts**

- What existing character efforts, formal or informal (if any), does your school employ?
- How can *Heroes & Villains* content bolster those efforts? What tensions may exist?

## **Role Modeling**

- How do your faculty and administrators already exemplify these virtues for the school community?
- How might this role-modeling look in different areas of school life (rehearsal rooms, athletic fields, classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, etc.)?



*“People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses, or the problems of modern society.”*

–VINCE LOMBARDI

### **Athletics & Extracurriculars**

- How might coaches, resource teachers, directors, and other extracurricular and facility staff extend these ideas beyond the classroom?

### **Parents & Community Involvement**

- How involved should parents be in this process? What opportunities exist to extend these ideas beyond the classroom?
- How might you involve the larger community (outside speakers, authority figures such as law enforcement, older students mentoring younger students, etc.)? What about volunteer opportunities?

**On what other leadership areas may you want to focus as you implement *Heroes & Villains*?**

## *Next, look at...* **Understanding**

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Use the prompts below to plan how you will ensure that everyone in the school community shares the same understandings as you use *Heroes & Villains*.

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### **Staff Education and Professional Development**

- How will these civic virtues be understood and reinforced among your school's faculty?
- Who will be primarily responsible for this effort?
- What opportunities will the faculty have to discuss these ideas with each other on an ongoing basis?

### **Teaching the Content**

- How will social studies and/or English teachers address this content?
- How many teachers in each department will cover this content?
- Will the content be taught all at once, periodically, or throughout the year?
- What cross-curricular efforts would be helpful? What, for example, could this look like in a math or science classroom?
- Will we evaluate students in some way? If so, how?
- How will these virtues be reinforced year-round...
  - ❑ in social studies or English classrooms?
  - ❑ in other classes?
  - ❑ in school assemblies, communications, or daily announcements?

## Peer Discussions and Mentoring: Students

- Identify students whose leadership could move others in the direction of these goals.
- What opportunities will older students have to mentor younger students?
- In what contexts can you envision getting students to discuss these ideas?
  - ▣ In class...
  - ▣ Outside of class...
- How might student clubs, student government, or other school groups reinforce these goals in your school?

**On what other areas of student and faculty understanding may you want to focus as you implement *Heroes & Villains*?**

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*“Nobody ever listens to a teenager. Everybody thinks you should be happy just because you're young. They don't see the wars that we fight every single day.”*

—FROM FREEDOM WRITERS



## Thinking about...

# Informing Instruction and Implementation

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Below, and on the following pages, are feedback-related items to consider as you and your faculty implement *Heroes & Villains*.

---

### Your School: *Start with Your Strengths*

- Look back at what you noted on your “School Climate and Culture” chart on page 11. Which civic virtue does your student body currently reflect most fully? Which virtue is currently weak? (*Full list on page 9.*)
- Consider the civic virtue that is strongest at your school. How can you reinforce it? How can you harness it to improve in the weakest area?

### Policies & Language

- Given the language and format of *Heroes & Villains*, how might your feedback to students (both positive and constructive) be revised?
- How might classroom and school policies be revised to reflect these civic virtues?

### Faculty Feedback

- What could positive accountability look like in relation to these virtues? Are there ways to incorporate these concepts into existing feedback systems?
- Identify some informal ways colleagues can hold each other accountable for role-modeling these civic virtues.

## Home-School Communication

- How can discussions about conduct be used to reinforce these civic virtues with students and their parents?
- How can written communication to parents incorporate the language of civic virtue?

What additional feedback-related ideas do you have as you integrate *Heroes & Villains* into your school curriculum and culture?

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*“The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt.”*

—FREDERICK BUECHNER

# Integrating Heroes & Villains Throughout the School and Across the Curriculum

Each narrative includes a “Virtue in Action” section with concrete suggestions for making civic virtue both active and a habit. In addition to these examples, you may consider some of the following suggestions.



## In the Social Studies Classroom

- Complete the activities for one narrative per month during the school year.
- Acknowledge that “heroes” are not demigods but human and, therefore, imperfect.
- Encourage teaching of history as “philosophy teaching by example.” Have students work as detectives to find virtues in history. For example, individuals who acted courageously in pursuit of justice; great historical moments involving what Aristotle called righteous indignation: American Revolution; Abolition; Women’s Suffrage; Civil Rights Era; etc.



## In the English/Language Arts Classroom

- Students could write short historical fiction stories based on the lives of the individuals in the narratives.
- Select companion stories or poetry for a literature class that reflect the same virtue being studied in the historical narrative. (See *Further Reading* and *Virtue Across the Curriculum* resources included after each of the book’s narratives.)
- Acknowledge the complexity of life and literature — even “good” characters may do bad things.

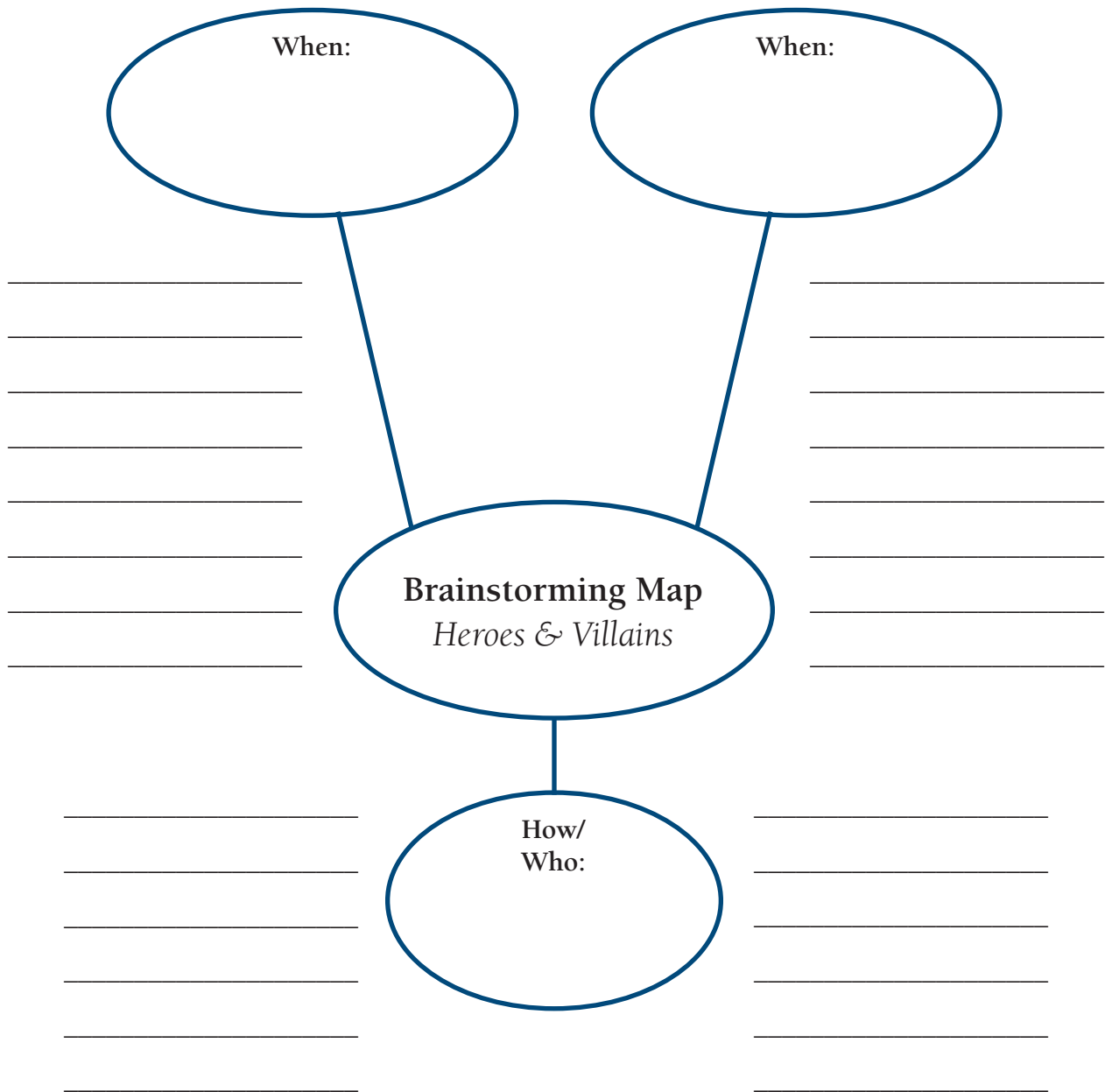


## In Classrooms, in Rehearsal Rooms, on Athletic Fields, and Beyond

- When affirming students who achieve excellent results, emphasize character traits such as **perseverance** and **responsibility** rather than innate intellect or talent.
- George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and other great leaders saw themselves as role models; within the school community, we are all role models. The question is not *whether* we will be role models, but *which virtues we will model*.
- If students wish to reflect on **examples of virtue** from sacred texts, encourage those contributions to the discussion.
- Encourage awareness of **humility, contribution, and justice** on the playing field.
- Distinguish between aggressor and defender in bullying cases. Praise the **courage** of those who defend the weak.
- Include references to these character traits, and use specific language, when communicating with parents—including report card narratives, and in parent meetings.

# BRAINSTORMING SPACE

Use the map below either to brainstorm your ideas, or to begin to organize the “Who/What/How” for the ideas that you may already have brainstormed with your faculty.



# ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

## *Planning for the School Year*

What will the implementation of *Heroes & Villains* look like across the school year?

Use this space to plan.

Time Period	Administrators	Teachers	Students
September			
October			
November			
December			
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			

# NEXT STEPS—FIRST STEPS

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What are the very next steps you want to take as you begin integrating  
*Heroes & Villains* into your school's curriculum and instruction?

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What?	Why?	Who?	When?

## ADDITIONAL NOTES



## ADDITIONAL NOTES



In December of 1784, when he sought recommendations for a tutor for Martha Washington's two grandchildren at Mount Vernon, George Washington wrote a letter to George Chapman, former headmaster of the grammar school in Dumfries, Scotland. In the letter, Washington wrote,

**“My sentiments are perfectly in unison with yours sir, that the best means of forming a manly, virtuous and happy people, will be found in the right education of youth.”**

Whatever your next steps may be, they are significant. You have the affirmation of George Washington himself.

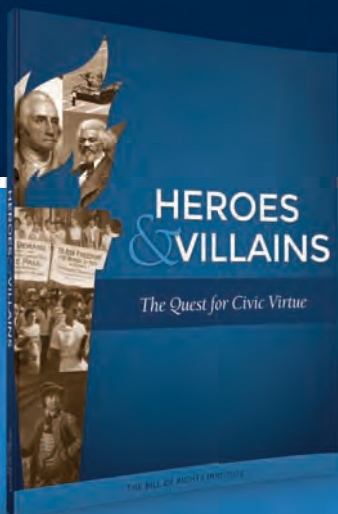
# PRAISE FROM TEACHERS FOR *HEROES & VILLAINS*



“Giving the students a role model of the virtue is a great way to teach civic virtue. The stories do a great job of giving the students characteristics to emulate.”

“I find myself drawn to, and using, more and more primary sources. The students enjoy deciphering pictures, especially, and then discussing their context and importance.”

“The cross-curricular approach was great! I was able to do the historical aspect and discussion, and the English teacher worked with them on writing their essay ... It was a great lesson for everyone.”



*Heroes & Villains: The Quest for Civic Virtue* is a program of the Bill of Rights Institute. For more information or to order, visit

**[www.BillofRightsInstitute.org](http://www.BillofRightsInstitute.org)**

# Defining Civic Virtue



*Launching Heroes & Villains with your Students*

As you begin to integrate Heroes & Villains into your instruction, you may find it helpful to have a place to consider how it relates to topics you already teach. On page xiii is a curricular planning guide so that you and your colleagues can do just that—and determine where and how you can naturally *weave character themes into the curricula you are already teaching*.

As you initiate student discussions involving civic virtue, you will naturally be checking students' current understanding and defining the terms that will be a part of readings and classroom discussions. The readings and activities on the following pages will be an indispensable starting point as you do this.

## ***Heroes & Villains Launch Activity:***

1. On the pages that follow are the student handouts *What is Virtue?—Historical and Philosophical Context* and *What is Virtue?—Defining the Term*. Before distributing those readings, have students respond in writing to the Defining Virtue questions on the following page. Do not discuss them before students have completed the reading. Explain to students that after they have read this, they will be expected to be able to elaborate further on their written responses. Have students read the handout, then discuss it as a class, referring to the questions included in the text.
2. After the reading, distribute the *Clarifying Civic Virtue* handout to the students. Have students write complete responses to the questions. Use that second set of questions as the basis for a discussion about the reading and to check students' understanding of the content as well as their engagement with the ideas.
3. Separate students into groups of 2 or 3 to discuss questions on the handout, particularly the final questions about whether they changed their responses, and why. Transition to a whole-class discussion of these final questions, ensuring that students refer to the text of both handouts to support and explain their responses.
4. The *Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue* handout includes a list of the civic virtues addressed in this book, along with a definition for each. Post or project that list—without the definitions—on the board. Elicit from students what each one means, asking them to offer examples from their personal lives. Encourage examples from within their families, school, and community. Explain that these are among the virtues that the U.S. Founders believed were essential to the form of government they were creating. Break students into their former groups of 2 or 3 and have them read the definitions. Then, assign to each group one or two of the listed virtues and have them write down examples of each, including context and further explanation. Examples could come from U.S. or world history, literature, or current events.
5. Students report back to the large group their examples and why, according to the listed definition, those people exemplify that civic virtue.

# Defining Civic Virtue



1. When you encounter the term “civic virtue”, what do you believe it means?

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2. Why do you believe this?

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3. Think about principles in the U.S. Constitution such as consent of the governed, separation of powers, and limited government. What assumptions did the Founders seem to be making about human nature? Why might those principles have required civic virtue among citizens and elected leaders?

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# What Is Virtue? — Historical and Philosophical Context



*Some assumptions underlie our selection and discussion of virtues.*

## Right and wrong exist. Understanding civic virtue means acknowledging this.

To further justice requires that one exercise judgment. To understand and evaluate virtue, we must be willing to admire heroes and condemn villains. We must be willing to take a stand. A special challenge today may be that many people do not wish to appear judgmental. We seek to balance two ideas: on the one hand, being too quick to judge is wrong. Respect means not looking down on others who are not harming anyone simply because you don't agree with them. On the other hand, a reluctance to judge the behavior of others should not mean we do nothing in the face of evil. All that is needed for evil to triumph, it is often said, is for good people to do nothing.



“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

—Atticus Finch, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee



“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Being virtuous does not require belief in a supreme being.

We need not shy away from the term “virtue.” Despite the occasional misunderstanding that it requires religion, virtue may in fact be defined as conduct that reflects universal principles of moral and ethical excellence essential to leading a worthwhile life and to effective self-government. For many leading Founders, attributes of character such as justice, responsibility, perseverance, and others were thought to flow from an understanding

of the rights and obligations of men. Virtue is compatible with, but does not require, religious belief.

To many in the Founding generation, religion and morality were “indispensable supports” to people’s ability to govern themselves. This is because religious institutions nurtured virtue, and the Founders knew virtue was needed for self-government to survive. On the other hand, to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, it does you no injury whether your neighbor believes in one god or twenty gods. A person’s religion alone would not make him virtuous, and his particular (or lack of) religion would not mean he was incapable of virtue.



“We ought to consider what is the end [purpose] of government before we determine which is the best form. Upon this point all speculative politicians will agree that the happiness of society is the end of government, as all divines and moral philosophers will agree that the happiness of the individual is the end of man. ...All sober inquirers after truth, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, have declared that the happiness of man, as well as his dignity, consists in virtue.”

—John Adams, *Thoughts on Government*, 1776

## Why virtues and not “values” or “character”?

Virtues are eternal because they are rooted in human nature. Values, on the other hand, can change with the times. The word “value” itself implies that values are relative. While values can change with circumstances, it is *always* good to be just, to persevere, to be courageous, to respect others, and so on. The word “character” refers to the sum total of virtues an individual displays. A person of character is virtuous.

## Why these virtues?

The United States Founders believed that certain civic virtues were required of citizens in order for the Constitution to work. Numerous primary sources—notably the Federalist Papers and the Autobiography of Ben Franklin—point us to the “Founders’ Virtues.” You will explore some of the following civic virtues as an integral part of *Heroes and Villains*.

- Contribution
- Courage
- Humility
- Integrity
- Justice
- Perseverance
- Respect
- Responsibility / Prudence
- Self-Governance / Moderation

## Virtue

Conduct that reflects universal principles of moral and ethical excellence essential to leading a worthwhile life and to effective self-government. For many leading Founders, attributes of character such as justice, responsibility, perseverance, etc., were thought to flow from an understanding of the rights and obligations of men. Virtue is compatible with, but does not require, religious belief.

# What Is Virtue? — Defining the Term

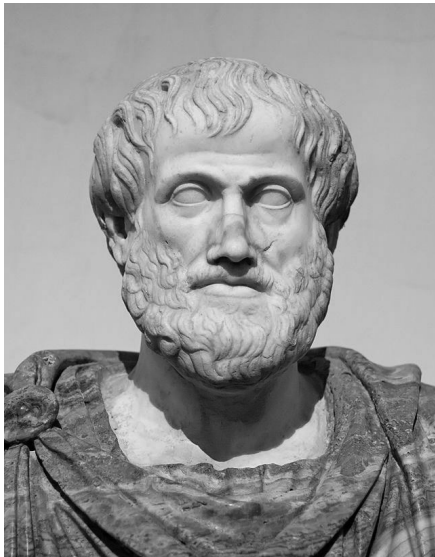


## **Virtue is a “golden mean.”**

Aristotle understood virtue as a “mean” (or middle) between two extremes. The same character trait, when expressed to the extreme, ceases to be virtue and becomes vice. For example, too little courage is cowardice, while too much makes one foolhardy. A healthy respect for authority becomes blind obedience to power when expressed too strongly, or it descends into unprincipled recalcitrance when completely lacking.

## **Virtue is action.**

Thoughts may be about virtuous things, but do not themselves merit the name of virtue. Similarly, words can describe virtuous acts or traits, but can never themselves be virtuous. One’s thoughts and words alone don’t make a person virtuous—one must act on them.



*Bust of Aristotle. Marble, Roman copy after a Greek bronze original from 330 BC.*

## **Virtue is a habit.**

Aristotle also believed that virtue is a habit. Virtuous behavior is not the result of numerous, individual calculations about which course of action would be most advantageous. For example, a person who finds a piece of jewelry, intends to keep it, but later returns it to the owner to collect a reward helps bring about a just outcome (property was returned to its rightful owner); however he falls short the title “virtuous” because of the calculation he went through to arrive at his course of action. While all virtues must be habits, not all habits are virtuous.

## **Virtue requires a just end.**

Behavior can be virtuous only when done in the pursuit of justice. For example, though courage is a virtue, a Nazi who proceeded in killing thousands of people despite his own feelings of fear cannot be called courageous. Though respect is a virtue, a junior police officer who stood by while his captain brutalized a suspect cannot be called respectful. A complication can come when we either “zoom in” or enlarge the sphere within which action takes place. Could an officer on the wrong side of a war display virtue in the form of courage by taking care of the younger men in his charge and shielding them from harm? Is the “end” of his action the responsibility towards his men, or the continued strength of his army, which is working toward an evil cause?



# Clarifying Civic Virtue



Questions 1 and 2 are also on the *Defining Civic Virtue* handout you completed earlier. Now that you have completed and discussed the *What is Virtue?* readings, write your revised responses to those questions, as well as full responses to the additional questions.

1. After further reading and discussion, what do you now believe “civic virtue” means?

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2. Compare your response to Question 1 to your response to the same question on the *Defining Civic Virtue* handout.

Did your response change at all after having read and discussed the articles?

Yes / No (Circle one)

If you did revise your answer: What, in the reading and discussion, caused you to revise your response?

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If you did not revise your answer: Why did you not change your response?

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Even if you did not change your response, what points (in the reading, the discussion, or both) did you find compelling and worth considering?

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3. Think about principles in the U.S. Constitution such as consent of the governed, separation of powers, and limited government. What assumptions did the Founders seem to be making about human nature? Why might those principles have required civic virtue among citizens and elected leaders?

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# Identifying and Defining Civic Virtues



Below are several civic virtues, along with definitions.

**Contribution:** To discover your passions and talents, and use them to create what is beautiful and needed. To work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

**Courage:** To stand firm in being a person of character and doing what is right, especially when it is unpopular or puts you at risk.

**Humility:** To remember that your ignorance is far greater than your knowledge. To give praise to those who earn it.

**Integrity:** To tell the truth, expose untruths, and keep your promises.

**Justice:** To stand for equally applied rules that respect the rights and dignity of all, and make sure everyone obeys them.

**Perseverance:** To remember how many before you chose the easy path rather than the right one, and to stay the course.

**Respect:** To protect your mind and body as precious aspects of your identity. To extend that protection to every other person you encounter.

**Responsibility:** To strive to know and do what is best, not what is most popular. To be trustworthy for making decisions in the best long-term interests of the people and tasks of which they are in charge.

**Self-Governance:** To be self-controlled, avoiding extremes, and to not be excessively influenced or controlled by others.

In the table below, write down the virtues your teacher assigns to your group. For each, identify a person or character in history, literature, or current events who exemplified that virtue. Include an explanation.

Civic Virtue	Person/Character	Why, or How?

# Teacher's Notes for Launching *Heroes & Villains*



As you begin to integrate *Heroes & Villains* into your instruction, you may find it helpful to consider how it relates to topics you already teach. Below is a curricular planning map so that you and your colleagues can do just that—and determine where and how you can naturally *weave character themes into the curricula you are already teaching*.

## Curricular Planning

If you would like to collaborate with colleagues to align your teaching of various themes across your subject areas, a simplified curriculum map may be a quick, easy, and useful tool. See the example below. A blank, full-page version is on the following page.

Notes:

- The history and art teachers have a natural fit, in that both are covering nineteenth century United States.
- Though the English classes are in a different century entirely since they will be reading Homer's *The Odyssey*, they have the opportunity to team up with the history and art teachers by reinforcing the character theme of perseverance in the course of their studies during those weeks.

SAMPLE			
Time	Subject	Topic(s)	Virtue(s)
Sept-Oct	History	Westward Expansion	Perseverance
Sept-Oct	English	<i>The Odyssey</i>	Perseverance
Sept-Oct	Art	19 <sup>th</sup> c. American Art	Perseverance

# Heroes & Villains Curricular Planning



Virtue(s)						
Topic(s)						
Subject						
Time						

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND CIVIC VIRTUE



## Suggested Launch Activity TEACHER'S NOTES



### *About Launch Activities*

This optional introductory activity is designed to support you in the classroom. However, the primary narratives and photos in the section that follows can be used with or without this introduction.

Initiate a discussion about individual character by diving, with your students, into Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. As you prepare to teach this primary source activity, select eight or nine of Franklin's list of 13 virtues (listed below) that you believe are either well-reflected or absent from your school's culture. Post your selected list on the board for reference as you read with your students.

Temperance	Industry	Cleanliness
Silence	Sincerity	Tranquility
Order	Justice	Chastity
Resolution	Moderation	Humility
Frugality		

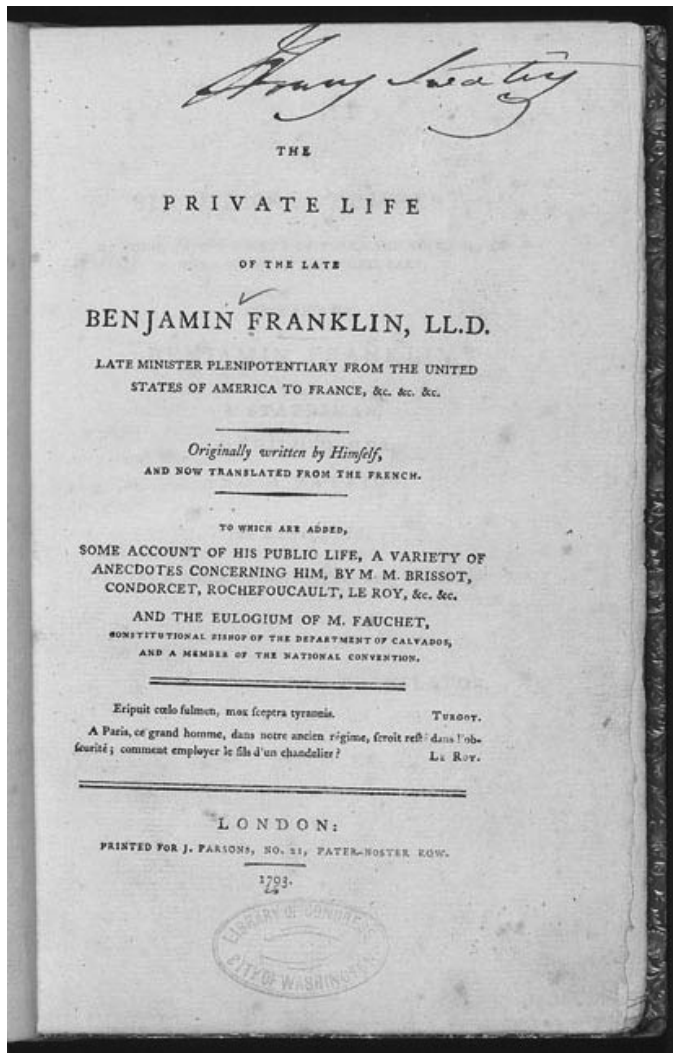
As students enter, instruct them to:

- Read the posted list, identifying the one trait they believe is particularly strong within your school's culture.
- Identify what they believe are the "top three" they believe are weak or absent in your school's culture.
- Write a definition for each of the four that they selected.

Lead a brief discussion of the traits the students listed as strong as well as those they listed as absent or weak. Discuss their definitions of each of the traits you listed on the board.

After students have drafted their lists and written their definitions, ask them what kinds of lists they have ever written. (They may mention homework, packing for trips, reading lists.)

Follow up by asking what techniques they use to motivate themselves for improving artistic or athletic performance, saving up money for something, etc. (They may mention workout lists, practice lists, schedules, college lists, etc.)



Title page, *The Private Life of the Late Benjamin Franklin... Originally Written by Himself, and Now Translated from the French*. London, Printed for J. Parsons, 1793 *Library of Congress*.

Introduce the Benjamin Franklin *Autobiography* excerpts by relating it to the kinds of lists that they just described and explaining that they will find out how he defined the traits. Instruct students to refer as they read to the lists they created when they entered the classroom. Ask them to compare Franklin's definitions to their own as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of his strategy.

# Benjamin Franklin and Civic Virtue

## Primary Source Activity — Student Handout



*Directions: When Benjamin Franklin was in his twenties, he began a project to become a more virtuous person. Many years later, he wrote the following selection from his Autobiography about that time. Read his reflections on virtue, then answer the questions that follow.*

**I**t was about this time that I conceiv'd the bold and arduous Project of arriving at moral Perfection. I wish'd to live without committing any Fault at any time; I would conquer all that either Natural Inclination, Custom, or Company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a Task of more Difficulty than I had imagined. While my Attention was taken up in guarding against one Fault, I was often surpris'd by another. Habit took the Advantage of Inattention. Inclination was sometimes too strong for Reason. I concluded at length, that the mere speculative Conviction that it was our Interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our Slipping, and that the contrary Habits must be broken and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any Dependence on a steady uniform Rectitude of Conduct. For this purpose I therefore contriv'd the following Method.

In the various enumerations of the moral Virtues I had met with in my Reading, I found the Catalogue more or less numerous, as different Writers included more or fewer Ideas under the same Name. Temperance, for example, was by the some confin'd to eating & Drinking, while by others it was extended to mean

the moderating every other Pleasure, Appetite, Inclination or Passion, bodily or mental, even to our Avarice & Ambition. I propos'd to myself, for the sake of Clearness, to use rather more Names with fewer Ideas annex'd to each, than a few Names with more Ideas; and I included under Thirteen Names of Virtues all that at that time occur'd to me as necessary or desirable, and annex'd to each a short Precept, which fully express'd the extent I gave to its Meaning.

These Names of Virtues with their Precepts were:

TEMPERANCE. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

SILENCE. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

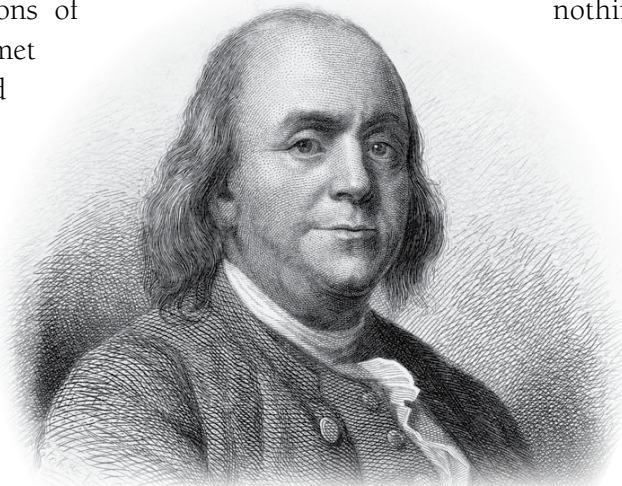
ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

RESOLUTION. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

FRUGALITY. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

INDUSTRY. Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

SINCERITY. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.



JUSTICE. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

MODERATION. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

CLEANLINESS. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, cloaths, or habitation.

TRANQUILITY. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

CHASTITY. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dulness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

HUMILITY. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My Intention being to acquire the Habitude of all these Virtues, I judg'd it would be well not to distract my Attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time, and when I should be Master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on till I should have gone thro' the thirteen. And as the previous Acquisition of some might facilitate the Acquisition of certain others, I arrang'd them with that View as they stand above. Temperance first, as it tends to procure that Coolness & Clearness of Head, which is so necessary where constant Vigilance was to be kept up, and Guard maintained, against the unremitting Attraction of ancient Habits, and the Force of perpetual Temptations. This being acquir'd & establish'd, Silence would be more easy, and my Desire being to gain Knowledge at the same time that I improv'd in Virtue and considering that in Conversation it was obtain'd rather by the use of the ears than of the Tongue, & therefore wishing to break a Habit I was getting into of Prattling, Punning & Joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling Company, I gave Silence the second Place. This, and the next, order, I expected would allow me more Time for attending to my Project and my Studies; RESOLUTION, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent Virtues; Frugality & Industry, by freeing me from my remaining Debt, & producing Affluence & Independence, would make more easy the Practice of Sincerity and Justice, &c &c. Conceiving then that agreeable to the Advice of Pythagoras in his Golden Verses daily examination would be

necessary, I contriv'd the following Method for conducting that examination.

I made a little Book in which I allotted a Page for each of the Virtues. I rul'd each Page with red Ink, so as to have seven Columns, one for each Day of the Week, marking each Column with a letter for the Day. I cross'd these Columns with thirteen red lines, marking the Beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the Virtues, on which line & in its proper Column I might mark by a little black Spot every Fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that Virtue upon that Day.

I determined to give a Week's strict Attention to each of the Virtues successively. Thus in the first Week my great Guard was to avoid every the least offense against Temperance, leaving the other Virtues to their ordinary Chance, only marking every evening the Faults of the Day. Thus if in the first Week I could keep my first line marked clear of Spots, I suppos'd the Habit of that Virtue so much strengthen'd and its opposite weaken'd, that I might venture extending my Attention to include the next, and for the following Week keep both lines clear of Spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go thro' a Course complete in Thirteen Weeks, and four Courses in a Year. And like him who having a Garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad Herbs at once, which would exceed his Reach and his Strength, but works on one of the Beds at a time, & having accomplish'd the first proceeds to a Second; so I should have, (I hoped) the encouraging Pleasure of seeing on my Pages the Progress I made in Virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their Spots, till in the end by a Number of Courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean Book after a thirteen Weeks, daily examination.

I enter'd upon the execution of this Plan for Self examination, and continu'd it with occasional Intermissions for some time. I was surpris'd to find myself so much fuller of Faults than I had imagined, but I had the Satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the Trouble of renewing now & then my little Book, which by scraping out the Marks on the Paper of old Faults, to make room for new ones in a new Course, became full of Holes: I transferr'd my Tables



& Precepts to the Ivory leaves of a Memorandum Book, on which the lines were drawn with red Ink that made a durable Stain, and on those lines I mark'd my Faults with a black lead Pencil, which Marks I could easily wipe out with a wet Sponge. After a while I went thro' one course only in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employ'd in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.

...on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavour, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, tho' they never reach the wish'd-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

## Questions to Consider



1. How does Franklin understand virtue? How does he define, use, and refine the term?
2. What was Franklin's rationale for ordering and working on the virtues in the order he did?
3. Franklin wrote that there was something more powerful than his intention to live virtuously. What was that more powerful thing?
4. Aristotle believed that virtue was a habit. Would Franklin have agreed with him?
5. How did Franklin incorporate the virtues he wrote about into his project to embody them?
6. How does Franklin describe his struggle to live virtuously? Do you believe moral perfection is possible? Is so, how? If not, what motivates an individual to act virtuously? Is it better to aim for perfection and fail than to not try at all?
7. What does Franklin reveal about his beliefs regarding the universality of right and wrong?
8. Did Franklin believe he succeeded in his ultimate goal? Why or why not?
9. What value did Franklin find in the project?
10. What most impresses you about Franklin's project?
11. Compare Franklin's list to the one found in the "Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue" handout earlier in this book. What differences do you find? What similarities?
12. How could you borrow some of Franklin's ideas and strategies to help you work on just one or two character traits you would like to improve?

## STUDENT ACTIVITY

*There's an App for That*



Imagine that the inventive Benjamin Franklin is not only alive in the present day, but that he is designing an app to help people improve their character. It will be a twenty-first century version of his journaling project as described in his *Autobiography*. With your partner(s), write a description of how the app will work. How will goals and progress be measured? Will it interface with any existing apps? Will it require any accessories?

Give the app a name, as well as a description that would accompany its listing in the App Store.

**Extension:** Display the students' App Store descriptions, and devise a system for students to "browse" the App Store, then select two or three apps for which to write a review and to rate on a five-star system.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Be Like Ben?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



*Directions* Should you try to be “the best,” or even perfect, at every endeavor? If perfection is unattainable, then what is the purpose of striving, every day, to do better than you did the day before? Identify an area of your life in which you, like Ben Franklin, work to improve, and explain why you do so.

[illegible]

*“Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.”*

–BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

# HEROES & VILLAINS

## Answer Key



### *Defining Civic Virtue (p. v)*

1. Answers will vary. Some students may say that when they encounter the term “civic virtue,” they assume it refers to religious morality, or some sort of general morality. Others may be more specific, saying that it refers to personal conduct that affects society in a positive way.
2. Answers will vary. Encourage open and thoughtful discussion of responses.
3. Sample responses: Because human beings are imperfect, no one person should have too much power—hence, separation of powers. Because no one group should have too much power—limited government.

### *Clarifying Civic Virtue (p. x)*

1. Students’ responses should expand on their previous answers and incorporate historical and philosophical context, perhaps including Aristotle and indicating that it may include, but does not require, religious belief. Some students should also note that it involves a balance between extremes, action rather than just ideals, regular habits, and must be related to just purposes.
2. If student response did change, response should be a reasoned explanation of what points in the reading contributed to this change. If the student response did not change, response should provide a reasoned explanation for why, based on the text, it did not.
3. Student responses should have expanded beyond their first response and make a direct

connection between the U.S. constitution and a constitutional republic, as well as to the ideas about human nature and the constitutional republic as addressed in the reading.

### *Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue (p. xi)*

Student responses will vary; accept answers that make a reasonable connection among the civic virtue, the person or character, and the justification based on the definition.

### *Benjamin Franklin and Civic Virtue - Questions to Consider (p. xix)*

1. Franklin understood virtue to be habits or traits that would reflect good conduct (“rectitude of conduct”) and bring a person closer to moral perfection. He refined his understanding as he concluded that moral perfection was not possible, but that the ambition and attempt toward it made him a better and a happier person.
2. Franklin ordered the virtues because he thought that working on all of them at the same time would be distracting and that focusing on one at a time would be a more effective way to work on them. He put them in an order so that virtues he acquired earlier might help him to develop others that were later on his list.
3. “Contrary Habits” or “Inclination” led him to keep slipping into habits that were not virtuous.
4. Given how frequently Franklin refers “habit” as a part of his attempt to become more “morally

perfect,” and the system he devised in order to increase his practice of virtues, he appears to have agreed with Aristotle that virtue was, indeed, a habit.

5. Franklin intended to master one virtue at a time, focusing on each one for a week and marking in his book the number of times he failed at that virtue. His goal was to keep each week clear of marks indicating when he had failed.
6. Franklin has difficulty living as virtuously as was his goal. He had difficulty keeping his weekly lines “marked clear of spots.” He did, however, see his faults diminish.

Moral perfection: Student responses will vary, but should be reasonable and related to the student’s overall beliefs and understandings. Challenge students to identify the bases of their motivations to act virtuously.

7. Franklin’s words are based on assumptions that right and wrong are universal and absolute, even while moral perfection may not be humanly impossible.
8. Franklin did not accomplish his initial goal of moral perfection because he never did rid himself of the faults he sought to eliminate because he found himself “so much fuller of Faults” than he had imagined.
9. He did eventually begin to see his faults diminish, and he did become a happier person than he would have been if he had not made the attempt, and he believes he was made better for having tried.
10. Student responses will vary, but should be based on the text.
11. Similarities students may find are:
  - Contribution – Industry.
  - Integrity – Sincerity.
  - Justice – Justice.
  - Perseverance – Industry.
  - Respect – Chastity.

- Responsibility – Resolution. Responsibility – Frugality. Responsibility – Temperance.
- Self-Governance – Silence. Self-Governance – Order. Self-Governance – Moderation.

Students may find several differences, including that some of Franklin’s virtues may not seem to correlate to those in the “Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue” list. Students may also identify differences in the definition of virtues that may otherwise seem similar.

12. Accept reasoned student responses.

### *Tanks in the Square (p. 3)*

1. Students may be somewhat familiar with this scene, including the fact that it is often referred to as “Tank Man” and that it took place in China. Some may know the decade or year it took place. Some may also know something about the political context and its place in history. Use responses to inform instruction.
2. Student responses will vary. Use responses to inform instruction throughout the rest of the activity. Provide answers, to students’ additional questions, or provide a means for them to research them in class.
3. Accept reasoned responses that are based on what can be observed in the photograph. Students should spot the man standing in front of the tank.
4. Students should identify the man standing in front of the tank on the left side of the photo. In the context of the size of the Square, and the size and number of the tanks, he appears quite small—and could almost be missed by someone not looking closely.

Students may say that he is making a statement about his determination in his protest, about his lack of fear of the tanks and troops, or of his willingness to sacrifice for what he is demanding.

5. Student responses may vary. Accept responses that are reasonably based on appropriate knowledge of the relevant history, as well as a reasonable understanding of the First Amendment.
6. Some students may believe that Wilson admired the demonstrators for their persistence and had a change of heart. Others may believe it was a matter of political expedience. If time allows, consider having students research the political and economic climate at the time to weigh other factors that may have influenced the decision.
7. Although the change for which she was working did not come immediately, Paul's perseverance helped to rally many others to her cause, and eventually did play a part in a major societal change—winning women the right to vote.
8. Accept reasonable responses that are based on an appropriate level of knowledge about Paul and U.S. history, as well as incorporating some level of understanding about the value of perseverance.
9. Students' additional examples of perseverance will vary. Accept responses that demonstrate an understanding of perseverance and the effect a person's perseverance can have on society as a whole.

When society has a number of people who are willing to take the more difficult path in the cause of justice or other principles that are part of the U.S. Constitution, it strengthens the republic by ensuring that society holds to its ideals.

### ***Contribution – The Schechter Brothers: Discussion Guide (p. 51)***

1. The Schechter brothers used their knowledge about poultry, butchering, Jewish dietary law, and their neighbors' needs to offer safe, affordable chicken to their customers during

difficult economic circumstances (the Great Depression).

2. They were charged with: selling "unfit" poultry, allowing customers to select their own chickens, refusing inspections by regulators, and selling chickens to unlicensed purchasers. They were also accused of "competing too hard" and keeping prices "too low."
3. Students may respond that they were surprised, and some may indicate some degree of indignation. They may relate this to a sense of justice, and that what happened was unjust, or wrong. Many students may thus conclude that there is such a thing as right and wrong.
4. When a majority of citizens in a society are using their skills to contribute to their communities, whether through volunteerism or through their vocations, the community benefits.
5. In *A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corporation v. United States* (1935), the Supreme Court decided in favor of the Schechter brothers, ruling that the NIRA was unconstitutional and that Congress had exceeded its constitutional authority in delegating its lawmaking power to the president.
6. Accept reasoned responses. Sample responses provided.
  - a. Students may decide it is not unfair because you close your business on your Sabbath day.
  - b. Some students may determine it is fair because a business owner can find various ways to keep costs low in order to compete in the market. Other students may disagree with the idea of keeping labor costs down. If so, ask students how their opinion may change if the employees are forced to accept lower wages versus if they voluntarily agree to lower wages in order to better compete

in the marketplace and increase their job security.

- c. Most students will identify this as unfair.
  - d. Unfair, unethical, illegal.
  - e. Unfair, unethical, illegal.
  - f. Responses will vary for other scenarios that you or others may suggest.
7. Since anti-Semitism was not atypical at the time, it puts into context the status that the Schechter brothers had in the greater society beyond their neighborhood, and also helps to highlight other, “hidden” factors that may have played a part in their being targeted more so than other business at that time and place.
8. Some students may say that that when people use their talents and work hard, it strengthens society. Others may add an economic framework by indicating a relationship between economic freedom and a strong economy. Still others may note that that in trying to maintain a business that aligned with their religious principles, they were setting an example of integrity in their business dealings.
- Given the economic depression at that time, people like the Schechter brothers made food available and affordable, thus providing dignity to neighbors who may have been in financial difficulty. They also likely provided jobs to people in their neighborhoods.
9. Responses should indicate transfer of understanding from the Schechter brothers’ story to a variety of civic virtues.
10. When people are free to pursue their talents, passions, and opportunities, they are better able to maximize their contribution to society. Society benefits more when people are free to contribute to the best of their ability.
11. The individual freedom to develop one’s skills and maximize one’s opportunities provides an incentive for citizens to better contribute to

their communities and to thus build a stronger society, thus strengthening the republic.

12. Accept reasoned responses and invite civil discussion. Introduce questions of religious freedom as appropriate.
13. Accept reasoned responses and invite civil discussion based on the facts in the text and on an age-appropriate understanding of the Constitution.
14. Students may mention artistic, athletic, academic, or other interests and talents, Encourage them to also consider additional skills such as team-building, leadership, and service. They may note that when they are reliable in their commitments to others in their musical ensembles, theater groups, or athletic teams, they help everyone else to improve and they strengthen the school community. When they work hard and use their skills, they help to provide things that are either beautiful or useful to others. Some students may also note that when each person works hard and uses his or her talents, this frees up other people to not have to do something they may not be as good at and to use their own particular talents, thus making the community or family stronger as a whole.

### *When Free Speech and Respect Collide: Analyzing Primary Source Documents (p. 58)*

1. Close-reading of the photographs.
- A group of teenagers or young adults is gathered. All except one are white.
  - Everyone is standing, and most are facing in the same direction and appear to be walking. One young woman has her mouth open and appears to be yelling at the one young woman who is not white. Some people are looking at the young woman who is yelling; others are looking