

SELF-GOVERNANCE



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 QUESTIONS: **How did George Washington's self-governance influence the early republic? How did it influence what we value in both citizens and leaders?**

Before class, post pictures of the Jean-Antoine Houdon sculpture of George Washington and of the John Trumbull painting of General Washington resigning his commission.

Separate the class into two groups. Distribute **Close-Reading Washington in Houdon's Art** to one group, and **Close-Reading Washington in Trumbull's Art** to the other group.

Have students work in pairs or trios to analyze their assigned work of art using the questions provided.

Once students have completed their analyses, post a photo of the sculpture and invite the students who close-read it to explain it to the students who did not study it. Invite additional observations from other students. Do the same with the Trumbull painting.

Introduce this definition of **self-governance**: *To be self-controlled, avoiding extremes and to not be excessively influenced or controlled by others.*

Transition to the **George Washington and Self-Governance** narrative by asking: *Given what you have "read" in this sculpture and this painting, how did George Washington's character influence the early U.S. republic? How did it influence what our society values in its citizens as well as its leaders?*

Teacher's Note

Excerpts from Washington's Farewell Address, critical thinking question 3:

An optional variation: Make a set of cards in one color, with one civic virtue on each card. Make another set of cards in a second color, with one constitutional principle on each card. Duplicate some constitutional principles so that you have the same number of cards in each set, and make enough cards for each student to have one.

Conduct an “inside-outside circle” activity. Students form two concentric circles with the inner circle facing out, and the outer circle facing in. Two “matched up” students (one inner circle, one outer) show each other their cards and explain how that civic virtue and constitutional principle relate to each other. Then, the outer circle rotates clockwise one person while the inner circle stays in the same position. Repeat the process until the circle has made a full rotation and each student has had at least one “match-up” conversation.

CLOSE-READING WASHINGTON IN HOUDON'S ART



Jean-Antoine Houdon's sculpture of Washington, seen from the front. Virginia State Capitol Richmond, Virginia. Albert Herring for Wikimedia.

Analyze key elements of this statue to answer the questions below and on the following page.

1. Describe Washington's posture.

2. Look at his hands and feet. Describe the gestures indicated by the hands.

3. What does the placement of his feet indicate about him?

4. Describe his facial expression. Where is his gaze directed in relation to the statue itself?

What might the sculptor have been indicating about Washington in sculpting his face in this way?

5. Neoclassical sculptures of Houdon's and Washington's time typically depicted their subjects wearing the garments antiquity. Washington wanted to be shown in contemporary clothing and is shown in military garb. What does this communicate about his personality, temperament, and what he valued?

6. Washington's left arm, as well as his cape and a sword, are resting on a fasces (a symbol of power). He is wearing his military uniform. What does this communicate about Washington?

7. Behind Washington, visible through his legs, is a plow. In his right hand is a cane. What does this communicate about him?

8. Taken as a whole, the imagery alludes to the ancient Roman, Cincinnatus.* Based on what you know about both Cincinnatus and Washington, what is the sculptor conveying to the viewer about Washington's priorities and his character?

9. How might the imagery of both military and farm life reference Washington's self-governance?

**Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus was an ancient Roman soldier and statesman who worked on his own farm until, during an invasion, he was asked to serve as dictator of Rome. He did so, and after the Roman victory over the invaders, he relinquished his power in order to return to his farm.*

CLOSE-READING WASHINGTON IN TRUMBULL'S ART

Directions Analyze key elements of the painting to answer the questions below and on the following page.



General George Washington Resigning His Commission, oil on canvas by John Trumbull, U.S. Capitol.

1. Describe Washington's posture.

Describe the posture of the others in the room.

2. How did the artist use light, color, and line to create a focal point?

What is the focal point of the painting?

3. Describe the gestures indicated by Washington's hands and feet.

What is he doing with each hand? What is he holding in his right hand, and what is he doing with it?
What is the artist highlighting about Washington?

4. Look at the faces of the other people in the room. At what is their attention directed?

How many people are looking elsewhere?

What does this communicate about their attitudes about Washington and what is occurring?

5. Describe Washington's facial expression.

Where are his eyes directed?

What might Trumbull have been indicating about Washington in depicting his facial expression in this way?

6. An empty chair is behind Washington. A regal-looking cloak is resting on it. What reference is Trumbull making about what Washington is doing in this painting?

What statement does this make about Washington, power, and self-restraint?

SELF-GOVERNANCE

George Washington and Self-Governance



It was 1783, and George Washington's troops were stationed at Newburgh, New York. At this late stage of the conflict, Congress was flat-out broke, and the army had not been paid for months. On March 10, an anonymous address from a "fellow soldier" (most likely Major John Armstrong) circulated through camp, calling the officers to meet the next day to answer "a country that tramples upon your rights, disdains your cries, and insults your distress." The announcement suggested that the army should, under Washington's leadership, defy Congress and launch a military coup. At this moment the Revolution could have spun out of control, ending in tyranny. Resistant to the allure of power, Washington determined to quell the incipient uprising.

Recognizing that the army's patience had worn thin and that its grievances were legitimate, Washington knew he could neither cancel the meeting nor allow it to take place. Instead he shrewdly called his own substitute gathering on March 15, hoping somehow to mollify the men and avert a coup. He would meet his disgruntled officers in person, face-to-face, either to stand them down or be deposed.

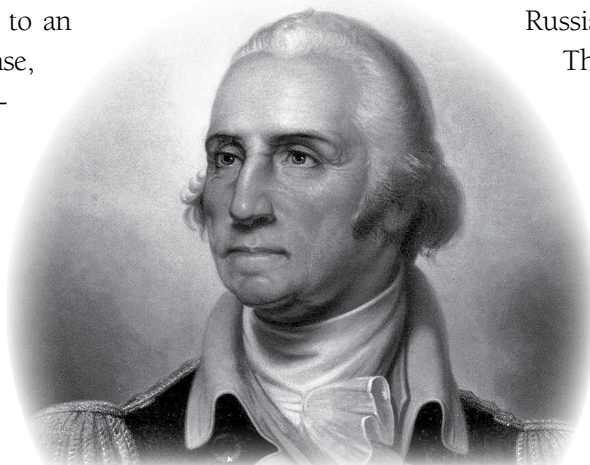
On the fifteenth, a "visibly agitated" Washington (according to an eye witness) spoke to a tense, restive audience in an overcrowded assembly hall known as "The Temple of Virtue." He begged the officers not to take a step that would bury their reputations in infamy. "My God," he asked, what evil could the au-

thor of the anonymous address have been up to? "Can he be a friend to the Country? Rather is he not an insidious foe," perhaps even an enemy agent "sowing the seeds of discord & separation between the Civil and Military power of the Continent?"

Despite an eloquent and impassioned speech, Washington's arguments for forbearance fell on deaf ears. As hostile murmurs welled up in the audience, he miraculously subdued the malcontents with a dramatic gesture: Washington pulled out his glasses. No one had ever seen him wear them in public before. Donning them, he remarked, "Gentlemen, you must excuse me. Not only have I gone gray, but I have also grown blind in the service of my country." That poignant moment, that admission of weakness, that selfless dedication to duty, shattered the mutiny and left the officers in tears. After Washington left the room, the assemblage unanimously rejected a military coup in favor of peaceful negotiations with Congress. The new nation had survived its brush with despotism.

Indeed, the American Revolution is unusual among modern world revolutions because it did not end in a dictatorship, like the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions.

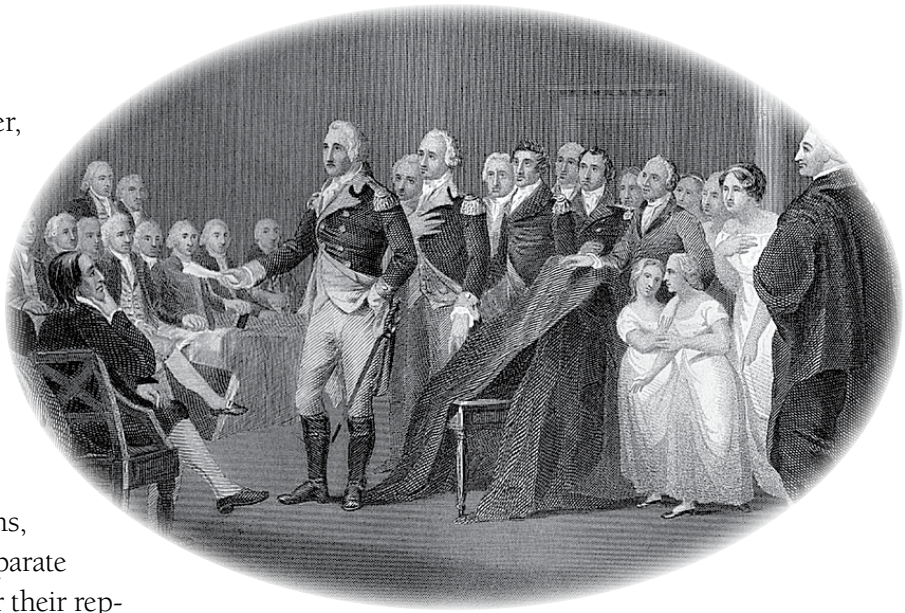
That the new nation instead ended up a republic had a lot to do with Washington's careful use of power. Once the war was over and independence won, his job complete, Washington resigned as Commander in Chief and retired back to his Mount Vernon plantation. The iro-



ny is that by never abusing power, and by giving it back to people, he became more and more powerful. Washington won the trust of his countrymen, who repeatedly called for his services, not only as Commander in Chief, but also as president of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and finally as President of the U.S. for two terms, from 1789 to 1797. On four separate occasions the American people or their representatives thus unanimously elected Washington to lead them.

Washington's contemporaries well understood his virtue. Consider the statue sculpted by the eighteenth-century French artist Jean Antoine Houdon. Instead of depicting one of Washington's military victories, the statue shows Washington retiring from the army, hanging up his military cloak and sword, and going back to his plow. Similarly, artist John Trumbull's painting that hangs in the U.S. Capitol rotunda shows Washington resigning his military commission back to Congress and becoming an ordinary citizen again.

Washington always did the virtuous thing because he wanted "secular immortality." Some men seek spiritual immortality—everlasting life in heaven. But Washington wanted a different type of immortality. He wanted to live forever in the pages of history books, and in the hearts and minds of the American people. He wanted to be a leader unlike any other in modern world history—greatest



of them all. To do that, he had to walk away from power, unlike other leaders.

Washington kept answering the call of his country because he became the only one who could. Not until the nation gained maturity could another leader hold it together. As Thomas Jefferson admonished him, "North and South will only hang together if they have you to hang onto." By accepting two terms as President, Washington put his cherished reputation at stake. Had he died in office (his greatest fear was dying in office) he would have died holding power instead of giving it up, and his prized reputation would have been shot. Not until he retired for good did he secure his secular immortality once and for all. Without an "Indispensable Man" like Washington, the American experiment in republican government could never have succeeded, or become a model and inspiration to the world.

—STUART LEIBIGER
LaSalle University



Defining Civic Virtues: Self-Governance

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

Discussion Guide



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

1. What were George Washington's troops considering doing in 1783?
2. Do you think Washington was tempted to seize power and become a dictator? Explain.
3. Why might Washington, while addressing the troops, have paused to put on his glasses and admit his eyesight was failing?
4. Self-governance requires officials to moderate the "passions" of the people, i.e., to serve as a check against the tyranny of the majority, or against mob violence. What are some ways that Washington accomplished this?
5. Self-governance also requires individuals to moderate *their own* passions, i.e., to put the public good ahead of their own self-interest. What are some ways Washington accomplished this?
6. Washington never abused the military power given to him as commander in chief of the continental army. He resisted the temptation to use the army as his personal bodyguard, to make himself a dictator, to become a Caesar, a Napoleon, or a Hitler. Instead, to what principles did Washington remain faithful?
7. Historian Stuart Leibiger notes the irony that by never abusing power, and by giving it back to people, Washington became more and more powerful. Why do you think this came about?
8. Think of other examples from history where individuals have voluntarily given up great power. Are they easy to find? In what ways can a leader demonstrate power by giving it up?
9. Why do you think Washington's greatest fear was that he would die in office? How does this evidence his putting the public good ahead of his own interest?
10. Why does self-government at a societal level require self-governance on an individual level?
11. Moments after taking the oath of office for the first time, President Washington addressed the new nation, stating, "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." Discuss how you personally uphold the virtue of self-governance and ensure the success of this experiment.

Optional Extension: Read the following excerpt from *Federalist No. 55* and respond to the question that follows.

“As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form. Were the pictures which have been drawn by the political jealousy of some among us faithful likenesses of the human character, the inference would be, that there is not sufficient virtue among men for self-government; and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another.”

—James Madison, *Federalist No. 55*

What could happen in a self-governing society if citizens don’t have self-restraint? If elected leaders, and those they appoint, don’t have self-restraint?

Virtue In Action: Class Activity



With your partner(s), highlight the section of the Farewell Address that your teacher assigns to you. Then, read and discuss that section and answer the questions at the end of the handout. Be prepared to report on your responses to those questions.

Excerpts from Washington's Farewell Address (1796)

The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant... it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

...be assured that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness, but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

...The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. ...Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting

Notes on Washington's Farewell Address (1796)

Washington delivers the Farewell Address to tell the American people that he would not seek a third term as president.

Although he is leaving he still has the nation's future interest in mind.

*He contributed to the organization and administration of the government with the best judgment possible even though he felt his qualifications were inferior.
His services were temporary.*

He believes he that he owes a debt of gratitude to the country and the honors and confidence it bestowed upon him.

my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal.

... The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels, and joint efforts of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

...Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

... Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally. ...This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension... is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction... turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty. ...the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

...It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one

Americans must have pride in patriotism despite differences in religion, manners, habits, and political principles.

Liberty will be protected in a government with divided powers. The government needs to be able to withstand the whims of factions, the people need to be limited by the prescribe laws, and security and tranquility must be maintained in order to protect the rights of people and property.

All types of governments must deal with the passions of the human mind.

Problems will increase and men will seek security in the absolute power of one individual.

It is the interest and duty of the people to discourage and restrain these issues.

Government officials should confine themselves to their constitutional powers and avoid overstepping into other departments.

department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositaries, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them.

...Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them... Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government.

...In offering you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

...How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

If not, the powers may end up being consolidated into one department, causing despotism.

Checks on the exercise of political power by dividing it and distributing it among many departments are necessary. The people should be cautious and prevent encroachments on power between the departments of government.

Religion and morality are crucial in protecting political prosperity. People cannot be true patriots if they try to subvert human happiness.

All people (including politicians) should respect these habits.

Even without religion, morality can prevail through education, reason, and experience.

He does believe that his recommendations will be beneficial to moderate factions or parties, warn against foreign powers, warn against false patriotism and protect the welfare of the people.

Washington believes that he has been guided by principles.

Critical Thinking Questions



1. Write a 1 to 3 sentence summary explaining your assigned section of the Farewell Address.
2. What does this section reveal about George Washington's character? Which of the civic virtues (listed below) is reflected in it?
3. Washington believed that virtue is essential to a republic and was himself a model of self-governance. Below, circle the civic virtue and the constitutional principle most apparent in the section of the Farewell Address that you read and discussed, then answer the question at bottom.

Civic Virtues	Contribution	Courage	Humility
	Integrity	Justice	Perseverance
	Respect	Responsibility	Self-governance
Constitutional Principles	Checks and balances	Limited government	Individual liberty
	Federalism	Consent of the governed	Separation of powers

In what way is this civic virtue an important part of maintaining a form of government based, in part, on that particular constitutional principle?

Virtue In Action: Individual Activities



All citizens must play a role for self-government to succeed. For the next month, make a special effort to be aware of and act in ways that promote your own self-governance.

- Write a personal mission statement and a plan for living it out.
- If you start or lead a club, a business, or any new initiative, find ways to ensure it can continue to endure without you there.
- If you play a team sport, be aware of your chance to work with teammates. Instead of trying to make every shot, pass the ball to others who are better positioned.
- Thomas Paine said, “Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice.” Draft a written response to Paine’s statement, identifying areas where you find it applicable in your own life.

Sources & Further Reading

Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. New York: Vintage, 2005.

Leibiger, Stuart. *Founding Friendship: George Washington, James Madison, and the Creation of the American Republic*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001.

Washington, George. “Farewell Address.” September 19, 1796

Washington, George. *George Washington’s Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior*. N.p.: CreateSpace Independent Platform, 2013.

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, and you are encouraged to create your own prompts for other suggested works.

“If” by Rudyard Kipling

How does the author define manhood? Are these qualities important only for men?

OTHER WORKS

Emma by Jane Austen

“Go Forth to Life” by Samuel Longfellow

Henry IV, part 1 by William Shakespeare

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Rediscovering George Washington directed by Michael Pack, narrated by Richard Brookhiser

Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen

Self-Governance

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

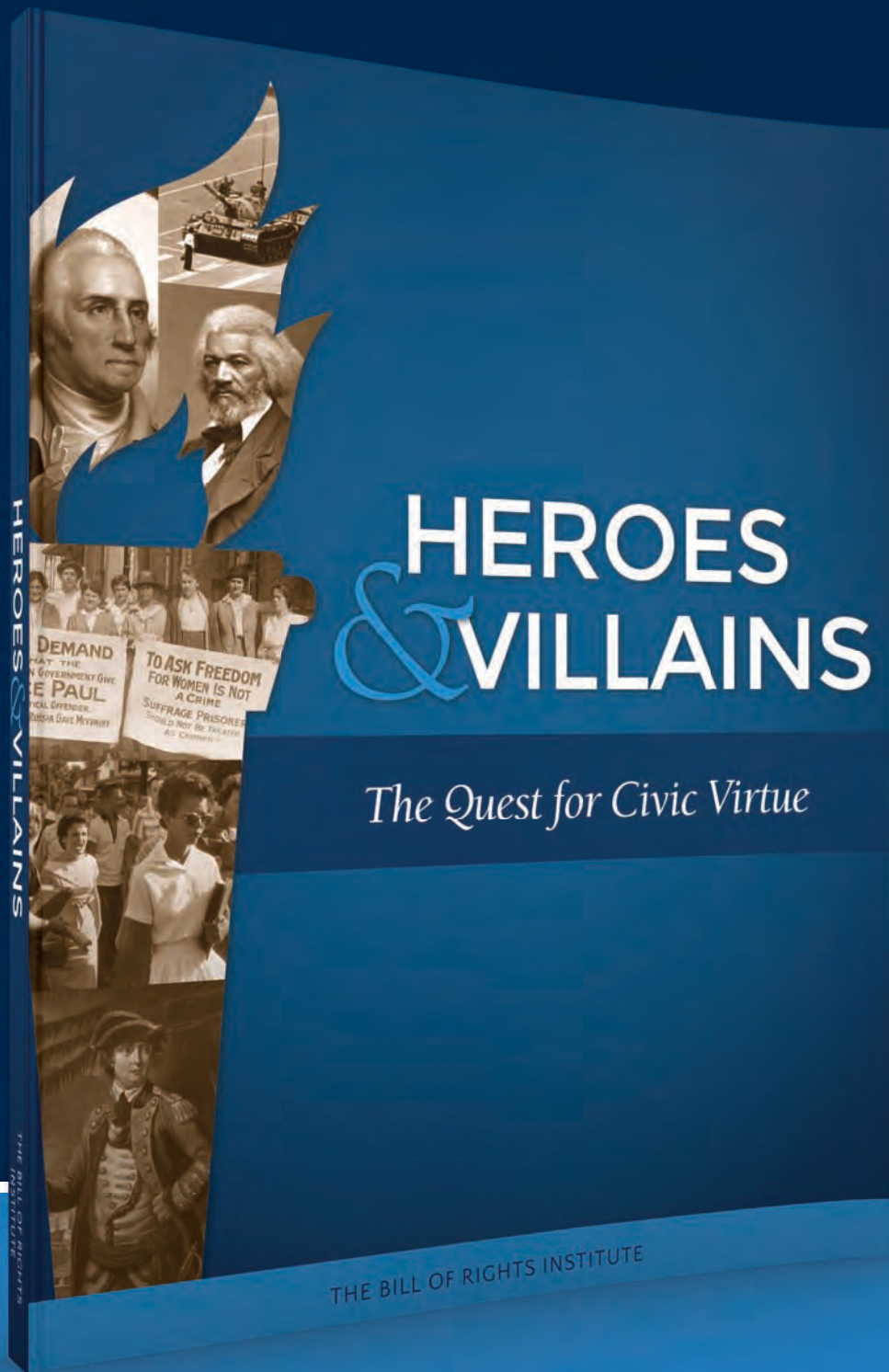


Directions Self-governance integrates self-reliance and moderation. What relationship do you see between individual self-governance and political self-government? In what ways can you govern yourself to ensure the success of American self-government?

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.

“Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice.”

—THOMAS PAINE



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

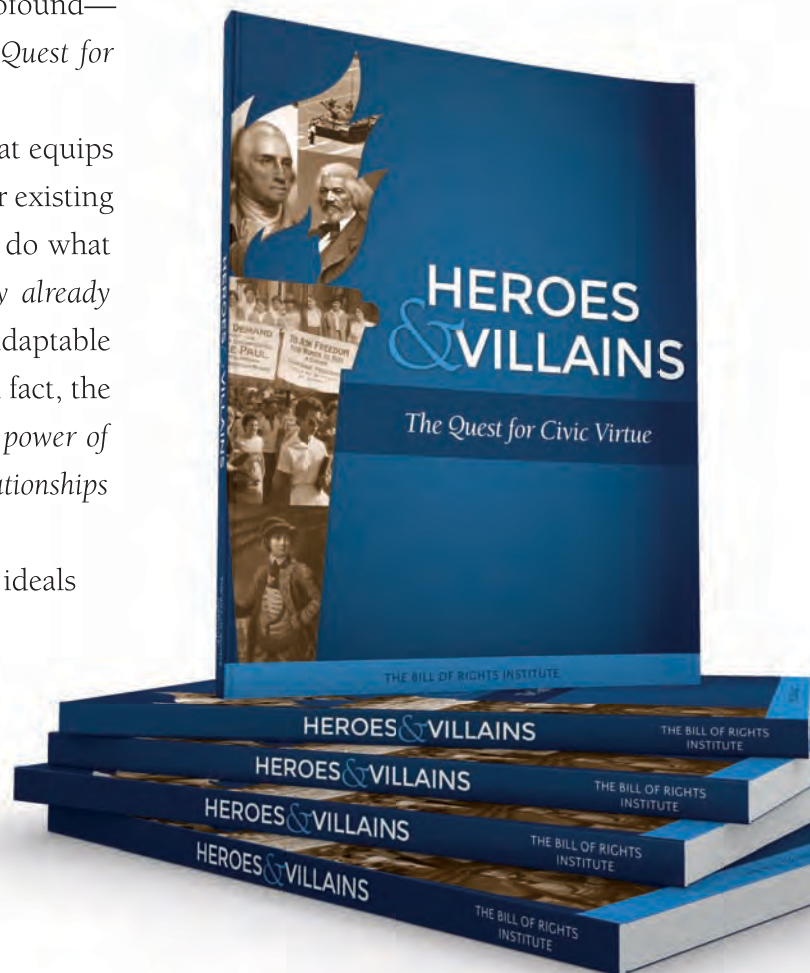
Introducing Our New Resource



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. 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.*

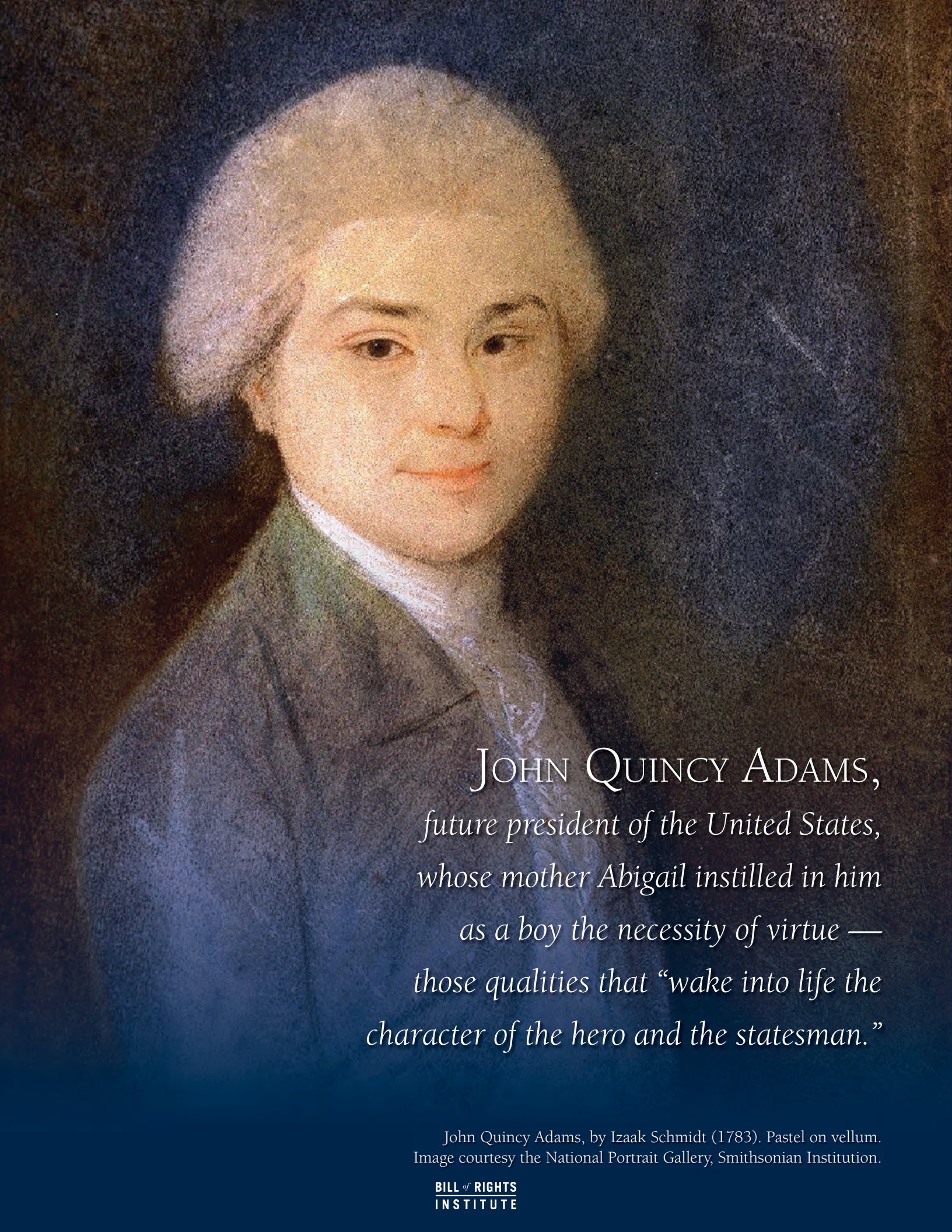
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JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,
*future president of the United States,
whose mother Abigail instilled in him
as a boy the necessity of virtue —
those qualities that “wake into life the
character of the hero and the statesman.”*

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
*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.*

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.*

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



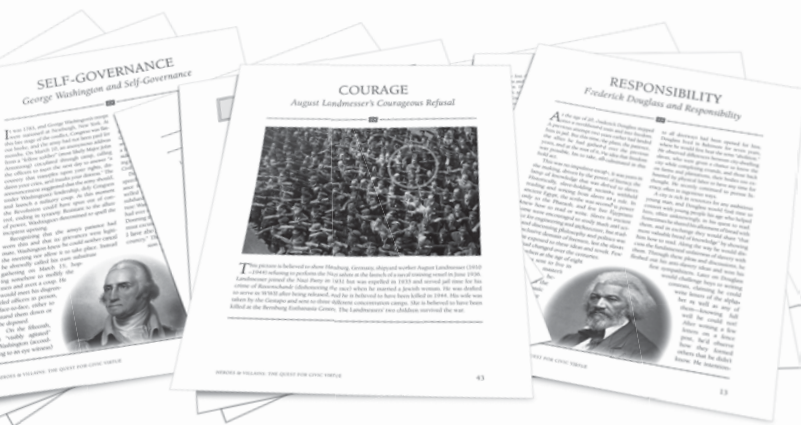
HEROES & VILLAINS

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

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.

Our School's Best Cultural Attributes Are...

-
-
-
-
-

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

-
-
-
-
-

Our Ideal School Culture Would Be...

Let's start with... Leadership

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.

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**

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*.

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*?

-
-
-
-

“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

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?

-
-
-
-

“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.

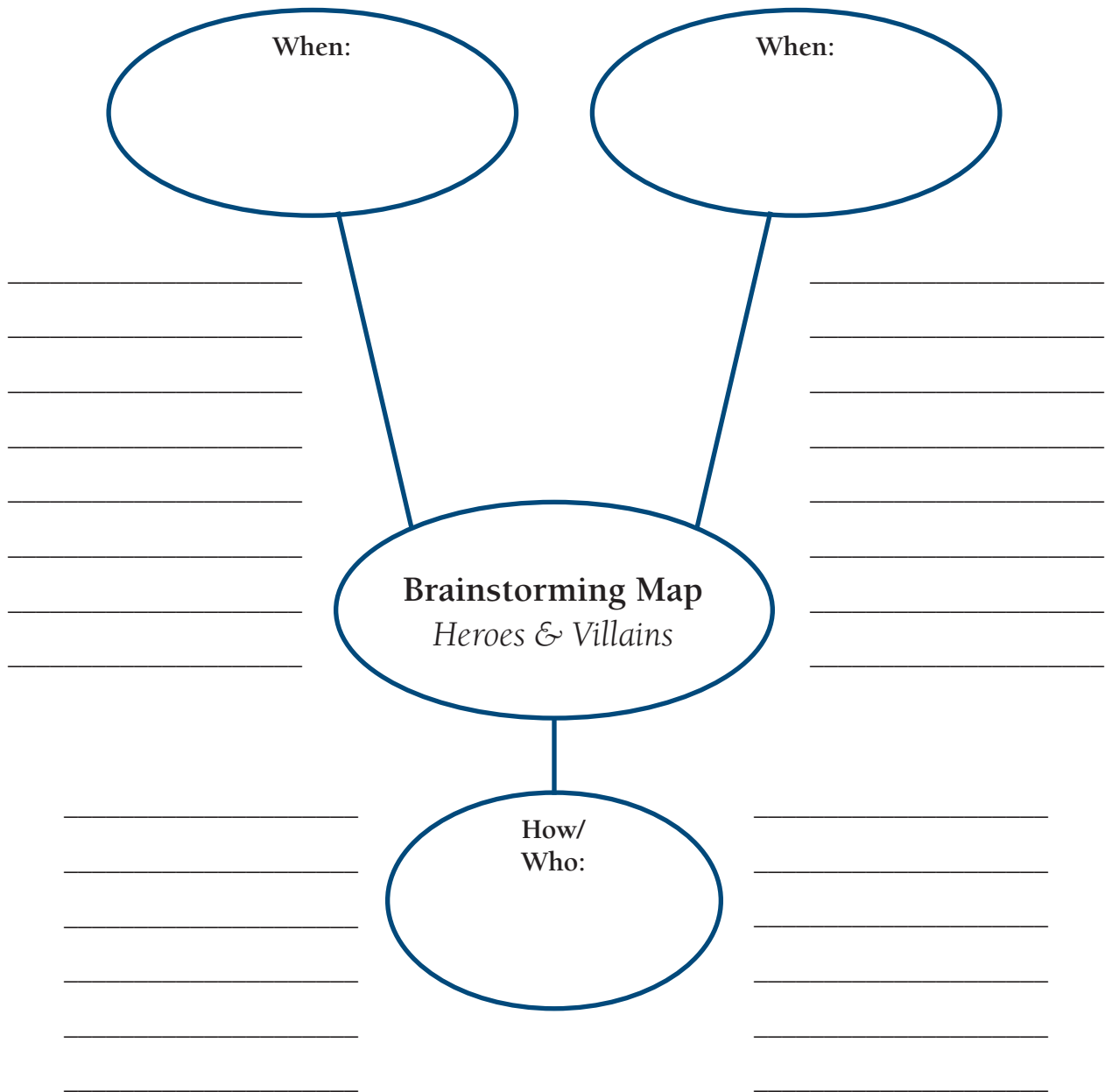


In Classrooms, in Rehearsal Rooms, on Athletic Fields, and Beyond

- 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

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

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.

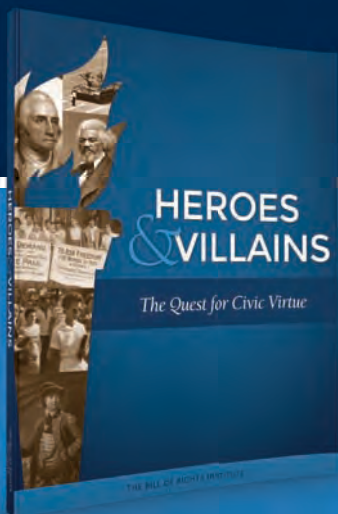
PRAISE FROM TEACHERS FOR *HEROES & VILLAINS*



“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

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?

2. Why do you believe this?

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?

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

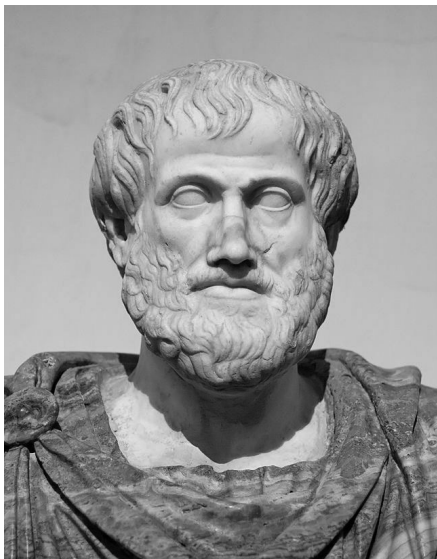


Virtue is a “golden mean.”

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?

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?

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

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

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?

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 th 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		

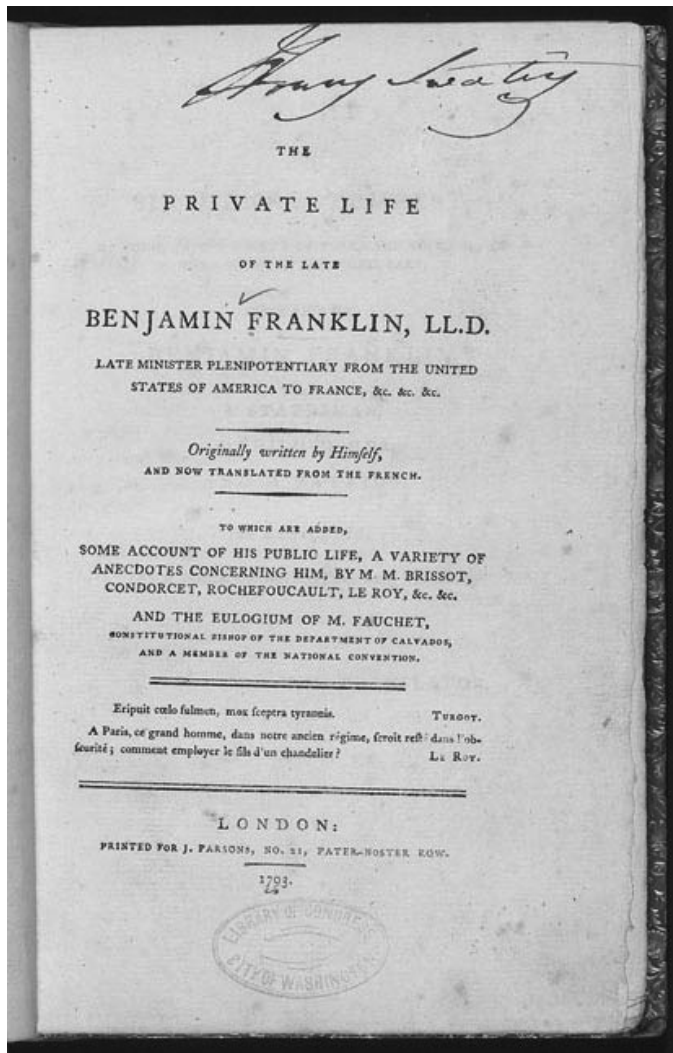
As students enter, instruct them to:

- 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.

It 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.

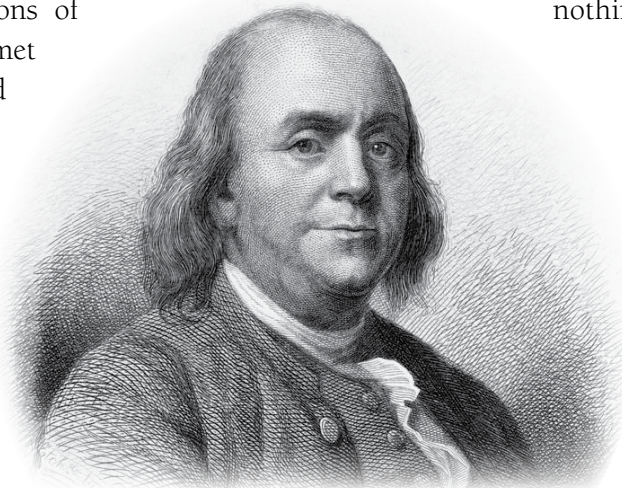
ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

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 single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. 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.

This image shows a single 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.

“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.

3. Accept and discuss reasoned responses.
4. Student responses will vary; guide students toward a connection between the ideas in the text and their own life experiences.
5. In a society founded on democratic principles, tyranny of the majority can occur. When it does, it is important that citizens have the courage to speak their conscience and stand up for people with little or no voice.

Benedict Arnold's Treason: Discussion Guide (p. 82)

1. He led a difficult American invasion of Canada (it failed); he helped to turn back a British invasion from Canada; he played an important role in the British surrender at Saratoga.
2. His compatriots became apathetic and abandoned (or seemed to abandon) the cause.
3. Answers may vary; accept reasoned responses based on appropriate understanding of relevant historical facts.
4. List of betrayals: fellow Americans left the fighting to a small minority; they failed to financially support the army; he did not receive the commission he thought was owed to him. Some of these may have been either imagined or exaggerated in his mind or influenced by grudges that he held.

Answers will vary regarding whether Arnold was correct, or whether the U.S. had lost its virtue.

5. Accept reasoned responses.
6. Answers may include self-deception, self-pity, impatience, or pride. Accept additional responses that are reasonable and based on the text.
7. In both cases, acknowledgement is given that a general played an important role there, but does not offer him honor by attaching his name.

8. By looking at the flip side of a virtue, we have the opportunity to consider the consequences when people fail to embody those virtues, as well as to better understand the importance of that virtue in a person's development, in his or her relationship to other people, and in society as a whole.
9. Arnold may very well have convinced himself that he was acting in the best interests of Americans.

Other answers may vary; accept reasoned responses.

Close-Reading Washington in Houdon's Art (p. 89–90)

1. Washington is standing in a relaxed posture, with his left leg stepping forward and knee bent.
2. His left hand rests atop his cloak, which is draped atop a fasces, and his right hand leans on a cane. His right foot is planted, and his left foot is stepping slightly outward. The clock beneath his left hand is a military cloak, referencing his military career. His right hand holds a cane, referencing his identity as a farmer. The emphasis is on his military and farming vocations. (The statue was begun prior to Washington's presidency and sculpted between 1785 and 1791.)
3. Answers may vary. Some students may say that his forward-moving foot indicates action and vision; others may note that his planted foot is on the side with the cane and infer an emphasis on farming.
4. His facial expression appears relaxed, yet firm. His chin is slightly raised, and his gaze is directed upward and forward. The sculptor may have been indicating firmness, decisiveness, and a focus on the future.
5. Washington's choice of clothing may indicate a desire to be portrayed as a man of his time

rather than having mythic or god-like status. It may also indicate that he wanted to be identified with his fellow citizens.

6. The fasces, sword, cloak, and military garb all convey Washington's power. The hand that rests on the fasces rests lightly.
7. The plow and the cane convey Washington's identity as a farmer. The hand holding the cane is grasping it tightly, while the hand on the fasces is resting more lightly. This could be seen, by some students, to communicate a value for both his military service and farming, but a stronger identification with the latter.
8. Cincinnatus was known for his leadership, civic virtue, and modesty, and famously left his plow when his country needed him to lead—and then gave up power and returned to his farm as soon as he was no longer needed in that in that position. The strong visual references to Cincinnatus are drawing clear parallels between the two men.
9. Responses may vary. Students may say that both military and farm life require hard work and self-discipline, and that both contribute to society in substantive ways.

Close-Reading Washington in Trumbull's Art (p. 91–92)

1. Washington is standing straight, in a somewhat relaxed posture, with one foot pointing forward in the same direction in which his right hand is reaching. All the other people in the room are standing so that they are facing in his direction.
2. Trumbull (the artist) used light to highlight Washington as the center of the painting. The rays of light form an inverted triangle that points directly at Washington, and while all other colors are earthy or muted, the single bright color is the golden yellow that highlights Washington, who is the painting's focal point.

3. One of Washington's hands is holding his sword; the other holds a piece of paper, the commission that he is resigning. The position of his feet, squarely facing the direction of the president of the Continental Congress, Thomas Mifflin, the person to whom he is handing his commission. The artist is highlighting Washington's action (resigning his commission, an act of leadership, humility, and willingness to give up power) and conveys a certainty of purpose.
4. The faces of all the people in the room are directed toward him. No one is looking elsewhere. This could indicate deference and respect.
5. Washington's facial expression appears relaxed and still. His eyes are directed at the person receiving his commission. Trumbull was highlighting the significance of Washington's act.
6. Trumbull may have been indicating Washington's humility and self-restraint in giving up power. This is a statement about Washington's willingness to give up power, and his self-restraint in doing so.

George Washington and Self-Governance: Discussion Questions (p. 95)

1. Based on a letter that was circulating through the camp at Newburgh, some of the troops may have been considering a military coup.
2. Accept reasoned responses.
3. Some students may say that Washington may simply have needed his glasses in order to see his notes for his remarks. Others may say that he did it for effect, as the crowd was on edge, and in order to emphasize his seniority and his physical frailty after his long service to those soldiers and their countrymen.

4. Washington did not cancel the meeting of those who were disgruntled, but called a substitute gathering at the “Temple of Virtue.” He acknowledged the agitation among the troops, the reasons for it, and the sacrifices they were making. He referred to talk of a coup as “insidious” and “sowing the seeds of discord and separation” and showed his own weakness (with the glasses and reference to his age).
5. Washington moderated his own desires and put the public good ahead of his own interests by being willing to serve the public in military and political capacities when called upon to do so. When he had served his military purpose, he gave up power. When he was a private citizen, he worked hard to be a productive farmer and entrepreneur. He was faithful to his duties in all these areas.
6. Washington remained faithful to the principles of limited power, consent of the governed, and civic virtue. Accept other reasoned answers.
7. The people had been fighting long and hard, and they and their families were sacrificing a great deal, for self-government—for the principles of consent of the governed, limited government power, and individual liberty. By demonstrating willingness to give up power, leaving it in the hands of the people, he showed trust in those ideals and in their judgment as citizens. His act reinforced the causes for which they were fighting, which affirmed their sacrifices and engendered their trust.
8. Accept responses that demonstrate an appropriate understanding of when or how voluntary relinquishing power can demonstrate leadership.
9. Washington may have been concerned that if were to die in office, he would not have had the opportunity to voluntarily give up power. It is doing this that would set him apart from others rulers in history and seal his legacy.
10. A society based, in part, on consent of the governed requires citizens who understand both their rights and their obligation. In addition, in a political system based on consent of the governed, citizens should exercise self-government over both themselves and those they elect to positions of political power.
11. Accept reasoned responses and use them to facilitate further discussion.

Class Activity – Washington’s Farewell Address: Critical Thinking Questions (p. 100)

1. Accept reasoned answers based on the text.
2. Accept reasoned answers that identify a civic virtue and make a reasonable connection to the text.
3. Responses will vary. *Sample answers:*
 - Self-governance on the part of elected officials ensures that they will abide by the principle of limited government or separation of powers, and not seek more power than is constitutional.
 - Responsibility is important among citizens in a society based on individual liberty because it restrains conduct harmful to society.
 - Consent of the governed means citizens must ensure limited government by holding their government accountable for their use of power.
 - Humility means knowing that no single person or small group of people has all the answers, and helps both citizens and elected officials help to value a system of federalism.
 - Humility means knowing that no single person or agency has all the answers or should have all the power, thus ensuring that our system of checks and balances is kept in place.