

AMBITION



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.

Ambition is a characteristic of human nature that can be driven by different impulses and put to different purposes. Honorable ambition can drive one to become great and serve the public as a lawgiver, a military hero, a builder of great art and culture, a great inventor, or a business leader. Examples include Cicero, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Charles De Gaulle. On the other hand, self-serving ambition for power and glory can lead one to put their own ambitions above those of the public, and lead to destruction and a tragic fall. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Aaron Burr sought their own glorification.

ACTIVITY

- Break the students up into groups of three or four. Have them brainstorm a few examples of self-interested ambition and betraying public trust.
- Distribute the graphic organizer handout and ask students to complete it. Make a list of three examples in stories or movies of characters who were ambitious to serve the larger good and three who pursued their own self-interested ambition.
- Invite the groups to share their answers and evidence to explain how the characters pursued self-sacrificing or self-interested ambition. As a large group, discuss: *How do you know when ambition is self-sacrificing or self-serving?*
- Ask a follow-up: *Why is ambition directed toward self-sacrifice and public service a civic virtue whereas self-interested ambition a vice?*

- Transition to the Aaron Burr narrative and ask students to think about the ambitions of Aaron Burr. He served the republic briefly in the Continental Army, as a New York politician, and as Vice-President under Thomas Jefferson from 1800 to 1804. Burr seemed to have an early career that was dedicated in part to serving the republic. However, he helped to organize a plot to invade and seize Spanish North American territory and become ruler over it while dividing the new United States. Ask students: *What are the differences between healthy ambition to serve the republic as a ruler or military leader as opposed to the unhealthy ambition to serve only one's own interests.*

Ambition Graphic Organizer



Directions: Make a list of three examples in stories or movies of characters who were ambitious to serve the larger good and three who pursued their own self-interested ambition. Then complete the rest of the chart.

Character	Movie/Book/Story	Self-Sacrificing or Self-Serving Ambition?	Evidence (What did they do?)
1.		Self-Sacrificing	
2.		Self-Sacrificing	
3.		Self-Sacrificing	
1.		Self-Serving	
2.		Self-Serving	
3.		Self-Serving	

AMBITION

Aaron Burr and Ambition



Many historical figures, and characters in fiction, have demonstrated great ambition and risen to become important leaders as in politics, the military, and civil society. Some people such as Roman statesman, Cicero, George Washington, and Martin Luther King, Jr., were interested in using their position of authority to serve the republic, promote justice, and advance the common good with a strong moral vision. Others, such as Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Adolf Hitler were often swept up in their ambitions to serve their own needs of seizing power and keeping it, personal glory, and their own self-interest. The former acted for the health of the republic and civil society; the latter usually acted to benefit themselves.

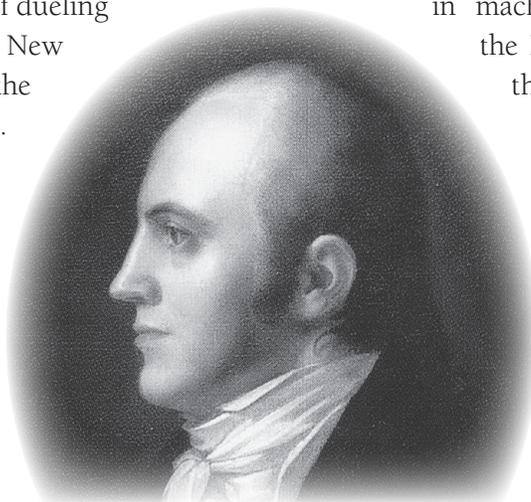
Aaron Burr was a leading American political figure in the early republic and was not immune to the vice of self-seeking ambition. On July 11, 1804, Vice President Burr faced off against his political nemesis, Alexander Hamilton, on a field in Weehawken, N.J. for a duel. Hamilton had called Burr an unprincipled and dangerous man, and Burr demanded satisfaction for the insult. The two met in a duel, and Burr killed Hamilton. Burr went into hiding to escape charges of dueling and murder in New York and New Jersey. Nevertheless, he had the audacity to preside over the U.S. Senate for the impeachment trial of a Supreme Court justice, Samuel Chase, while himself evading the law and justice.

During that summer and fall, Burr met with traitor General James Wilkin-

son, the commander of the U.S. Army and a secret double-agent in the pay of the king of Spain. The two met privately in Burr's boardinghouse and pored over maps of the West. They planned to invade and conquer Spanish territories.

The duplicitous Burr also met secretly with British minister Anthony Merry to discuss a proposal to separate the Louisiana Territory and western states from the Union, and form an independent western confederacy. Though he feared "the profligacy of Mr. Burr's character," Merry was intrigued by the proposal since the British sought the failure of the American republic. Burr hoped the British would provide military and financial assistance as well as a generous payment to him. He informed his son-in-law that he was traveling out West to "seek another country." Burr's ambition was leading him to become involved with dangerous intrigues against his country.

The plotting vice-president received great praise for dignity and impartiality as he presided over the impeachment trial of Justice Chase. Burr then gave a tearful farewell to the Senate since he was being replaced as vice-president. He had engaged in machinations against Jefferson in the 1800 presidential election even though they were the same party. Eventually, the House broke a tie between the two and selected Jefferson president. Jefferson witnessed Burr's self-serving political ambition and decided to dump his vice-president. Nevertheless, Burr told his colleagues the Senate,



is a sanctuary and a citadel of law, or order, or liberty—and it is here—it is here—in this exalted refuge—here, if anywhere will resistance be made to the storms of popular frenzy and the silent arts of corruption; and if the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the demagogue or the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor.

For the next two months, Burr's extensive travels in the West ironically fulfilled his own warnings about the threat to the republic by a dangerous traitor. He visited shipyards, military suppliers, banks, forts, and met with wealthy individuals and with General Andrew Jackson. Many of the meetings bore fruit, winning promises of financial and military support. Burr then rode down the Mississippi River and reached his final destination of New Orleans. He forged ties with the Mexican Association, a group of powerful individuals who shared his dream of liberating Mexico from Spanish imperial rule. In addition, Burr learned that the city presently had more than fifty French cannon. Burr returned to the East with the groundwork laid to launch his plan. In all of this plotting, Burr saw himself as the leader of the expedition and any new country that was created.

President Jefferson heard various rumors and received direct warnings about Burr's machinations in the West. Burr returned to the nation's capital and actually met with the president to demand a government position but was spurned. In August 1806, Burr headed back out to the West to accomplish his shadowy enterprise. He was frustrated in achieving his aims at several points. Burr was able to recruit a few dozen people to join him as a military force but not the thousand he believed he could raise. In addition, he tried to gather the boats and the weapons for the plot with mixed success. Burr's design was unraveling fast.

James Wilkinson, like many plotters in a conspiracy, turned on Burr and warned New Orleans, the Spanish, and President Jefferson in order to keep in the good and generous graces

of those who paid him. Wilkinson went to New Orleans to bolster its defenses and secure the artillery in case of Burr's attack. Governor Claiborne declared martial law and arrested a few suspected conspirators. Jefferson issued a proclamation warning any Americans against participating in the Burr conspiracy. Federal prosecutors then seized Burr and sought to indict him with grand juries but they determined there was not enough direct evidence. Nevertheless, officials in several states seized the boats and supplies of the conspiracy. Finally, the governor of the Mississippi Territory had Burr's followers arrested. Burr fled from authorities in disguise and was eventually tracked down, arrested, and brought back to Richmond, Virginia for trial. The charge was treason.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall presided over the trial of former Vice President Aaron Burr for treason. Marshall was an impartial justice but had supported the Federalist Party. His cousin, President Thomas Jefferson, was a leader of the Democratic-Republican Party, and the two struggled over the Burr trial. Jefferson was personally affronted by Burr's interference with his administration's diplomacy with Spain and became heavily involved in the case. The president did everything in his power to pressure Marshall to return a guilty verdict.

The Framers of the Constitution believed it was important to use a specific and exacting definition of the crime of treason because of the seriousness of the crime. Article III, clause 3 of the Constitution read, "Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court." Marshall eventually decided that the evidence presented by federal prosecutors did not meet the constitutional standard of treason and acquitted Burr.

Aaron Burr may have been acquitted in a court of law, but that did not mean that he was innocent of ambitious, unpatriotic machinations

that might have split the new nation into separate confederacies with himself as the emperor of a western confederacy. Many Founders agreed that he was an unprincipled character only interested in his own power and ambitions. They thought him

an American version of Cataline, a Roman senator who launched a conspiracy to overthrow the Roman Republic. The Founders believed serving the republic was a noble virtue, while pursuing only one's narrow self-interest was a lowly vice.



Defining Civic Virtues: Ambition

To be driven by self-interest while pursuing power and fame for yourself rather than serving the republic or the good of others.

Discussion Guide



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

1. What crime did Aaron Burr commit as a sitting vice-president?
2. Should Burr have faced justice for his actions in the duel with Alexander Hamilton? Did he damage the reputation of the Senate when he presided over an impeachment trial at the same time he was indicted for murder and escaped justice? Should the Senate have impeached and removed Burr from the vice-presidency for his crimes and his flight from the law?
3. How were James Wilkinson and Burr driven by self-interest in their dealings with the Spanish and the British? What interest did the European powers have in seeing the American republic fail?
4. Could Wilkinson and Burr really trust each other? Can conspirators in a criminal plot ever trust each other?
5. How could Burr give a farewell speech warning about threats to the republic and then act just like the dangerous person he described? Was Burr engaging in self-deception about the civic virtue of defending law and liberty? Did he knowingly betray the public and personal trust others placed in him?
6. What actions did Burr take in the West to prepare for his conspiracy? Why do you think he was so brazen and did not do a lot to hide his plot?
7. What benefit might Wilkinson have derived from betraying Burr? Were the extraordinary actions of Wilkinson and Governor Claiborne justified to stop Burr and his followers from fulfilling their conspiracy?
8. Should Aaron Burr have been convicted of treason even if the evidence did not exactly achieve the constitutional standard? Why does civic virtue and justice demand that citizens and courts follow the spirit and letter of the law? Can an accused criminal be guilty yet acquitted and set free? Do you think justice was done in Burr's trial for treason?
9. George Washington demonstrated the republican virtues of public service, self-sacrifice, and patriotism through his long years as general and president and then surrendering these powers to return to Mount Vernon. In what ways can we come closer to understanding the virtue of patriotic service to the republic by examining its opposite? How does Burr's attempted treason against the republic help you understand civic virtue?

Virtue In Action



Honorable ambition can lead to noble pursuits and greatness for those who seek to serve others or build something of lasting importance politically, militarily, economically, and culturally. James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, Dwight Eisenhower, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Alva Edison, Steve Jobs, Martin Luther King, Jr., William Shakespeare, Michelangelo, and Walt Disney are only some of the heroes who can inspire us with noble ambition for greatness.

Think self-reflectively of the contribution that you can make with your talents and ambition to serve others.

- Where can you provide leadership in your school?
- How can you serve your local community?
- Where do you want to go to college? Why?
- What do you want to do for a career? Why?
- What purpose do you want to serve in your life?

Sources & Further Reading

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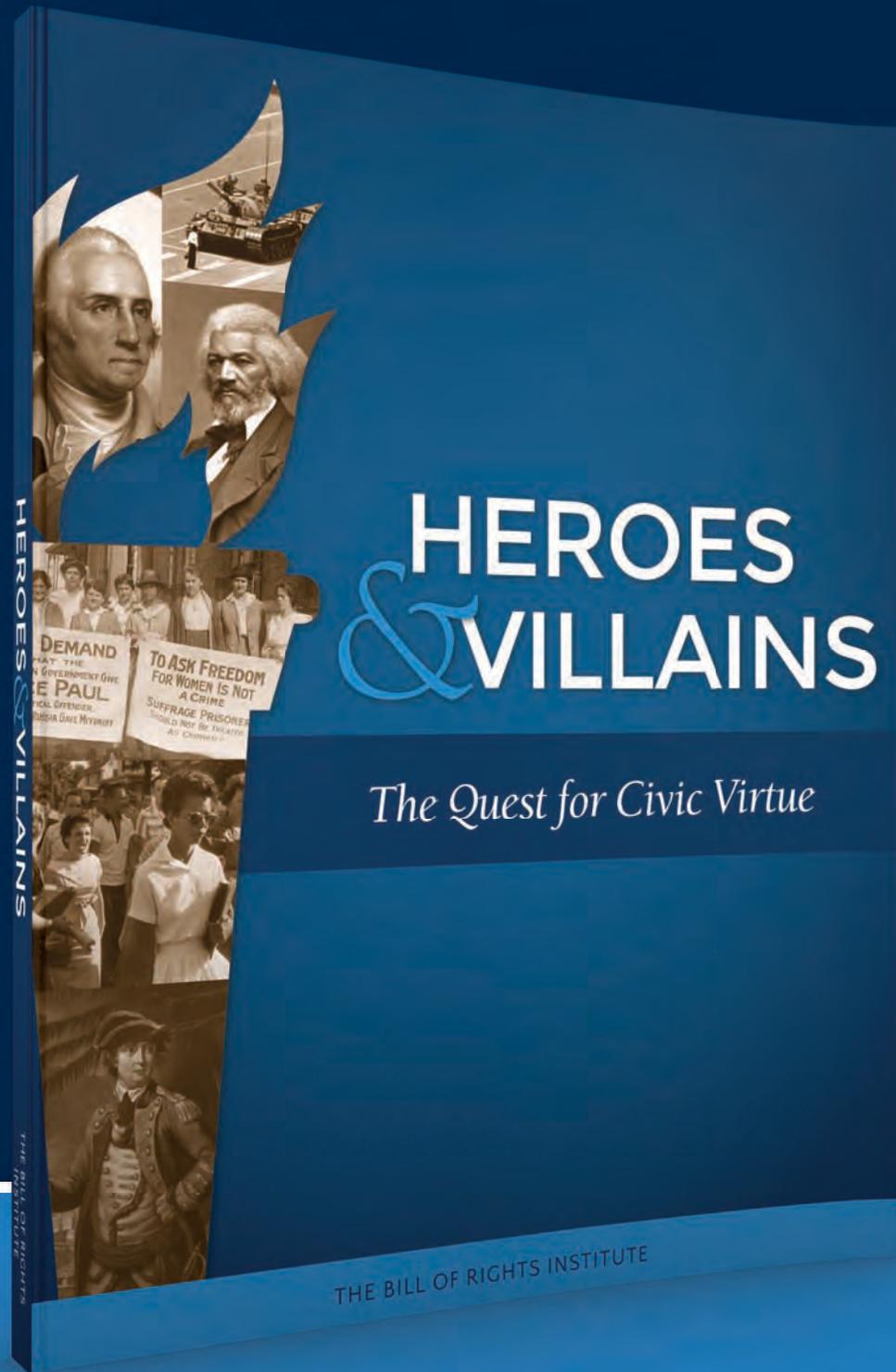
Virtue Across the Curriculum

Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, a classic which explores biographies of famous Greek and Roman figures to examine the virtue and vice in their characters. Plutarch has several character sketches noting the dangers of ambition.

OTHER WORKS

Hamlet, by William Shakespeare

Macbeth, by William Shakespeare



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

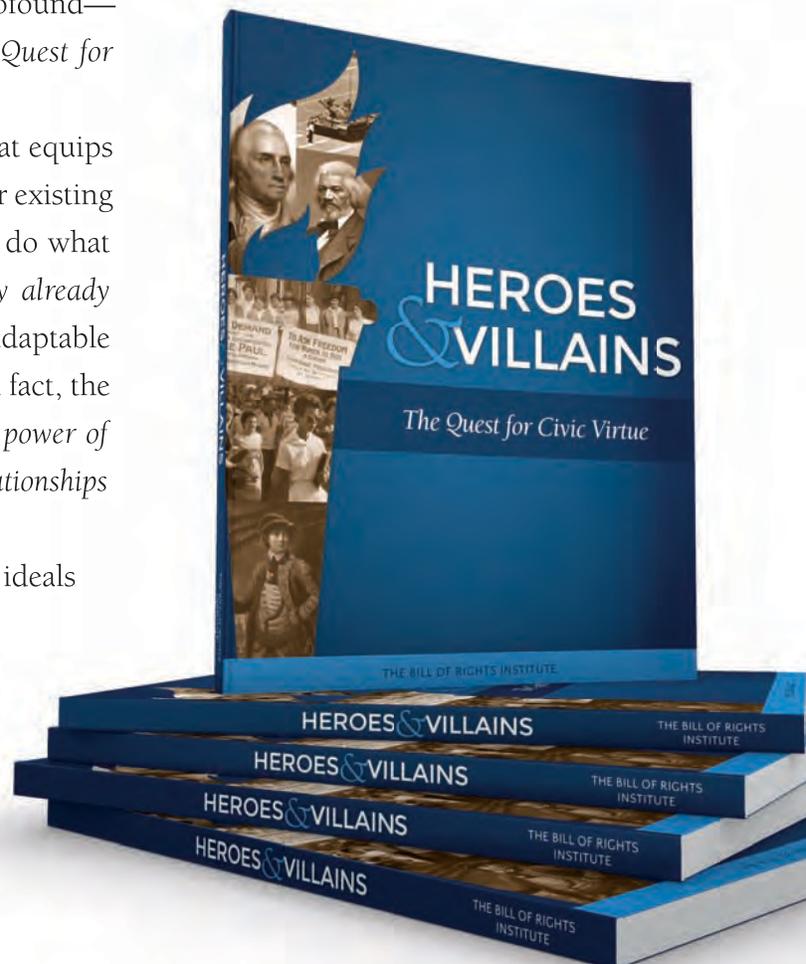
Introducing Our New Resource



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.

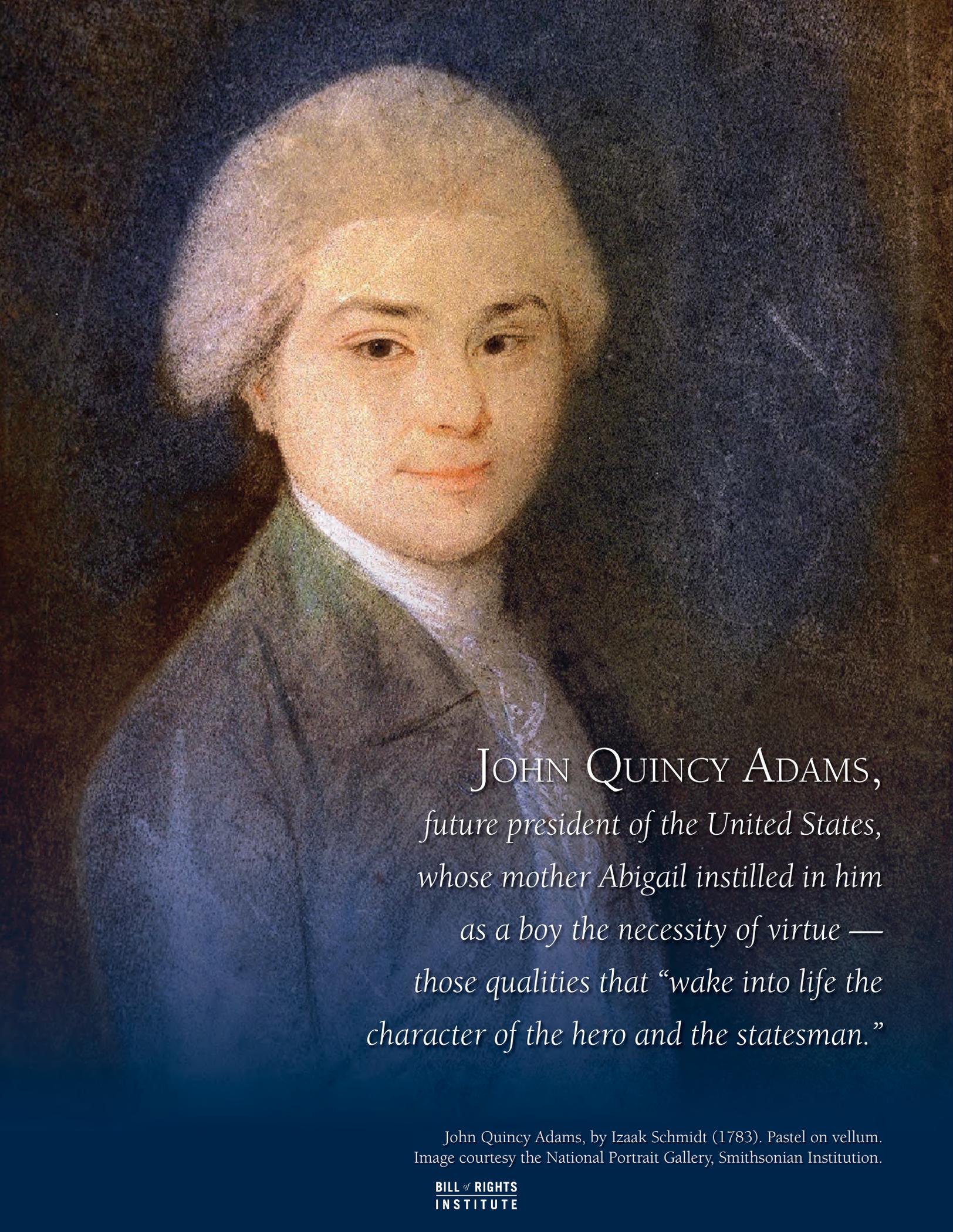
If you don’t already have a copy of *Heroes & Villains*, contact us at info@billofrightsinstitute.org. We’ll get it into your hands so you can get started.

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.”

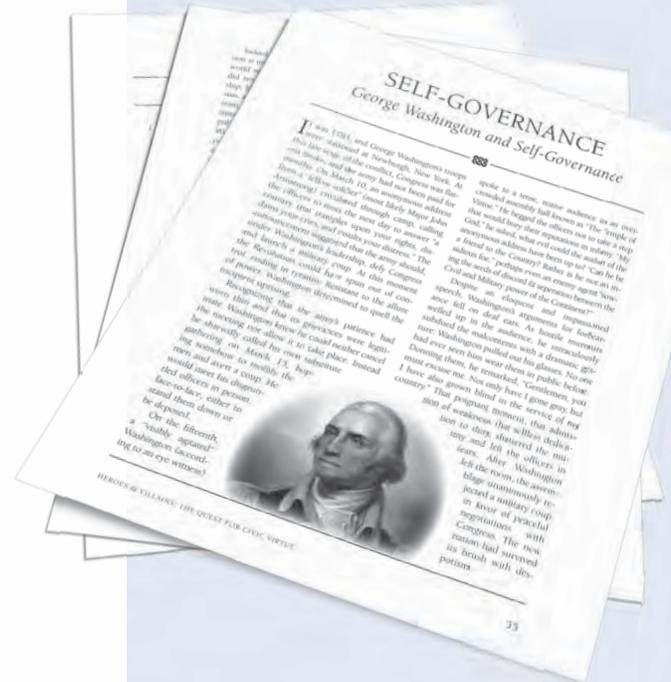


Ancient Values, Enduring Ideas, Daily Difference

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.

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



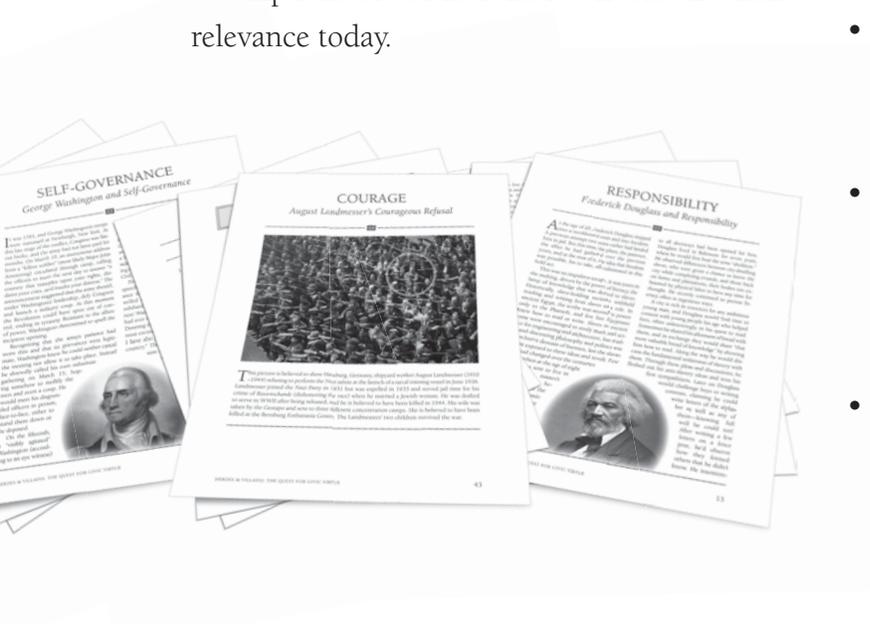
HEROES & VILLAINS

Materials Overview



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

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



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

Working Notes and Ideas for Implementing
HEROES & VILLAINS



Laying the Groundwork with Your Faculty

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

Civic Virtues Based on the Thinking of the Founders



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

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

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

Contribution: The discovering of your passions and talents, and the use of them to create what is beautiful and needed. Working hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE QUESTION

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



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

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



WORKING NOTES:

Our Current School Climate and Culture

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.

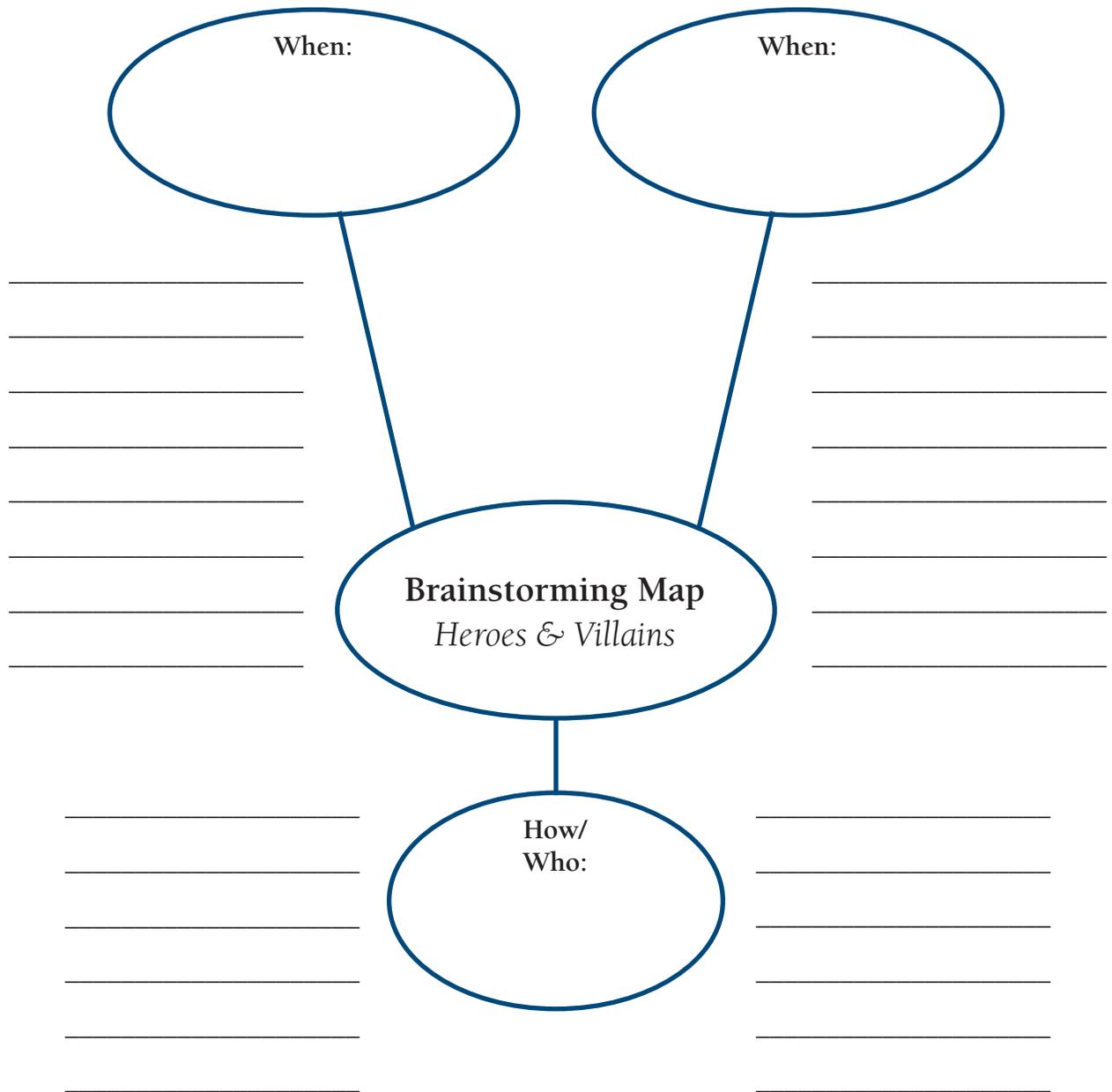


In Classrooms, in Rehearsal Rooms, on Athletic Fields, and Beyond

- 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.

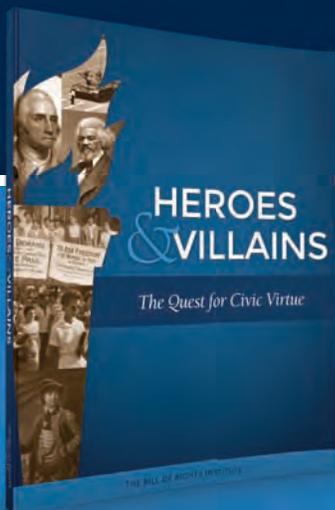
PRAISE FROM TEACHERS FOR *HEROES & VILLAINS*



“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.

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

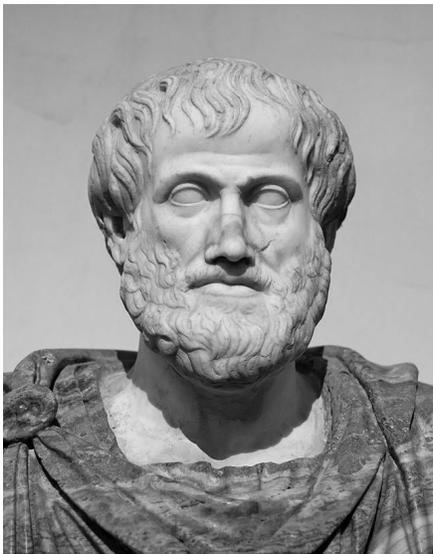


Virtue is a “golden mean.”

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		

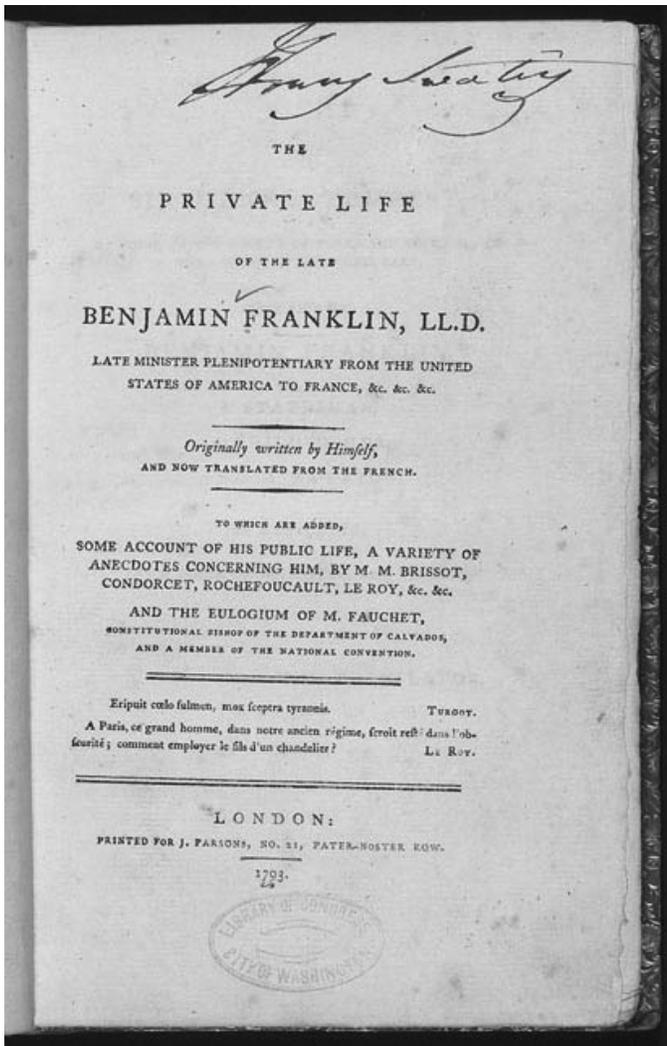
As students enter, instruct them to:

- 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.)



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.

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*.

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.

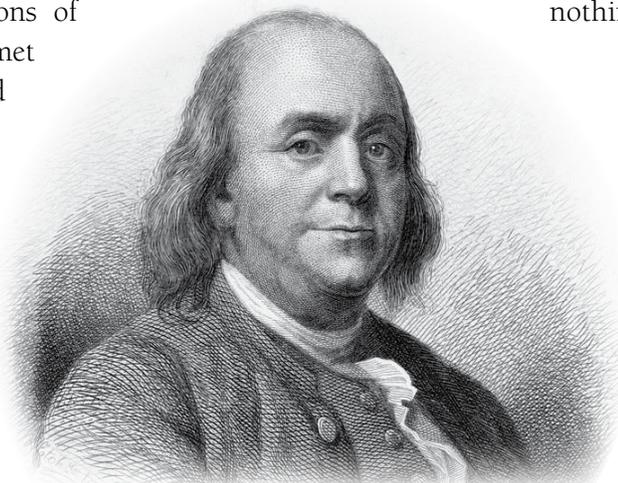
ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

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 determin'd 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 imagin'd, 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?

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.

4. Student responses may vary. Ask for explanations for the answers they provide.
 5. Some students may believe he and the other demonstrators did experience fear, but that they acted in spite of it because they were so sure their cause was just. Others may believe that the strength of their convictions helped them to not actually experience any fear. If students share personal anecdotes about times they acted courageously, respond with affirmation and encourage thoughtful discussion.
 6. Student responses may vary. Accept reasoned responses and invite a safe environment for students to share their opinions while encouraging an understanding of the First Amendment and not only the costs, but the benefits of free speech. Introduce the idea of not causing direct harm to other people or to their property in the process of expressing oneself.
 7. Ask questions that will encourage further deliberation and discussion about the relationship between free speech, personal responsibility, and a constitutional republic. Use your own classroom discussions as an example of the significance of civil dialogue that includes disparate ideas and opinions.
 8. Examples of courage that students may identify might include trying out for a play, a musical group, or a team, or running for student government. It could also include enrolling in a challenging class serving the community in an unfamiliar setting. Affirm specific responses that help students to transfer their understanding from the purely academic to personal application.
2. Answers will vary. Note the discrepancy between presiding over an impeachment trial fairly and impartially while being wanted for capital crimes as a sitting vice-president. Burr was subject to possible censure and impeachment for his actions in the Senate, but his colleagues did not proceed against him.
 3. Both Wilkinson and Burr pursued their own ambitions out of self-interest and ambition for money and power. Their ambitions played into the hands of various European powers who wanted to see the American republic fail, in part because of imperial and territorial interests on the North American continent.
 4. Answers will vary, but Wilkinson and Burr betrayed each other as plotters in a conspiracy often do to suit their interests. Think of the phrase “there is no honor among thieves.”
 5. Answers will vary. Burr may have sincerely believed in those ideals, but his profession of them strikes one as duplicitous, that his words masked his true intentions or that they were merely words not actions. He seemed to betray his public trust in his honesty and integrity as he wanted to serve only his own ambitions rather than the public good.
 6. Burr tried to secure followers, money, weapons, and transportation to launch his planned invasion. Answers will vary on why he was so brazen. Perhaps he was so open to attract more followers or maybe his ambition overcame any reservations he had about being discovered.
 7. Wilkinson was a double agent who would benefit from being rewarded by either the United States or Spain depending on the circumstances. The governor’s actions during the declaration of martial law resulted in the violation of basic and essential civil liberties.
 8. Answers will vary for the different questions. The constitutional rule of law, however, demands an adherence to the letter and spirit of the law. Since there is an exact definition of

Aaron Burr and Ambition: Discussion Guide (p. 133)

1. Aaron Burr was charged with dueling and murder in two states for killing Alexander Hamilton, but he did not stand trial for those crimes.

treason in the Constitution, it should be followed closely by the courts. Even if the accused person seems guilty, all persons are innocent until proven guilty by the presented evidence in a court of law.

9. Answers will vary but individuals such as George Washington who exhibit civic and republican virtue can serve as a standard by which to measure the actions of those who practice vice challenging the virtue and health of civic virtue and the republic. Aaron Burr exercises an unhealthy amount of ambition directed only at his own self-interest rather than the good of the republic.

*Contribution – The Schechter Brothers:
Discussion Guide (p. 143)*

1. The Schechter brothers used their knowledge about poultry, butchering, Jewish dietary law, and their neighbors' needs to offer safe, affordable chicken to their customers during difficult economic circumstances (the Great Depression).
2. They were charged with: selling "unfit" poultry, allowing customers to select their own chickens, refusing inspections by regulators, and selling chickens to unlicensed purchasers. They were also accused of "competing too hard" and keeping prices "too low."
3. Students may respond that they were surprised, and some may indicate some degree of indignation. They may relate this to a sense of justice, and that what happened was unjust, or wrong. Many students may thus conclude that there is such a thing as right and wrong.
4. When a majority of citizens in a society are using their skills to contribute to their communities, whether through volunteerism or through their vocations, the community benefits.
5. In *A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corporation v. United States* (1935), the Supreme Court decided in favor of the Schechter brothers, ruling that the NIRA was unconstitutional and that Congress had exceeded its constitutional authority in delegating its lawmaking power to the president.
6. Accept reasoned responses. Sample responses provided.
 - a. Students may decide it is not unfair because you close your business on your Sabbath day.
 - b. Some students may determine it is fair because a business owner can find various ways to keep costs low in order to compete in the market. Other students may disagree with the idea of keeping labor costs down. If so, ask students how their opinion may change if the employees are forced to accept lower wages versus if they voluntarily agree to lower wages in order to better compete in the marketplace and increase their job security.
 - c. Most students will identify this as unfair.
 - d. Unfair, unethical, illegal.
 - e. Unfair, unethical, illegal.
 - f. Responses will vary for other scenarios that you or others may suggest.
7. Since anti-Semitism was not atypical at the time, it puts into context the status that the Schechter brothers had in the greater society beyond their neighborhood, and also helps to highlight other, "hidden" factors that may have played a part in their being targeted more so than other business at that time and place.
8. Some students may say that that when people use their talents and work hard, it strengthens society. Others may add an economic framework by indicating a relationship between economic freedom and a strong economy. Still others may note that that in trying to maintain a business that aligned with their religious principles, they were setting an example of integrity in their business dealings.