

SELF-DECEPTION



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.

DISCUSSION

- Break students into small groups. Have them read the following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence:

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, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

- Ask the students to discuss the question: *When is right of rebellion permissible under the Declaration of Independence?*

- Reassemble as a class and have a representative from each group explain the answers that the group discussed. Then, explain to the students that Abraham Lincoln described the ideals of the Declaration of Independence as an “apple of gold” that was inextricably connected to the Constitution and Union as a “picture [frame] of silver.”
- Ask the class: *What is the connection between the natural right principles of liberty and equality in the Declaration of Independence and the constitutional rule of law in the Constitution?*
- Transition to the narrative of John Brown and how he persuaded himself that it was necessary and permissible to violate the constitutional rule of law to achieve natural rights for all Americans of every race. Discuss the importance of conscience and if the individual is allowed to act on their conscience even if violating the law.

SELF-DECEPTION

John Brown and Self-Deception



John Brown was greatly admired as a hero to some and fiercely hated by others during his lifetime. Abolitionists who supported the end of slavery praised his actions as necessary to destroy the institution; Southerners were horrified by the violence he employed to achieve his ends. Others, such as politician Abraham Lincoln, questioned the means even if they agreed with the end of abolishing slavery. Rarely has an individual stirred such controversy over his historical reputation as a hero or villain. Even today, John Brown provokes a variety of responses among historians and biographers. Judgments of Brown's character range from a self-righteous, fundamentalist terrorist to a crusading abolitionist for freedom.

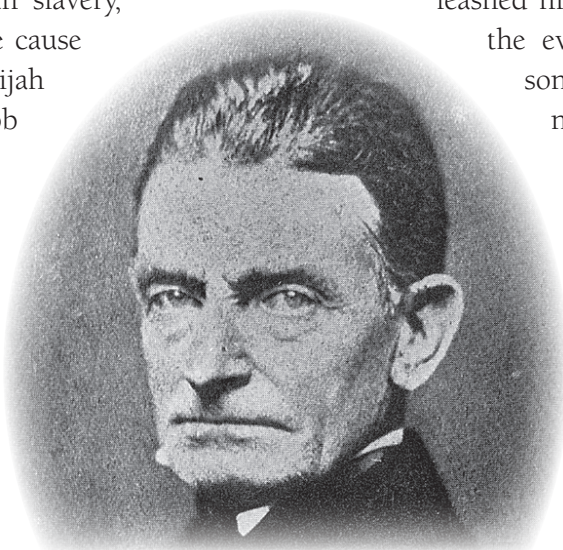
In 1831, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison launched his newspaper, *The Liberator*, with the principled, uncompromising words about the abolition of slavery: "I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD." Brown was swept up by such unbending abolitionist thinking that was consistent with his Calvinist Puritan faith. He asserted that he had an "eternal war with slavery," and dedicated himself to the cause when abolitionist editor, Elijah Lovejoy, was killed by a mob in 1837. "Here before God, in the presence of these witnesses, from this time, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery," Brown said in a church meeting.

Over the next few decades, Brown failed in several business ventures

and moved his family around a lot. He was more devoted to the cause of freeing slaves from bondage. He moved near Lake Placid, New York to manage a colony of free blacks and organized a secret society to prevent slavecatchers from catching their quarry of runaway slaves in the North. However, Brown began to deceive himself into thinking that he could and must act violently to end the immoral slave system.

John Brown followed several of his sons who moved to the newly-created Kansas Territory, which was organized under the principle of popular sovereignty, meaning that the people would decide whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free or slave state. Southerners and Northerners flooded the territory with settlers to decide the issue. They were deeply divided and set up rival territorial governments in different towns. Tension was rife and erupted into sporadic violence, threatening to cause civil war. Brown and his sons joined the Liberty Guards militia and the Pottawatomie Rifles militia to fight pro-slavery forces.

On the night of May 24, 1856, Brown unleashed his righteous vengeance against the evil slave system. He and his sons knocked on the doors of nearby cabins of several pro-slavery families (even if they were too poor to own slaves). Armed with pistols, hunting knives, and swords, Brown and his sons took five adult males prisoner at gun-point and led them outside into the darkness while their wives and children cowered in-



side. The next day, the hostages were all discovered killed and their bodies grisly mutilated. When asked about the deeds, Brown said, “I did not do it, but I approved of it.” He proclaimed his godly righteousness in murdering pro-slavery advocates: “God is my judge. We were justified under the circumstances.” He went into hiding in the woods and soon went back to the Northeast to raise money, weapons, and recruits for his main action against Southern slavery. Brown believed that murder was morally permissible if done in the name of what was right.

As he informed a few abolitionist friends, Brown intended to lead an army on a raid of the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry in Virginia. He planned to seize the weapons and then distribute them to liberated slaves to start a violent race war in which slaves killed their masters and fled to a revolutionary state in the mountains of Virginia. In the summer of 1859, he moved in disguise to a farm near Harper’s Ferry but only managed to recruit twenty-one men. He wrote a political manifesto entitled, “A Declaration of Liberty by the Representatives of the Slave Population of the United States of America,” modelled on the Declaration of Independence, and a new constitution guaranteeing equal rights to all races.

The small, but righteous band moved out in the dark on the night of October 16 to begin the war. They achieved easy early success when they took a night watchman and an arsenal guard prisoner as they broke into the armory. Brown dispatched a handful of men in a wagon loaded with weapons to break into nearby homes and liberate their slaves. The first victim of the war was ironically a free black railroad worker whom the rebels shot. By the morning, Brown’s men had taken some forty prisoners of townspeople going to work, and word of the raid spread instantaneously across the nation by telegraph.

Daylight brought nothing but disaster for the ill-conceived raid. Brown’s rebels entered into a shoot-out with the townspeople, and lost one of the band. When Brown sent out three emissaries to negotiate a cease-fire, each were shot. When five

of his men tried to retreat to the Shenandoah River, two were shot and killed, one drowned, and two blacks (one free and one slave) were captured and nearly hanged. In the chaos, some thirty prisoners escaped. By nightfall, Brown only had four or five healthy men. One of his sons was killed, and one was wounded, but he resolved to fight to the end to achieve his goal of liberating the slaves.

The following day, Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived with Lieutenant Jeb Stuart and ninety Marines. Stuart tried to negotiate a surrender, but Brown refused. The Marines battered down the heavy door and stormed into the building. After his other men went down, Brown was the last to fight and was slashed by a saber before being knocked unconscious.

Brown was tried for murder, inciting slave insurrection, and treason against the state of Virginia only a few days later. After five days, he was convicted on all the charges. Transcendentalist author, Henry David Thoreau, delivered an oration praising Brown for breaking an unjust law. “Are laws to be enforced simply because they are made?” Thoreau asked. During his sentencing, Brown was allowed to make a statement and finished by saying, “If it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country, whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I submit. So let it be done!” Brown deceived himself into thinking that any number of deaths were acceptable in his crusade against the evils of slavery.

On December 2, Brown was driven in a wagon to a gallows on a cornfield guarded by 1,500 militia to guard against any rescue attempt. He was bound, hanged, and placed in a coffin. That morning, he handed a scrap of paper with a prophetic warning: “I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land: will never be purged away; but with Blood.” The John Brown raid helped fuel the sectionalism that led to the bloody Civil War between North and South that claimed more than 600,000 Americans.



Defining Civic Virtues: Deception

To lie to yourself and others either to deceive purposefully or because you are deluded into thinking that something is right when it is wrong and unjust

Discussion Guide



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

1. What ideals encouraged John Brown to dedicate his life to abolitionism?
2. When John Brown dedicated his life to the destruction of slavery what means did he use to achieve his goal? Were there other means at his disposal that were less violent? What other courses did abolitionists use to work for the end of slavery in the United States? Which ones were consistent with the constitutional rule of law and a healthy civic society?
3. What is the difference between acting according to uncompromising principles and acting according to the classical idea of prudence, or practical wisdom? Which course guided Brown, and did it benefit his cause?
4. Why did John Brown move to Kansas? What actions against slavery did he take while he was there? Were his actions justified? Explain your answer.
5. Is it ever morally permissible to do a wrong to achieve a good end? Explain your answer.
6. What was Brown's plan to rid the country of slavery? Was it a realistic plan? Were there other alternatives that he could have pursued to help end slavery? Had he deluded himself into thinking that it was the right and only path? Explain your answers.
7. Did the raid on Harper's Ferry go according to plan? Were innocent people were swept up in the violence and lost their lives? Did Brown consider the loss of life tragic or necessary to achieve his goals? Explain your answer.
8. Did Brown express any remorse for killing people or breaking the law? Did his righteous vision cloud his judgment regarding the rightness or wrongness of his actions? Explain your answer.
9. Did Brown consider the consequences of his raid for human lives? Did he consider the consequences if he had actually succeeded in raiding Harper's Ferry and starting a race war in the South? Did he consider the consequences of fueling tensions between North and South because of his violent plan? Explain your answers.
10. Why was John Brown considered by some to be a hero and by some to be a villain? Why is his life and legacy still debated as a hero or villain?

Primary Source Activity



ABRAHAM LINCOLN, “THE PERPETUATION OF OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS,” ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG MEN’S LYCEUM, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, JANUARY 27, 1838

At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

I hope I am over wary; but if I am not, there is, even now, something of ill-omen amongst us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country; the growing disposition to substitute the wild and furious passions, in lieu of the sober judgement of Courts; and the worse than savage mobs, for the executive ministers of justice. This disposition is awfully fearful in any community; and that it now exists in ours, though grating to our feelings to admit, it would be a violation of truth, and an insult to our intelligence, to deny. Accounts of outrages committed by mobs, form the every-day news of the times....

Such are the effects of mob law; and such are the scenes, becoming more and more frequent in this land so lately famed for love of law and order; and the stories of which, have even now grown too familiar....

The question recurs “how shall we fortify against it?” The answer is simple. Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and Laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred

honor;—let every man remember that to violate the law, is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the character of his own, and his children’s liberty. Let reverence for the laws, be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap—let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges;—let it be written in Primmers, spelling books, and in Almanacs;—let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.

While ever a state of feeling, such as this, shall universally, or even, very generally prevail throughout the nation, vain will be every effort, and fruitless every attempt, to subvert our national freedom.

When I so pressingly urge a strict observance of all the laws, let me not be understood as saying there are no bad laws, nor that grievances may not arise, for the redress of which, no legal provisions have been made. I mean to say no such thing. But I do mean to say, that, although bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible, still while they continue in force, for the sake of example, they should be religiously observed....

There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law. In any case that arises, as for instance, the promulgation of abolitionism, one of two positions is necessarily true; that is, the thing is right within itself, and therefore deserves

the protection of all law and all good citizens; or, it is wrong, and therefore proper to be prohibited by legal enactments; and in neither case, is the interposition of mob law, either necessary, justifiable, or excusable.

But, it may be asked, why suppose danger to our political institutions? Have we not preserved them for more than fifty years? And why may we not for fifty times as long?....

They were the pillars of the temple of liberty; and now, that they have crumbled away, that temple must fall, unless we, their descendants, supply their places with other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason. Passion has helped us; but can do so no more. It will in future be our

enemy. Reason, cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason, must furnish all the materials for our future support and defence. Let those materials be moulded into general intelligence, sound morality and, in particular, a reverence for the constitution and laws; and, that we improved to the last; that we remained free to the last; that we revered his name to the last; that, during his long sleep, we permitted no hostile foot to pass over or desecrate his resting place; shall be that which to learn the last trump shall awaken our WASHINGTON.

Upon these let the proud fabric of freedom rest, as the rock of its basis; and as truly as has been said of the only greater institution," the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL, APRIL 16, 1963**

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather strange and paradoxical to find us consciously breaking laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation

statutes are unjust because segregation distort the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I-it" relationship for an "I-thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. So segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. On the other hand, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. An unjust law is a code inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all types of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I was arrested Friday on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance

which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Self-Deception Graphic Organizer



Directions: Using the narrative on John Brown and the primary sources on Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr., complete the following graphic organizer related their views on just and unjust laws.

	What is their view of the rule of law in the United States?	When can an individual or a group justifiably decide to break the law? How are laws to be broken?	What is the person's goal related to the laws of the United States?
John Brown			
Abraham Lincoln			
Martin Luther King, Jr.			

Virtue In Action



Read the play, *A Man for All Seasons*, by Robert Bolt, or watch the 1966 movie directed by Fred Zinnemann.

- Discuss the difficult situation that Thomas More contends with under King Henry VIII.
- How does Thomas More preserve both his moral conscience and his dedication to the rule of law?
- What sacrifice does More and his family make for his obedience to conscience and law? How do More and his daughter, Margaret, demonstrate great courage?

Sources & Further Reading

Carlton, Evan. *Patriotic Treason*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

Horowitz, Tony. *Midnight Rising: John Brown and the Raid that Sparked the Civil War*. New York: Henry Holt, 2011.

Oates, Stephen. *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1984.

Peterson, Merrill D. *John Brown: The Legend Revisited*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002.

Reynolds, David. *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights*. New York: Knopf, 2005.

Virtue Across the Curriculum

In the movie *Lincoln* (2012), President Lincoln tells a vignette about surveying and the importance of prudence in pursuing the moral principle of ending slavery as opposed to Thaddeus Stevens' abolitionist way of doing what is right regardless of the consequences.

LINCOLN

"I admire your zeal, Mr. Stevens, and I have tried to profit from the example of it. But if I'd listened to you, I'd've declared every slave free the minute the first shell struck Fort Sumter; then the border states would've gone over to the confederacy, the war would've been lost and the Union along with it, and instead of abolishing slavery, as we hope to do, in two weeks, we'd be watching helpless as infants as it spread from the American South into South America."

THADDEUS STEVENS

"Oh, how you have longed to say that to me. You claim you trust them - but you know what the people are. You know that the inner compass that should direct the soul toward justice has ossified in white men and women, north and south, unto utter uselessness through tolerating the evil of slavery. White people cannot bear the thought of sharing this country's infinite abundance with Negroes."

LINCOLN

"A compass, I learnt when I was surveying, it'll - it'll point you True North from where you're standing, but it's got no advice about the swamps and deserts and chasms that you'll encounter along the way. If in pursuit of your destination you plunge ahead, heedless of obstacles, and achieve nothing more than to sink in a swamp, what's the use of knowing True North?"

OTHER WORKS

Thomas Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*

Declaration of Independence

Gandhi (1982), Directed by Richard Attenborough

Lincoln (2012), Directed by Stephen Spielberg

Plato, *Crito*

Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*

Mark Twain, *Joan of Arc*

Self-Deception

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



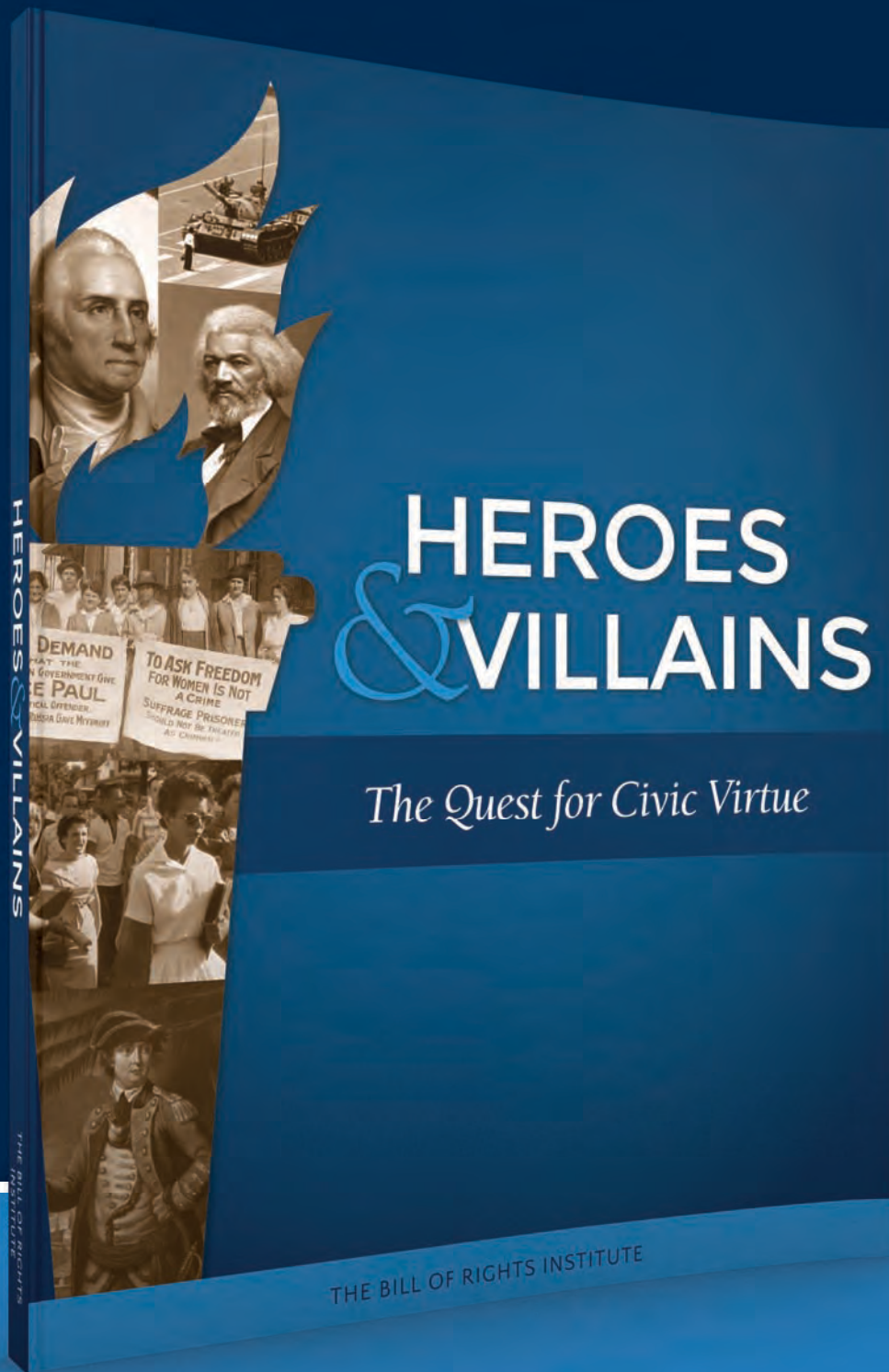
Directions President Abraham Lincoln was strongly dedicated to the principle of natural rights for all human beings. Although the abolitionists pressed for immediate action, Lincoln was also firmly dedicated to the constitutional rule of law and would not break it to do what was right. The Emancipation Proclamation (1863) demonstrated the Lincoln wanted the slaves to be free while acting under presidential authority in the Constitution.

Answer the following questions: Compare and contrast the goals and methods of John Brown and Abraham Lincoln. Did Brown or Lincoln demonstrate the virtue of prudence, or practical wisdom, in achieving his goal?

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

“This country’s planted thick with laws from coast to coast...and if you cut them down-and you’re just the man to do it-d’you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?”

–SIR THOMAS MORE IN ROBERT BOLT, *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS*



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

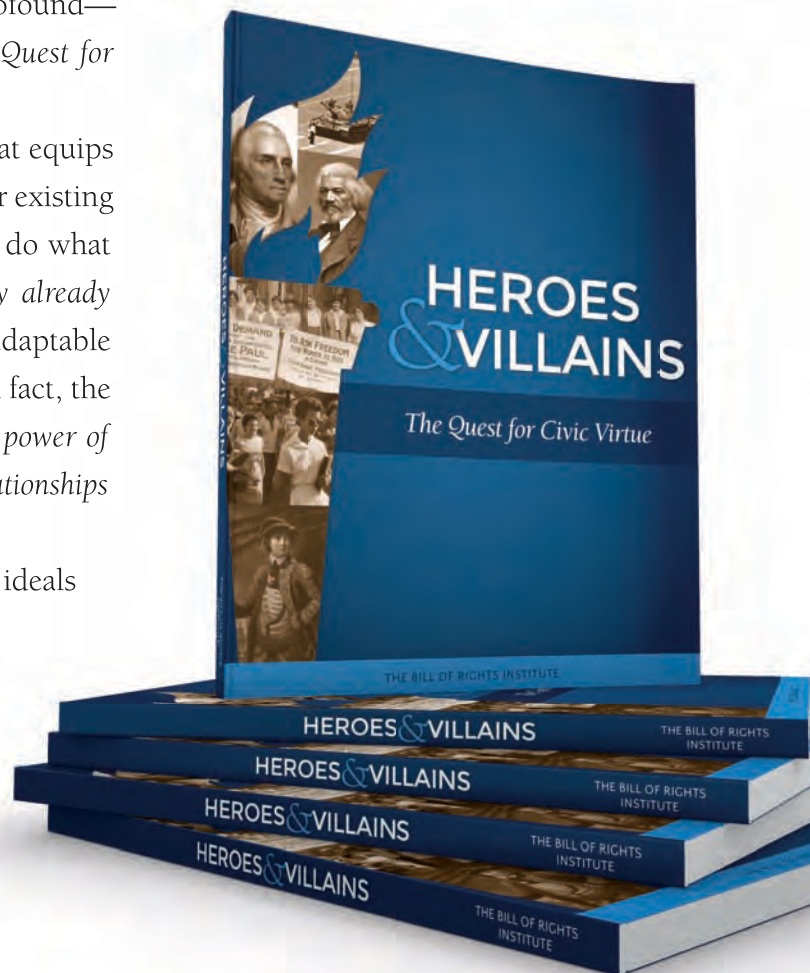
Introducing Our New Resource



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.*

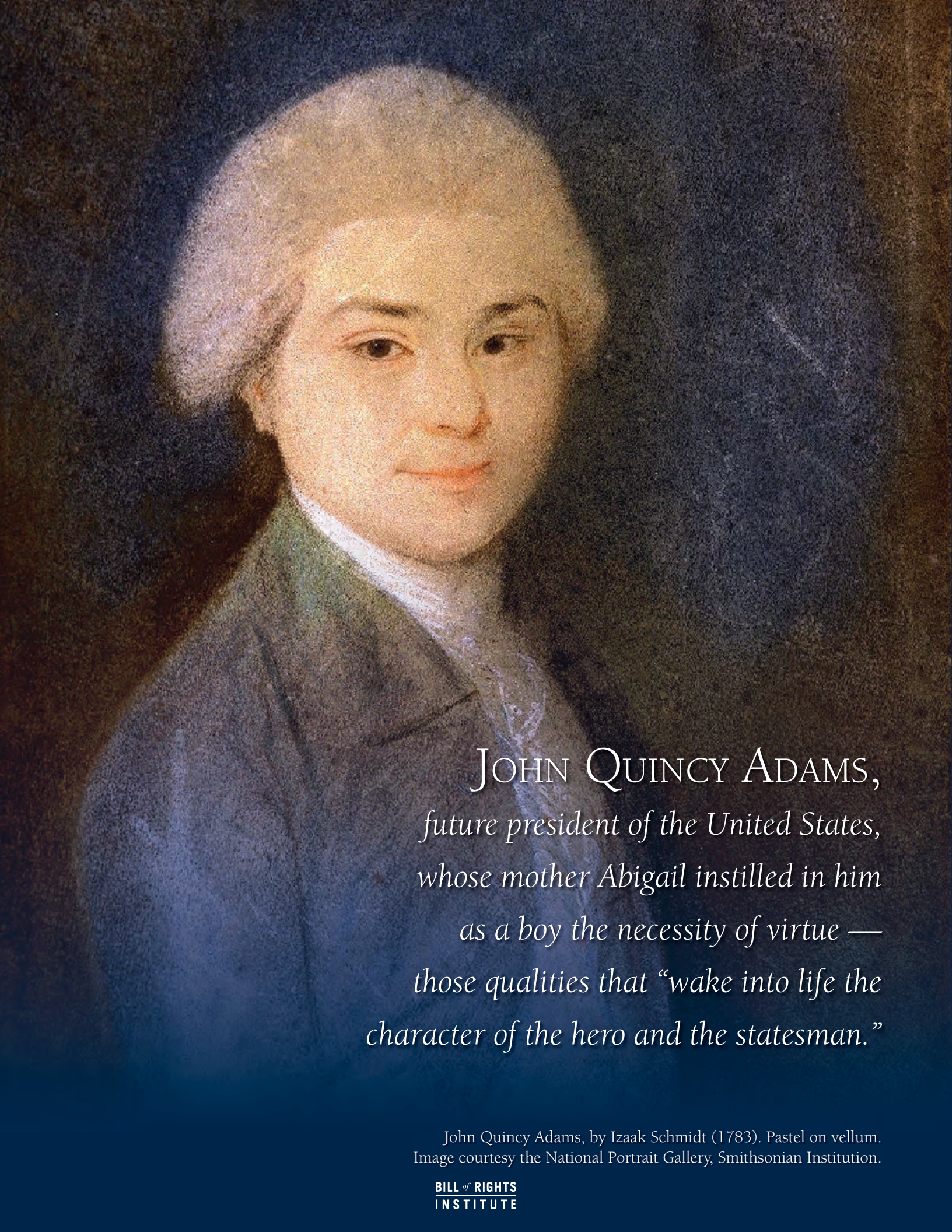
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JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,
*future president of the United States,
whose mother Abigail instilled in him
as a boy the necessity of virtue —
those qualities that “wake into life the
character of the hero and the statesman.”*

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.*



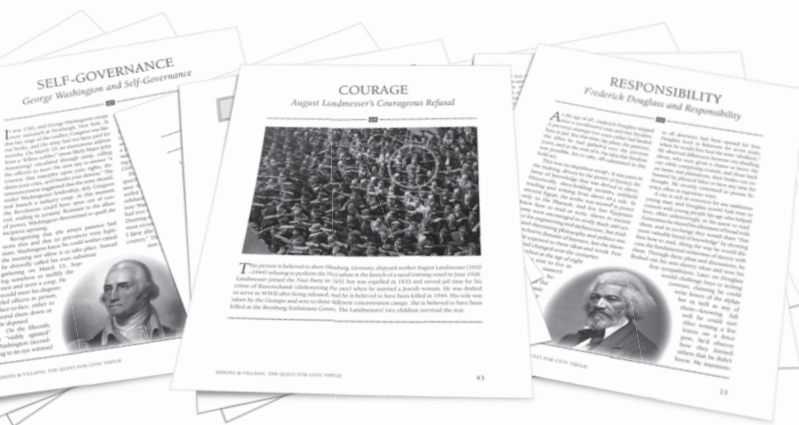
HEROES & VILLAINS

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.

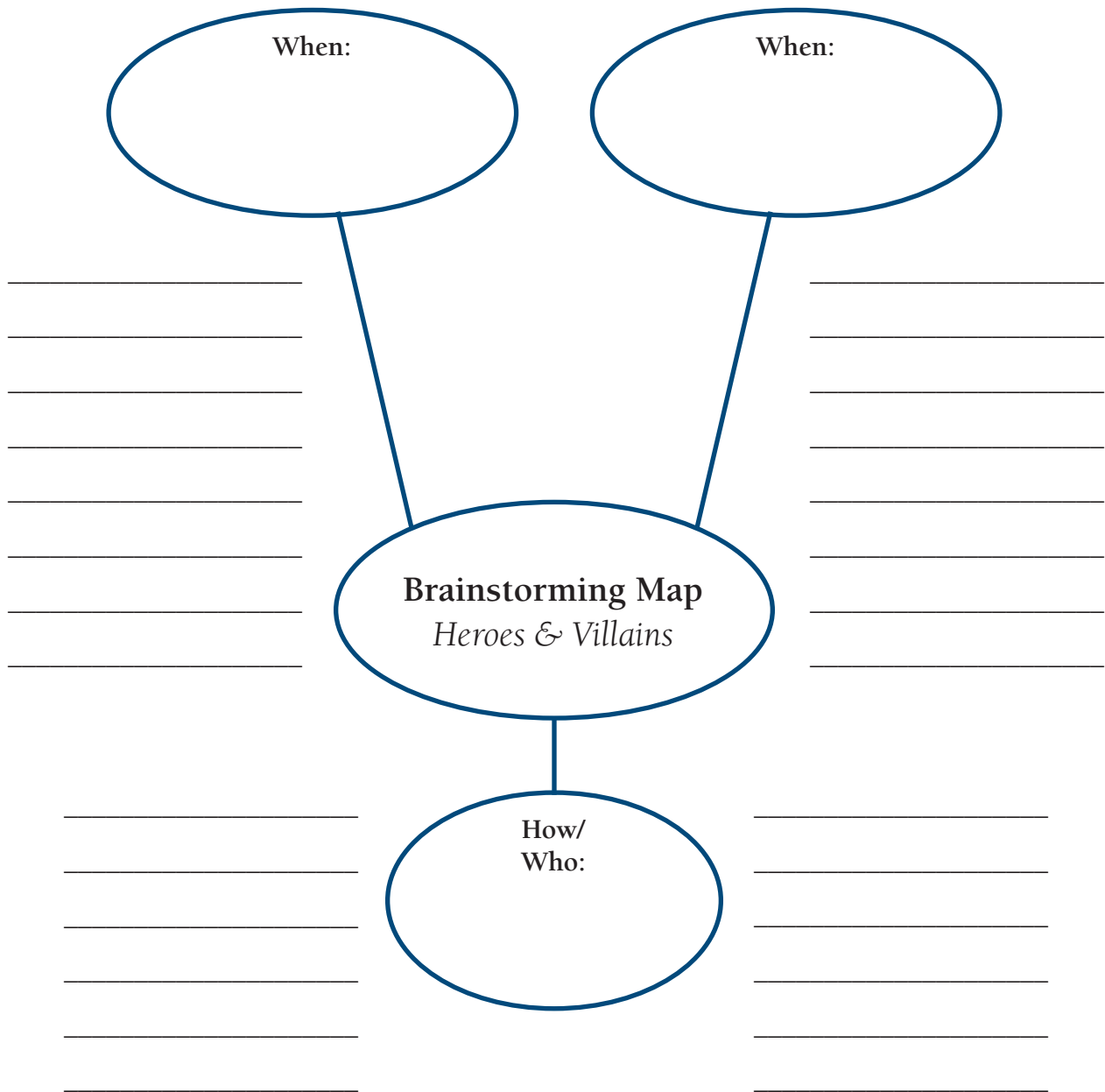


In Classrooms, in Rehearsal Rooms, on Athletic Fields, and Beyond

- 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.

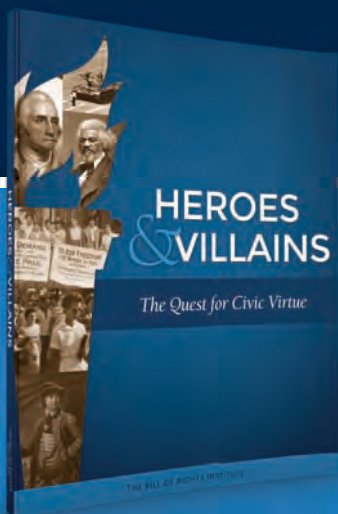
PRAISE FROM TEACHERS FOR *HEROES & VILLAINS*



“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

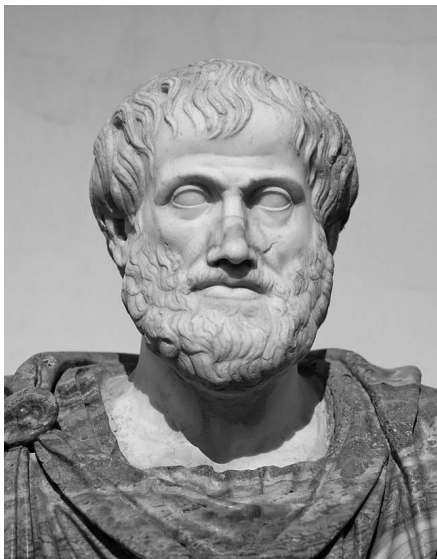


Virtue is a “golden mean.”

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		

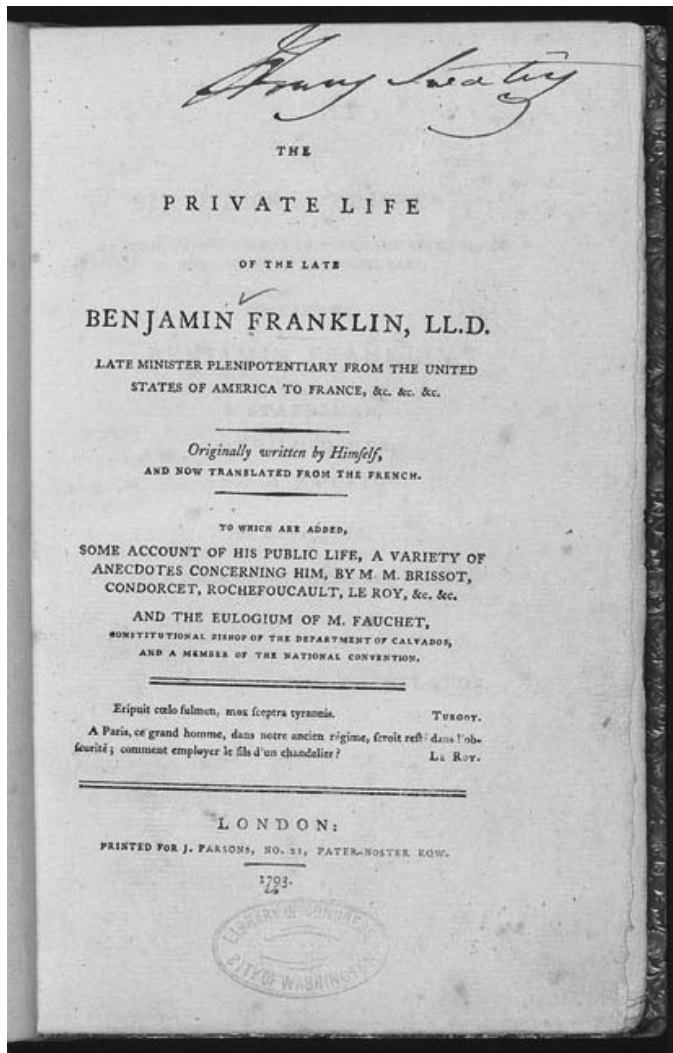
As students enter, instruct them to:

- 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.

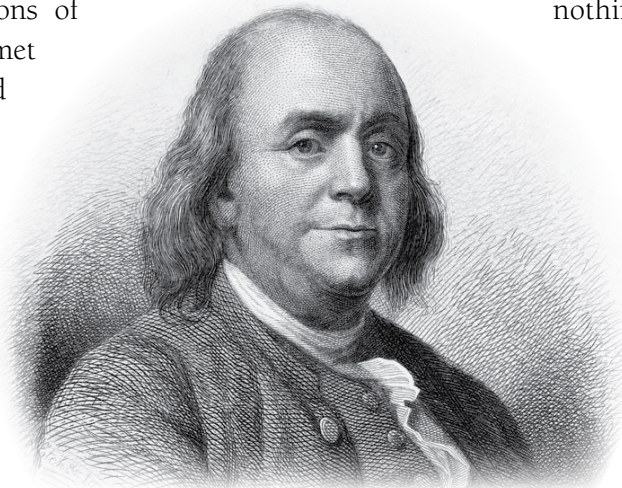
ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

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.

[illegible]

Be Like Ben?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



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

[illegible]

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

–BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

HEROES & VILLAINS

Answer Key



Defining Civic Virtue (p. v)

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

Clarifying Civic Virtue (p. x)

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

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

Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue (p. xi)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. Accept reasoned student responses.

Tanks in the Square (p. 3)

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

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

9. Students should state a connection between freedom and responsibility. They may, in addition, note principles such as checks and balances, separation of powers, and limited government, and note a relationship between human nature and those checks on power that are intended to curb lack of virtue.
10. Some students may mention part-time jobs, household chores, community service, or extracurricular responsibilities. (Ideally, someone will mention homework!) In five years, they may be responsible for increased work responsibility, college or graduate school studies, or volunteer responsibilities. Some students may also mention family responsibilities, car ownership, or having to provide for their own food and home.
11. Answers will vary; accept reasoned responses.

John Brown and Self-Deception: Discussion Guide (p. 84)

1. John Brown was guided by his religious principles and the conviction that one should follow a higher moral law than the laws of the United States.
2. Brown dedicated his life to the destruction of slavery by violent means if necessary. The murders in the Kansas Territory and the violence of his raid on Harper's Ferry as well as the expected race war are evidence. Other abolitionists used less violent means of giving anti-slavery speeches, sending anti-slavery petitions to Congress, and writing anti-slavery pamphlets and newspapers. Brown's inciting violence and a race war in the United States seems to conflict with a respect for the rule of law.
3. Brown acted to his pure ethical motives but ignored any practical outcome of his violent actions on human life, the health of the laws of the country, and igniting a possible war. In the end, most of his followers were killed, he was hanged, innocent people were killed, and he further ignited deep divisions in the country leading to Civil War. Answers may vary on debating whether the ends justify the means.
4. Brown moved to Kansas to attempt to make it a free state with the expectation of employing violence. He and his sons dragged people out of their homes, even if they did not themselves own slaves, and carried out summary justice, murdering them. Answers may vary on whether this was justified.
5. Answers will vary on this philosophical question. Have the students defend their answers.
6. Brown's plan to free the slaves was to raid Harper's Ferry, seize the weapons, arm slaves, and start a slave insurrection and race war in which slaves killed their masters for freedom. Brown did not have a realistic tactical plan and probably underestimated the violence that southerners would employ to block the plan from coming to fruition. Brown was deluded by his righteousness to think that violence was the only solution. Abolitionists and later Abraham Lincoln employed a variety of lawful and peaceful actions to work toward the same goal of freeing the slaves.
7. Brown's plan for taking Harper's Ferry was poorly conceived and met a great deal of resistance from townspeople and the military that doomed it to failure. Brown did not care who was killed in the raid, whether innocent people or his own children, because he was more concerned with the injustice against millions of slaves.
8. Brown never expressed remorse for the killing because he felt justified by a higher religious authority for his actions.
9. Brown did not seem to consider or be concerned about the thousands of slaveowners, slaves, and other citizens who might have been swept up in the violence of a race war if his plan had actually succeeded.

10. Answers will vary. Those who agreed with his moral goals and who supported his following a higher authority to do what was right regardless of consequences hailed him as a hero. Both those who disagreed with his goal of ending slavery and those who disagreed with his violent means of achieving his goal disagreed with him.

John Brown and Self-Deception: Graphic Organizer (p. 88)

1. What is their view of the rule of law in the United States?
 - **John Brown:** Brown was guided by a higher law and thought the rule of law and Constitution was inadequate because they allowed slavery.
 - **Abraham Lincoln:** The rule of law was vital to a healthy republic and civil society. Immoral laws should be changed, not broken.
 - **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** King believed in the rule of law, but made a distinction between just and unjust laws. He believed individuals had a responsibility to obey just laws and to disobey unjust laws non-violently.
2. When can an individual or a group justifiably decide to break the law? How are laws to be broken?
 - **John Brown:** Brown believed that the individual could break the law if guided by a higher law. Laws could be broken violently if necessary.
 - **Abraham Lincoln:** Individuals cannot decide which laws to follow and which to break. Conscience and principle were important but should be used to change the laws if they are immoral.
 - **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** Individuals must follow just laws and break unjust laws, if they conflict with the moral law. Unjust laws must be broken openly, lovingly, non-violently, and with an acceptance of the punishment.
3. What is the person's goal related to the laws of the United States?
 - **John Brown:** Brown's pursuit of his goal of ending slavery was unconcerned with the laws governing the United States.
 - **Abraham Lincoln:** Lincoln agreed with the principle of ending slavery but wanted to do so in a constitutional manner.
 - **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** King wanted to change unjust laws such as segregation by arousing the conscience of the community with non-violent demonstrations against unjust laws.

When Free Speech and Respect Collide: Analyzing Primary Source Documents (p. 95)

1. Close-reading of the photographs.
 - A group of teenagers or young adults is gathered. All except one are white.
 - Everyone is standing, and most are facing in the same direction and appear to be walking. One young woman has her mouth open and appears to be yelling at the one young woman who is not white. Some people are looking at the young woman who is yelling; others are looking at the young women at whom the yelling is directed; others are looking at each other, possibly talking to each other. One or two appear to be smiling. This indicates that a crowd has gathered around the one non-white young woman, and that some have strong attitudes about her while others' attitudes are not as clear.
 - The clothing and hairstyles indicate that this may be in the mid- to late-1950s.
 - This photograph may have been taken in the southern part of the United States.