

Activating My Democracy

- MIDDLE SCHOOL -

LESSON
2

**This Is Right On So
Many Levels!**

How to understand
real wealth and
our liberties

ultimate
CIVICS



Activating My Democracy

Civics lessons and resources for grades 6–8
Second Edition, 2017

Explores how to: (1) Move ideas into action; (2) Understand values and liberties (3) Understand rights, privileges, and the balance of power; (4) Trace the historic roots of the democracy crisis in current events; (5) Repair a democracy and protect our liberties; and (6) Exercise our rights to defend what we love.

Empowers: Youth by nurturing self-efficacy and teaching skills and strategies to take control of their destiny.

Engages: Youth as change agents to define their roles as global citizens during a critical time in human history.

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The greatest threat to democracy is the illusion that it has been achieved.
~ Anonymomous

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”
~ Frederick Douglas

This is right on so many levels!

Understanding wealth and our liberties



Rationale

The purpose of forming a limited government is to recognize and secure our cherished principles and values. It is up to the citizens of each generation to exercise our rights and to secure others, as needed, to maintain a limited government that derives “its just powers from consent of the governed” and to pass this government to our posterity.

The rights recognized and secured in the Bill of Rights and the concepts of limited government established in the Constitution, such as the balance of power, resulted in part from the Framers first-hand experience in dealing with the tyranny of the British monarchy and instruments of its oppression, in particular, the corporations holding royal charters.

Our nation has progressed in decades-long periods of popular movements to secure more rights in response to decades-long periods of abuse from government overstepping its limited powers and industry overreaching its privileges and powers.

“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...”

~ Declaration of Independence



We now find ourselves in one such cycle of abuse of powers that grew in response to the popular movements of the 1950s through 1970s. It is up to the citizens present at this time to exercise our rights and work together to protect our cherished ideals so “that this government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” (President Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1863)

For democracy to work, our individual work must be grounded in our core principles and values, because these are where we find common ground and commitment to work together. These are also the key to understanding our rights and using our rights responsibly. And these are the foundations of our dreams and hopes for our collective future.

It is incumbent on all citizens to be able to articulate what we value, understand how our value-based liberties are – and become – enshrined as rights, and exercise our rights responsibly and often to protect our liberties and to maintain a limited government of, for, and by the people.

Enduring Understanding for Civics Grades 6-8*

- Ability to describe ideas and principles contained in founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system. (D2.Civ.8.)
- Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society. (D2.Civ.10.)
- Ability to assess specific rules and laws as means of addressing public problems. (D2.Civ.12.)

** C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards*

<http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf>

Essential Questions

- What was the purpose of forming a democratic government?
- What are some of the key values protected in the Bill of Rights?
- How are these rights being used to address current issues?

Learning Objectives

Students can:

- Describe the four types of wealth and give examples of each.
- Understand and describe the purpose of forming a limited government.
- Explain key values and concepts enshrined in the Bill of Rights.
- Describe how these rights are being used to address current issues.

Resources

Constitution Center, interactive guide to amendments

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/>



This is right on so many levels!

Lesson 2

Students explore and articulate what they value, then examine how the value-based liberties and principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence were moved into legal protections through the Bill of Rights. Using select current events, students learn how, and how well, our rights work to defend our wealth and wellbeing and to curb government and industry abuses of power.

Time

Approximately 50 minutes: Interactive exercises supported by films and power point slides.

Materials

- Power point notes and slides
- One copy per student of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution
- One double-sided copy per student of the ½-page WORKSHEET Values and Wealth (on one side) and the ½-page WORKSHEET Understanding Real Wealth (on other side)
- One single-sided copy per student of the ½-page Exit Ticket for Values and Rights
- A piece of paper about 5 feet by 3 feet or a white board
- Two (2) films
 - » *A 3-minute guide to the Bill of Rights* (TED Ed Lesson)
<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/a-3-minute-guide-to-the-bill-of-rights-belinda-stutzman>
 - » *Proclaim* with Ta’Kaiya Blaney, 2 minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmT2CJ2ssbs>

Preparation

- Review lesson materials: power point notes and slides, films, teacher guides and student worksheets for exercises, and vocabulary
- Note page numbers of readings in Declaration of Independence in margins of this guide for student reference
- Download or cue films for viewing
 - » Slide 9 – *A 3-minute guide to the Bill of Rights* (Start 13 seconds in)
 - » Slide 17 – *Proclaim*
- Clear white board behind screen where slides will be projected
- On a different part of the white board or poster paper write:
 - » Essential questions



What was the purpose of forming a democratic government?
What are some of the key values protected in the Bill of Rights?
How are these rights being used to address current issues?

» Vocabulary

amendment
inalienable/ unalienable right
liberty
quality of life
value
wellbeing

- Arrange desks in groups of 4 to 6 students
- Provide writing utensils for each student
- Provide set of WORKSHEETS for each student
- Post paper on wall where students can write on it with markers and where it will not be covered by the screen for the power point lesson. Make two columns: Title the narrower (8 inches) left column – “Type” and the wider right column – “Value.”

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt



Power Point Notes

Lesson 2

1. *Ultimate Civics!* COVER SLIDE

Today we are going to explore why people come together to form a democratic government – one that is ruled by the people.

Our essential questions are:

- What is the purpose of creating a democratic government?
- What are some of the key values protected in the Bill of Rights?
- How are these rights being used to address current issues?

2. Shared Values

To answer these questions, we will start by identifying our values.



Instructions for WORKSHEET Values & Wealth (Slides 2–3)

- Identifying *individual* values
 - » Ask students to write under “Values” column of WORKSHEET what they like, what they find useful, of worth, or important. Just use short phrases or words or drawings.
 - » Ask students to work in silence for 3 minutes.
 - » Time 3 minutes. Warn students when they have 30 seconds left.
- Identifying *shared* values
 - » Ask each group to share 2 or 3 values; write these on the white board or big paper under the “Value” column. For repeats, ask the group to pick another value from their list.

- Observe and comment on the list of shared values.
 - » Does every thing on the list have a sticker price? Does it cost money to buy? (No.)
 - » Ask students to identify items that cost money to buy – things with sticker prices.
 - » Does every thing on the list have value? (Yes.)
 - » Ask the students to identify some things on the list that value but no sticker price (like best friends or Mom and Dad.)
 - » Return to power point presentation slide 3.

3. Types of shared values

Let’s see if the values on our shared list can be grouped into types.

- Teacher reads each definition in turn from the slide.
- Ask students to write each definition on WORKSHEET Understanding Wealth.
- Ask students to identify an example from the list of shared values. Write symbols or letters to the left of each value.
 - \$ = economic wealth
 - E = environmental wealth
 - S = social wealth
 - P = political wealth
- After categorizing several values, students should begin to realize that



some values represent more than one type of wealth – and that the sticker price does not represent the true value of the thing.

- » Encourage this discussion. Ask student to explain their choices.
- » The point is: Our values are shared and interwoven.

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Economic wealth is the total of things with a sticker price; things that are owned, have value, and could be sold or bartered.

- » Consider: What is barter considered economic wealth? (Barter substitutes for money when people trade things of value to meet their needs)

<CLICK>

Environmental wealth is healthy ecosystems – all life and the natural environment to support it.

- » Consider: Take a breath. Did you pay for that air? Can you live without it?

<CLICK>

Social wealth is things in demand but with no price like: trust, friends, family, culture, knowledge, health, safety, relationships. It is also art, music, sciences, peace of mind, happiness; i.e., priceless things.

- » Consider: Friendships and marriages are based on trust. Barter or trade is built on trust.

<CLICK>

Political wealth is our inalienable rights, plus government and institutions respecting these rights.

Instructions



- After completing the shared list, ask students to take a minute to categorize their personal values.

- Then turn to a partner and finish this sentence:
- “My favorite value is _____ because it _____.”
- Identify the types of wealth your value represents.

4. When society reflects human values

When a society or culture reflects what people love and value, our types of wealth weave together to create a quality of life. Our quality of life *improves* when people – and the government and businesses we establish – take care of our wealth. Protecting these forms of wealth are critical to the wellbeing of society.

We have choices!

“Have you ever seen a solar panel break down, and it destroys an ecosystem and ends a way of life for people and animals? Have you ever heard of a solar spill?”

Olivia in *Olivia’s Birds and the Oil Spill*

5. Definitions and concepts

The Declaration of Independence recognizes key human values and wealth.

Before we look at the Declaration of Independence, let’s examine some vocabulary. Use your WORKSHEET Understanding Wealth to take notes.

<CLICK>

- **Unalienable** means cannot be transferred or sold. The root word comes from the Latin *alienus*, meaning “of or belonging to another.”



- » So a space “alien” belongs to another what? (planet or galaxy)

<CLICK>

- **Unalienable rights** are “*fundamental rights*” that cannot be transferred, sold, or denied.
- **Liberty:** What does this mean?
 - » Ask students to define it. Most think it means “freedom.”
 - » Ask freedom from what?

<CLICK>

- Read definition. Allow discussion.

6. Statement of principles



Instructions

- Work at your tables: Find and read this sentence (on slide) in the Declaration of Independence.
- What are the Founders saying here? Discuss the key principles.
- What types of wealth are these values? Why?
- Discuss as a class when ready.
 - » Guide to key principles
 - People are created equal
 - People are born with natural rights (life, liberty)
 - List of natural rights is not inclusive
 - » Guide to types of wealth
 - All are examples of social wealth; liberty is also political wealth

7. Statement of purpose



Instructions

- Work at your tables: Read the next two clauses in the Declaration of Independence.
- Answer these two questions on the slide:
 - » What is the purpose of forming a government?

- » What if a government “becomes destructive of these ends” or purposes? (2 things)

- Guide group discussion and explain as needed. The main points are:
 - » The reason to form a government is to recognize and secure natural human rights. However, it’s not just any government.
 - » It’s a democratic government that derives its “just powers” from the people – from the consent of the governed.
 - » “Just powers” are only those powers that are given by the people, in the form of passing laws and making policies. The people rule, not the government.
 - » When the Government becomes destructive of life, Liberties, and other natural rights, what is a right and responsibility of its citizens? To abolish it and try again.

8. Bill of Rights = Inalienable Rights

The Bill of Rights is the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. An “*amendment*” is an official rule change.

The Bill of Rights recognizes some of our inalienable rights and limits on the powers of federal government. It is meant to safeguard individual liberties. After the Civil War, the 14th Amendment extended most of these rights to limit the powers of state governments as well.

Our rights are meant to protect individual rights of all citizens. It is an ongoing duty of citizens to make sure state and federal governments respect these rights.

For example, the goals of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s were to end racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans and to secure



legal recognition and federal protection of the citizenship rights listed in the Constitution. The movement used civil resistance to draw national attention to the inequalities and injustices faced by African Americans. Children played a key role during this movement, which led to passage of key federal laws to overturn discriminatory practices.

Any government violation of any of our liberties is a threat to all citizens and our democracy.

No More: The Children of Birmingham 1963 and the Turning Point of the Civil Rights Movement, 10-minute documentary film
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCxE6i_SzoQ

9. Bill of Rights overview

We're going to watch a short film about the first official change to Constitution – the Bill of Rights amendments.



SHOW FILM

- Turn to the amendment section of the Constitution. It's at the end.
 - » How many amendments are there?
XXVII or 27. Explain Roman numerals, if necessary.

- » Turn to the first 10 amendments – our Bill of Rights. The 1st amendment is important, because we need it to protect all of our other inalienable rights.

Let's look at some current events and see what protected rights are featured.

10. 1st Amendment: Thought & expression

Instructions



- Ask students to work at the tables to read and identify *their five (5)* protected rights in this amendment.
 - Example: Think of the big Women's March on January 21, 2017.
 - » What 1st Amendment rights were these citizens using?
Have students explain their choices.

11. 2nd Amendment: Who has this right?

Ask students to read their protected right.

2nd Amendment rights are constantly being challenged. It is possible today for a citizen to purchase and possess a fully automatic military grade assault rifle – provided that person meets and follows state and federal rules of gun ownership.

Instructions



- Turn to a partner and discuss where you would draw the line on gun control. Allow about 3 minutes.
 - » Ask for students to explain their choice; get a balance of different perspectives.
- The point is: our rights are complicated and involve many perspectives.



12. 3rd & 4th Amendments: Secure in our homes and persons

The 3rd and 4th Amendments are about being secure in our homes, persons, and possessions.

In most cases, police need a “warrant” or order from a judge to conduct a search of private property. There are exceptions for “probable cause.”

For example, if police have a reasonable basis for believing that a crime has been committed, then the police may not need a warrant for search or seizure.

Instructions



- Read the 4th Amendment at your tables. Discuss following:
 - » Describe what is protected in your own words. Give examples.
 - » Consider: Electronic files and cell phones did not exist when this was written. Are electronic files stored in cell phones protected?
- Discuss as a class.
 - » Regarding electronic files, the Supreme Court also discussed cell phone privacy. In 2014, it ruled police, generally, need a warrant to search a cell phone seized from a person who has been arrested.

“The fact that technology now allows an individual to carry such information in his hand does not make the information any less worthy of the protection for which the Founders fought.”

~ Chief Justice Roberts in a unanimous Court in *Riley v. California*



RESOURCES

Exceptions to the warrant requirement

https://nationalparalegal.edu/conLawCrimProc_Public/ProtectionFromSearches&Seizures/ExToWarrantReq.asp

U.S. Supreme Court, cell phone privacy

<http://www.scotusblog.com/2014/06/symposium-in-riley-v-california-a-unanimous-supreme-court-sets-out-fourth-amendment-for-digital-age/>

13. 5th Amendment: Due process

The 5th Amendment recognizes several “*due process*” rights that concern a fair legal process.

- What was one due process right mentioned in the film? (Hint: I plead the 5th.)
This right to not testify against yourself in a trial is one part of a fair legal process.

<CLICK>

Another 5th Amendment right is currently being used in what is being called “the biggest case on the planet.”

Another 5th Amendment right is currently being used in what is being called “the biggest case on the planet.”

Twenty-one youth are using this protected liberty to sue the federal government over their right to a stable climate. The youth claim that global warming and the resulting climate chaos violate their generation’s due

process rights to equal protection and to life, liberties, and property.

We'll learn more about this case in another lesson.

RESOURCE

National Geographic covers 'biggest case on the planet'

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/03/kids-sue-us-government-climate-change/>

14. 5th Amendment: Eminent domain

"*Eminent domain*" is the right of governments to seize or take private property for public use. The 5th Amendment provides that government must pay the property owners fairly for their loss. A fair price is called, "*just compensation*."

The power of eminent domain is used a lot. For example, when a public highway needs to be expanded, the government can claim its power of eminent domain to seize any private land and homes, or farms like in the cartoon, for the project and pay the owners "just compensation" for their loss.

<CLICK>

Instructions



- Turn to a partner and answer the question on the slide: "How 'just' is just compensation?" Consider other forms of wealth that a home represents. Allow about 3 minutes.
- Ask students to explain their answers.
- The point is: Eminent domain "takings" are often very controversial, because the market price rarely reflects the full value of the property.

15. 6th & 7th Amendments: Trial by jury

The 6th and 7th Amendments are about our legal system.

- What are the first several words of the 6th Amendment?
"In a criminal prosecution": The 6th is about protected rights in a criminal trial.
 - » And the first several words of the 7th Amendment?
"In suits at common law": The 7th is about rights under common or civil law. This is used to settle disputes over private rights of citizens.

The 8th Amendment is about preventing cruel and unusual punishment. While this amendment is a good principle, it has proven harder in practice. As the film stated, people really have not agreed on what exactly cruel and unusual means – for over 200 years!

Obama banned the use of torture in U.S. intelligence gathering by Executive Order. However, other standing presidents could cancel that order.

16. 9th & 10th Amendments: Natural rights

The 9th & 10th Amendments were called "non-rights" in the film, but let's call them "natural rights" – just like the other unalienable human rights.

These amendments recognize that the rights listed in the Constitution are not inclusive. Citizens and states have the right to claim other protected rights. This ultimately protects the people's liberty.

"Dissent is the highest form of patriotism."

~ Thomas Jefferson



Amendment right to protect the climate for their generation.

- Ask a student to read the statement of Victoria Barrett, one of the youth who are suing the government.
- Discuss how this applies to the 9th Amendment.

17. Defending human values & wealth with rights

When people feel that their wealth and wellbeing are threatened by government actions, people rise up to defend their liberties. Here's one example from Idle No More, a movement to honor Indigenous sovereignty and to protect the land and water.

As we watch this 2-minute film, listen for core values and rights. Be prepared to write and share what you heard.



SHOW FILM

Instructions

- Take a minute to write some of the types of wealth or rights that you heard on your WORKSHEET Values and Wealth.
 - Ask class: What are some of the values or rights that you heard?
 - » Teacher's guide for types of wealth: Land, homes, food, medicine, history, culture, wellbeing, way of life, healing, identity, our future, right to choose future, children, generations to come, water, diversity
 - » Teacher's guide for rights: inalienable rights mentioned



in World Proclamation of 1763; sovereign rights mentioned in U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; right to assemble peacefully (come together in one canoe); right to speak (joining voices)

- Turn to another person and take turns comparing your personal values with those expressed by Ta'Kayia.
- Ask class for observations.

People protest when the government is threatening their lives, liberties, and wellbeing. Maybe the people exercising their 1st Amendment rights are not the problem. Maybe it's the government. We'll look at this possibility in our next lesson.

18. Ultimate Civics! COVER SLIDE

RESOURCES

Idle No More <http://www.idlenomore.ca/>

The British King issued the World Proclamation of 1763 at the end of the French and Indian War. It was meant to end westward expansion by settlers. It became one of the cornerstones of Native American law in the U.S. and Canada. <http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/1763-proclamation-of>

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous (UNDRIP) was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in September 2013. UNDRIP is a strong statement of principles and an important tool towards eliminating human rights violations. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Declaration.aspx>

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

amendment: an official rule change made to a constitution, law, contract, or other legal document

liberty: freedom from government oppression on one's way of life, behavior, or political views
quality of life: general wellbeing of individuals and societies

unalienable/ inalienable right: a fundamental or natural human right that cannot be transferred or sold, or denied, because a person is born with them

value: something of worth; i.e., it is important or useful

wellbeing: the state of being healthy, happy, and comfortable

Legal Vocabulary

due process: a fair legal process

eminent domain: the power of government to take private property for public use

just compensation: fair payment for loss of value or property after an eminent domain seizure or "taking"

enumerate: list

proclamation: a declaration that carries the force of law

taking: eminent domain seizure

