

Making the Case: Can Limited Government Last?

General

Grade Level

High School

Author Info

Tamara Hagen & Shannon Thompson

Type of Lesson

Challenge

Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Group

Duration

90-120 minutes

Challenge Question

Limited government is one of the basic principles of American Government. The origins of this concept can be found in a variety of influential primary source documents. You will take on the role of a lawyer by finding the key language supporting limited government in our founding documents as your evidence. Analyze current events, make the case, and answer the question, "Is our government truly limited today?"

Rationale

This lesson is intended for a traditional high school history or government course as well as AP US History and AP US Government & Politics. This would work well as a concluding activity for a unit on the Constitution or as a Constitution Day/Celebrate Freedom Project. Students will peruse a variety of

primary source documents with the goal of identifying key passages illustrating the concept of limited government as the founding fathers envisioned. Small groups will create digital posters with specific quotes/portions of these documents with visual support from the collection. As an extension, students will compare this ideal with the reality of our world today. *Please note-the Bill of Rights document included is the original version written by James Madison. So, there are 12 amendments listed and they are in a different order than students are used to.

Steps

1. Review the gallery of primary source documents within the “Challenge Resources”.
2. Find 4 quotes about limited government from at least 4 of the 9 different primary sources. These quotes can illustrate the rationale for a limited government or the actual incorporation of this principle into our system of government (one of which must be from the US Bill of Rights). As you highlight your selections from the transcript, use the tools at the bottom of your screen to add these to your “Collection”.
3. Click on the “Take Challenge” tab and then select the “Add An Image” icon.
4. Drag these chosen portions from the gallery onto your digital poster in a creative format.
5. Then use the “Explore” tool to locate at least 4 visuals that you feel represent the main idea of your chosen passages and add them to your collection.
6. Drag and drop the images into your digital poster near the corresponding quote.
7. Discuss and research a current issue related to limited government in the US today.
8. Write a 250-300 word explanation defending whether or not you feel our government is as limited as our Founding Fathers intended. Be sure to explain the connection of your current issue to this justification.
9. Be prepared to present both your digital poster and your case to the class for review and discussion. The class will vote on the best arguments/projects to be published on the Sea of Liberty website.