

The Constitution: Counter Revolution or National Salvation?

Government Workshop

How should our new government work?

The Declaration of Independence told our citizens and the world:

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 foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

In this exercise, imagine that you and your group members have been handed the responsibility given our founding fathers: to design a working government which will protect the principles of the "Declaration." Your answers will vary with your perspective, either radical or conservative. Paste this chart in your notebooks and fill in the columns for the group you have been assigned. Briefly state your reasoning for each position. Wait to fill in the "Here I Stand" section after we have debriefed the plans of the two positions.

	Radical Plan	Conservative Plan	Here I Stand
How will you determine who is allowed to vote?			
Should the Constitution focus on tough laws to keep crime down, or tough statements of everybody's right to freedom?			
Do you believe we should have a bicameral (two-house) legislature?			

	Radical Plan	Conservative Plan	Here I Stand
How many years should a legislator serve before standing for re-election? How often should they be able to be re-elected?			
How many years should a president be allowed to serve before standing for re-election? How often should they be able to be re-elected? (term limits)?			
What qualifications should a person have to be able to run for office?			
What should be stronger: local and state governments or the national government?			
Should the national government be allowed to tax people?			
How should Supreme Court judges be selected? How long should they serve in office?			
Should a president be allowed to veto laws made by Congress?			
How much power should the military have in cases of domestic unrest (i.e., L.A. riots)?			
Should slavery be allowed?			