

Unit 1: Political Culture in America and Political Socialization

Name: _____ Period: _____

Terms to know:

Government

Social Contract Theory

Social Contract

Mayflower Compact

Thomas Hobbes

John Locke

Direct Democracy

Indirect Democracy

Republic

Monarchy

Totalitarian

Oligarchies

Political Culture

Personal Liberty

Political Equality

Popular Consent

Majority Rule

Popular Sovereignty

Natural Law

Civil Society

Libertarians

Conservatives

Social Conservatives

Liberals

Moderate

Poll

Public Opinion

Public Opinion Polls

Straw Polls

Sample

Random Sample

Stratified Sample

Push Polls

Tracking Polls

Exit Poll

Margin of Error

Sampling Error

Ambiguous Phrasing

Limited Respondent Options

Political Socialization

Questions to consider as you read Chapter 1

1. What is an ideological spectrum and how is it used to give us an idea where people stand with their political ideas?
2. How does the American political culture compare with the rest of the world when placed on an ideological spectrum?
3. Describe the differences between the views on human nature of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes.
4. What are the implications of the changing demographics of the U.S. population?

5. What is a democracy?

6. What requirements must be met for a government to be called a democracy?

7. Can socialism coexist with democracy? Is extensive economic freedom essential to democracy?

8. In his 1651 *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes observed that without government, life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Justify his argument. With this justification, justify the existence of government as it presently operates in the United States today.

9. What demographic and socioeconomic factors do you think are related to democracy?

10. Does majority rule undermine freedom and threaten individual rights? What was James Madison's view, and what is your reaction?

11. Discuss the theories of elitism and pluralism as explanations of how American government works.

12. Americans often possess a healthy cynicism of government, whether large or small. Identify the reasons for such beliefs and how government should attempt to address these.

13. How does democracy in America compare to democracy in other parts of the world?

14. What are the most important sources of stability in American government?

15. What are the most important forces for change in American government?

16. Do you agree with the statement, "Equality, individualism, and openness are the crucial values of American politics in the twenty-first century"?

17. How can terrorism affect the paradox of democracy? How can/should democracies respond?

18. How can democracies, particularly the United States, deal with new restrictions imposed as a result of terrorist acts/threats?

19. What can individual American citizens do to influence the actions and policies of their government?

20. What are the strengths of our democracy in the new millennium? Our weaknesses? Why?

21. Today's Americans often question the "American Dream." What is the American Dream and how could you go about proving that the Dream is still alive or that the Dream is dying? What types of evidence would you need and where might you find it?

22. Given the remarkable diversity in America, how is the country able to function as smoothly as it does? Does this diversity threaten to make the country less governable now than in the past?

23. What are both the weaknesses and strengths of "direct democracy"?

Chapter 11

1. How have surveying techniques improved over time?

2. What is the margin of error? Why is it important?

3. What are some of the driving forces behind a person's political socialization?

4. Why do women tend to hold different public opinions than do men, and how do they differ?

5. What is public opinion?

6. What role does public opinion play in American politics?

7. How would you gather a representative sample of your college or university? What groups would have to be represented, and in what proportions?

8. What issues might cause the most difference between whites and African Americans?

9. What role do “scorekeepers” play in aggregate public opinion change?

10. What effect opinion polls that predict the outcome of an election may have on voter turnout?

11. What are the advantages and disadvantages of providing polling data on public opinion?

12. What is the difference between civil disobedience and civil discourse? How might the latter be used to influence political leaders?

13. What is the relationship between fundamental values and political values and beliefs?

Unit 1: Political Culture in America and Political Socialization

14. What is the relationship between social and economic background and political values and beliefs?

15. How do we acquire our political values and beliefs?

16. What fundamental values do most Americans share? Use examples to explain how we can share values but support conflicting policy choices.

17. How do you explain the correlation between religion and party affiliation in the United States?

18. In consideration of Americans' general lack of interest and knowledge of politics, what do you consider to be the primary cause for such lack of public knowledge?

19. Why does it matter whether Americans understand important public policy issues?

20. Who are opinion leaders, and what role do they play in the political process?