Founded in September 1999, the Bill of Rights Institute seeks to educate young people about the words and ideas of America’s Founders, the liberties guaranteed in our Founding documents, and how our Founding principles continue to affect and shape a free society. The Bill of Rights Institute is an educational non-profit organization, classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization, a public charity. With an annual operating budget of over $3.3 million, the Institute is grateful to be supported by 3,000 individual, corporate, and foundation donors.
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## What is virtue within the context of this book? How do we mean the term? These pages can be used with students to help further their understanding of the term.

### NARRATIVES

- **George Washington and Self-Governance** ........................................................................................................ 19
  - George Washington moderated the passions of the mob as well as his own desires when he refused to seize power by force.
  - Self-government on a societal level requires self-governance on an individual level.
  - Remind yourself daily that history remembers the very best and the very worst leaders. Which are you becoming?

- **Benedict Arnold's Treason** .................................................................................................................................. 35
  - Benedict Arnold was a traitor who abused the confidence of his brothers-in-arms.
  - People freely living and working together must be able to trust each other.
  - Tell the truth, expose untruths, and keep your promises.

- **Thomas Jefferson and the Rewards of Humility** ................................................................................................... 47
  - Thomas Jefferson displayed a special intellectual humility that allowed him to learn from others.
  - The people closest to a situation or problem often have the best knowledge to address it.
  - Remember that your ignorance is far greater than your knowledge. Give praise to those who earn it.

- **Douglas MacArthur and Hubris in Civil-Military Relations** .................................................................................. 57
  - The great World War II general and war hero yielded to the vice of hubris and challenged the authority of President Truman in the Korean War.
  - Hubris, or excessive pride, can result in the tragic fall of a hero.
  - Choose humility as a better path by serving others and avoid the temptation of becoming arrogant.

- **How Jourdon Anderson Understood Justice** ...................................................................................................... 69
  - Escaped slave Jourdon Anderson articulated a definition of justice in response to his former master's request that he return and work for him.
  - Justice requires respect for individual rights.
  - Stand for equally applied rules that respect the rights and dignity of all, and make sure everyone obeys them.
Chief Justice Roger Taney and Injustice in the Supreme Court

- Chief Justice Roger Taney tried to avert the Civil War by attempting to resolve the issue of slavery and its expansion in the West, but the Dred Scott (1857) decision was a grave injustice against the rights of African Americans.
- Injustice can occur even when a person has the best intentions to solve a problem.
- Remember to seek justice with good intentions and a good end in mind.

The Responsibilities of Frederick Douglass

- Frederick Douglass persevered despite terrible injustice and took responsibility for his own learning.
- The virtue of responsibility is often a struggle but one that must become a habit.
- Remember that real leaders strive to know and do what is best, not what is most popular.

John Brown's Raid and Self-Deception

- John Brown was a radical abolitionist who believed that he could murder people and start a race war to free the slaves in the United States before the Civil War.
- It is right to have good principles, but the fight for them can be blinded by self-deception when performed unjustly.
- Remember to pursue your principles virtuously and justly.

Elizabeth Eckford, the Little Rock Nine, and Respect

- Elizabeth Eckford and the Little Rock Nine courageously faced down an angry mob after the Supreme Court ordered the racial integration of public schools in Arkansas.
- All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.
- Protect your mind and body as precious things. Extend that protection to every other person you encounter.

Robespierre, the Search for Enemies, and Political Intolerance

- Robespierre was one of the leaders of The Terror during the French Revolution and had tens of thousands executed in a search for “enemies” of the revolution.
- Political intolerance can result in the violation of minority rights and violence.
- Remember to listen to other people and accept that they have different political views than your own.

The Unknown Rebel's Courage at Tiananmen Square

- An anonymous individual refused to yield to a tank during the crackdown on protesters at Tiananmen Square.
- "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point." C.S. Lewis, 1942
- Stand firm in being a person of character and doing what is right, especially when it is unpopular.

Aaron Burr's Empire of Ambition in the West

- Aaron Burr was driven by a self-interested ambition to break off the western part of the United States and establish his own empire as emperor.
- Ambition can be virtuous and noble in its service or it can be self-serving and self-interested.
- Remember to pursue success and greatness with the right intentions and attitude.
The Schechter Brothers’ Contribution

- The Schechter brothers fought against an unjust law that took away their right to earn a living.
- Every person has the right and the responsibility to take care of himself and to use his talents to improve the lives of others.
- Discover your passions and talents, and use them to create what is beautiful and needed. Work hard to take care of yourself and those who depend on you.

“Boss” Tweed’s Corrupt Political Machine

- “Boss” William Tweed organized post-Civil War New York City politics to amass great power and millions of dollars of corrupt money out of greed.
- Greed can corrupt a person or society.
- Remember to be honest and upright with money and important responsibilities.

Alice Paul’s Perseverance for the Vote

- Alice Paul endured extreme personal hardships in her struggle to win the right to vote for women.
- Accomplishing great things almost always requires the virtue of perseverance.
- Remember how many people before you chose the easy path rather than the right one, and stay the course.

Joseph McCarthy and the Demagoguery of McCarthyism

- During the early Cold War, Joseph McCarthy warned of Communist subversives in the American federal government and proceeded to pursue the issue for his own power.
- Demagoguery results in manipulation and hurts others.
- Listen to those who express virtue in not only what they say but what they do.

August Landmesser’s Courageous Refusal

- It takes courage to refuse to go along with the crowd.
- Mob mentality is a particular danger in democracies.
- Stand firm in being a person of character and doing what is right, especially when it is unpopular.

Irma Grese and the Self-Deception of Nazism

- Ordinary Germans such as Irma Grese were caught up a web of self-deception that led them to participate in terrible deeds against Jews and others thought to be “inferior.”
- Self-deception can lead one to do something they would not ordinarily do.
- Be vigilant that the people you associate with respect the rights of others and act virtuously.

Dwight Eisenhower, D-Day, and Responsibility

- Dwight D. Eisenhower was the commander of the Allied forces during the Normandy Invasion on June 6, 1944 and wrote a private note accepting sole responsibility in case the invasion failed.
- Responsibility can be a heavy burden but shows integrity for one who accepts it.
- Always take responsibility for your actions whether they are successes or failures.

Che Guevara and Communist Injustice

- Che Guevara helped to overthrow the Cuban government in 1959 and work with Fidel Castro to establish an unjust Communist regime.
- Injustice can occur when one blindly follows an ideology and imposes it on others.
- Make sure that in fighting for a just society that your ideas do not justify much greater injustices in the name of some grand goal.
Acknowledgments

The development of these resources was made possible through the generous support of the Kern Family Foundation.
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 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?
Right and wrong exist. Understanding vice and virtue means acknowledging this.

To further justice requires that one exercise judgment. To understand and evaluate virtue and vice, 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 vices and 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

We have also identified vices the Founders believed could endanger constitutional principles and a healthy civil society. By studying examples of vice throughout history, we established a list of vices which include ambition, avarice, blind obedience, corruption, hubris, injustice, political intolerance, and many others.

- Ambition
- Avarice
- Blind Obedience
- Corruption
- Demagoguery
- Hubris
- Injustice
- Political Intolerance
- Self-Deception

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.
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 and vice are actions.

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.

Virtue and vice are habits.

We also take the idea from Aristotle that vice and virtue are habits. 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. Behavior done in the pursuit of an injustice is vice.

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?
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.
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.
   - Perseverance – Industry.
   - Respect – Chastity.

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.


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.
Identifying and Defining Civic Virtues

Below are several civic virtues and vices, 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.

**Ambition:** To be driven by self-interest while pursuing power and fame for yourself rather than serving the republic or the good of others.

**Avarice:** To allow the love of wealth to lead you to do wrong acquiring it.

**Deception:** To lie to yourself and others either to deceive them or because you are deluded into thinking that something is right when it is wrong and unjust.

**Demagoguery:** To lead others astray because you control or manipulate their emotions through moving words or a vision.

**Hubris:** To have excessive self-pride, vanity, and arrogance that usually leads to a tragic fall.

**Injustice:** To harm others by applying unequal rules and damaging another's inalienable rights and dignity.

**Political Intolerance:** Disrespect for the different political views of others and violating their inalienable rights.
**Handout: Constitutional Principles and Essential Virtues**

Use these checklists in your discussion of the assigned readings. In what ways are the principles and virtues demonstrated? In what aspects of the events are they decidedly absent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Examples/Explanation</th>
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<td>Checks and balances</td>
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<td>Due process</td>
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RESPONSIBILITY

Suggested Launch Activity

**TEACHER'S NOTES**

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**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.

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**CENTRAL QUESTIONS:** How can one individual’s responsibility influence a community? How can this affect society? How does individual responsibility play a part in a constitutional republic?

**Discussion**

Write or post the word “responsibility” on the board. Discuss, as a class, what it means. Then, post the following definition:

*To strive to know and to do what is best rather than what is most popular or expedient. To be trustworthy for making decisions in the best long-term interests of the people and tasks of which one is in charge.*

Show students the photo on the following page. Ask: In this photo, what specific items or actions illustrate “responsibility”? Allow time for students to closely examine details of the photograph and to discuss it. *(Note: They may note the gentleman reading at his desk, in a posture that indicates close focus on what he is doing; the large collection of books, noting the expense this represents at that time; the neatness with which the books and desk are arranged; the multiple items on the desk may indicate that he takes responsibility for bills to be paid, letters to which he should respond, etc.)*

**Explain:** One place that represents Frederick Douglass’s responsibility is his home (now a National Historic Site in Washington, D.C.), and especially his library. See if students make the connection between the mention of Frederick Douglass and the photo they just examined.
Activity: Responsibility Maps

1. Distribute a plain sheet of paper (8.5" x 11" or larger) to each student. Instruct them to fold it into fourths and then unfold, so that they have four sections to their paper. Have students do a “quick-draw” of each section, one at a time, as follows:
   - your home
   - your neighborhood
   - the school
   - another place where you regularly spend time

   All “quick-draws” should be simple line-drawings or maps, each completed in about one minute.

2. Assign students to groups of 4 or 5. Distribute to each small group of students a set of colored pencils. Instruct them as follows:
   - On each of the four drawings, in one color, identify and label places that represent where other people (parents, babysitters when young, teachers, coaches, neighbors, etc.) have shown responsibility for them and their families.
   - On each of the four drawings, in a second color, identify and label places that represent where you, in some regular way, show responsibility toward other people and places.
   - On each of the four drawings, in a third color, identify and label places that represent where you have not yet, but could begin to demonstrate responsibility toward other people and places.

3. Instruct students to describe and explain their “responsibility maps” to the other members of their small group. If time allows, invite them to find commonalities among the kinds of responsibility they share in various places, and the types of responsibility they do not yet have, but that they believe they are ready to take on.

Assignment

Have students identify a person from whose responsibility they have benefitted. Instruct them to write either a handwritten note or a thank-you note to that person, and to turn in a copy of that note or email.
At the age of 20, Frederick Douglass stepped onto a northbound train and into freedom. A previous attempt two years earlier had landed him in jail. But this time, the plans, patience, and allies he had gathered over the previous years—and at the root of it, the idea that freedom was possible, his to take—all culminated in this bold act.

This was no impulsive escape. It was years in the making, driven by the power of literacy, the lamp of knowledge that was denied to slaves. Historically, slave-holding societies withheld reading and writing from slaves as a rule. In ancient Egypt, the scribe was second in power only to the Pharaoh, and few free Egyptians knew how to read or write. Slaves in ancient Rome were encouraged to study math and science for engineering and architecture, but reading and discussing philosophy and politics was the exclusive domain of freemen, lest the slaves become exposed to these ideas and revolt.

Few things had changed over the centuries. In 1826, when at the age of eight Douglass was sent to live in Baltimore, his master’s kind-hearted wife began to teach him the alphabet and basic reading skills before she was chastised for doing so.

Yet Douglass was bright and determined. The door to all doorways had been opened for him. Douglass lived in Baltimore for seven years, where he would first hear the term “abolition.” He observed differences between city-dwelling slaves, who were given a chance to know the city while completing errands, and those back on farms and plantations, their bodies too exhausted by physical labor to have any time for thought. He secretly continued to pursue literacy, often in ingenious ways.

A city is rich in resources for any ambitious young man, and Douglass would find time to consort with young people his age who helped him, often unknowingly, in his quest to read. Sometimes he shared his allotment of bread with them, and in exchange they would share “that more valuable bread of knowledge” by showing him how to read. Along the way he would discuss the fundamental unfairness of slavery with them. Through these pleas and discussions, he fleshed out his anti-slavery ideas and won his first sympathizers. Later on Douglass would challenge boys to writing contests, claiming he could write letters of the alphabet as well as any of them—knowing full well he could not! After writing a few letters on a fence post, he’d observe how they formed others that he didn’t know. He intentionally lost these dares, winning knowledge and skills in the process.

In 1833, Douglass was sent back to plantation life, which he found intolerable. Escape was never far from his mind. But how was he going to attain his freedom? Under the watchful eyes of callous masters and cruel overseers, Douglass stood out, and the tactics they would use to break his
spirit would lead to deep physical and mental suffering. There were moments when he wished he had never heard the word “abolition,” never learned how to read and write and think about the toll that slavery took on slave and master alike. The days at the farm became a miserable blur, and eventually, when he tried to lead a group in escape in the spring of 1836, it failed when their intent to break away was betrayed. Ironically, just after this attempt Douglass found himself in Baltimore again, as his suspicious master determined to hire him out to learn a trade—and perhaps isolate him from the plantation slaves.

Two years later, in 1838, Douglass again made plans to break out of slavery, this time determined to succeed. Through connections, he secured papers and a train ticket to New York, riding successfully away from the life of a slave. The world opened up to him, and it was a world of turbulence and joy. He took a new name with his new identity as a free man. He married. He found it difficult to find work and cast about for some time getting used to the new territory, uncertain of the way forward. However, he never questioned his original actions. He savored his freedom and eventually took up the mantle for the cause of abolition, putting his writing and speaking skills to use as a speaker and author. There would still be battles within the abolition movement, and even in the northern states, free blacks felt the sting of discrimination. Douglass knew his mind and was armed for these. In his later writings, he asserted that “[g]reatness does not come to any people on flowery beds of ease. We must fight to win the prize.”

That time so many years before when he had been granted the power of basic literacy—and then determined to continue, driven by his desire for freedom—resulted in a distinguished role as an orator and warrior for the cause of abolition.

—Shelby Rosengarten
St. Petersburg College

Defining Civic Virtues: Responsibility

To strive to know and to do what is best rather than 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.
Discussion Guide

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

1. Historically, why had enslaved people been prevented from learning to read?
2. What important event took place when Douglass was eight years old?
3. What were some of the more inventive ways Douglass worked to become a better reader? Would some of these options have been available to him if he had been less resourceful, or less humble? Explain.
4. Douglass failed in his 1836 attempt to escape. Slaves were not permitted to leave their masters without permission, and fugitive slaves could be (and in some places were legally required to be) returned to their masters. In other words, Douglass's attempt to escape was against the law. But was it virtuous? Explain.
5. Douglass said, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle.” How does this quotation help you understand the virtue of responsibility?
6. He went on to say, “The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. …Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others.”

The Thirteenth Amendment, Section 1 states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

Did Douglass’s ideas about responsibility become irrelevant with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment? Or are they still true today? Explain.

8. Slavery was a terrible injustice that ended in the U.S. after people worked for over a century. What is the responsibility of citizens in a constitutional republic to protect others’ rights?
9. Given your responses to the previous two questions, what is the relationship between civic virtue among citizens and the effective running of a republic?
10. For what are you responsible? For what will you be responsible in five years?
11. How do—and will—you act responsibly in your daily life?
Virtue In Action

Look around your street, your neighborhood, your school, and your community. Is there anything you can identify that needs improving? Define the problem, and then think about your responsibility as a citizen to take action to improve it. Issues to think through:

- Our constitutional system assumes that most issues are better solved by citizens working together voluntarily than through the use of government force.
- Before automatically developing a plan to petition government, be sure that the problem you have identified cannot be solved by your own words and actions and/or by the freely offered words and actions of others.
- If it cannot, determine which level of government (local, state, or national) has the power to address it.
- Before taking action, think about how the additional power that you and your fellow citizens would like to grant to government may eventually be used by officials who do not share your specific goals.

Sources & Further Reading


Below are corresponding literature and art suggestions to help you teach this virtue across the curriculum. A sample prompt has been provided for the key corresponding work. For other suggested works, or others that are already part of your curriculum, create your own similar prompts.

The Gettysburg Address (1863)
How does Abraham Lincoln characterize the meaning of the Civil War? What responsibility does he place on the shoulders of Union soldiers and of all Americans? Why must they persevere in their fight?

*I Hear America Singing* by Walt Whitman
Discuss or review nineteenth century growth and changes in the United States. What kind of changes and growth occurred? How is that conveyed in this poem? What sensory imagery does Whitman use? Name the sounds and their sources. How do these sounds convey responsibility? Describe the tone Whitman establishes through this imagery. How would you describe it? What class, or group, of people is depicted as adding to the “song”? Who does Whitman indicate is driving the growth, change, and “singing” in the United States during this time period? Describe how this poem conveys the relationship between individual freedom and responsibility.

*The Jolly Flatboatmen*, painting by George Caleb Bingham
If students have not yet studied nineteenth century United States history, have them research the context of this painting. Do a close-reading of the painting based on the basic elements of art. Then, discuss: What time of day is it in this scene? What, in the painting, tells the viewer what they were doing previously? What are they doing now? How does this relate to what they were previously doing? How does the painting depict responsibility? How does this poem depict the relationship between individuals and society? Describe how this painting conveys the relationship between individual freedom and responsibility.

OTHER WORKS
*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs
*David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens
*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
Responsibility

**Directions**  
Frederick Douglass stated that once one learns to read, one is forever free. Would he have said that being free is sufficient? What greater responsibility comes with learning? What does your responsibility have to do with your education? How will you live out that responsibility?

“Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility. For the person who is unwilling to grow up, the person who does not want to carry his own weight, this is a frightening prospect.”

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
5. Franklin did appear to see a difference between being humble and appearing humble. In applying the question to themselves, accept reasoned responses and follow up with questions that encourage further, honest self-examination.

6. Franklin saw social benefits in appearing humble. His conversations with people became more pleasant, and people were less apt to contradict him.

Student responses to the additional questions will vary. Encourage a transfer of understandings beyond Franklin and to themselves and their own actions.

_Frederick Douglass and Responsibility: Discussion Guide (p. 25)_

1. Historically, enslaved were prevented from learning to read because literacy was the domain of free people, and because of a concern that if slaves were exposed to the ideas of philosophy and politics, they could revolt.

2. When Douglass was eight years old, his master's wife began to teach him the alphabet and basic reading skills.

3. Douglass found time to spend with peers who helped him by showing him how to read in exchange for his bread. He also challenged boys to writing contests, and when the other boys wrote letters he didn't know, even though he lost, it was his way of learning more letters.

4. Students may reason that Douglass's actions were virtuous because they were done in the pursuit of justice. Others may say that breaking the law is never virtuous. Some may note that the law he was breaking was unjust, thus making his act virtuous. Some may also refer to the statement “Virtue require a just end,” from the What is Virtue? handout in the Virtue Teaching Tool chapter.

5. Responses will vary; accept reasoned responses that address his key points.

6. Accept reasoned answers that are based on the texts.

7. Accept reasoned answers that address Shaw's quotation.

8. Student responses may vary, but should include references to other texts that they have studied, and to an appropriate understanding of the Constitution and republic.

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.

_Jourdan Anderson and Justice: Discussion Guide (p. 32)_

1. Responses will vary, but may include confident, honest, straightforward, just.

2. It was written in August 1865, in response to a letter he had received from his former master (Col. Anderson) asking him to come back to work for him as a paid servant. Students may identify a sarcastic or derisive tone and infer that he aimed to remind Col. Anderson of the injustice of his enslavement.
Suggested Launch Activity

**TEACHER’S NOTES**

**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 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?
HEROES & VILLAINS: THE QUEST FOR CIVIC VIRTUE

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....

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 distorts 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 to their views on just and unjust laws.

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


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

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 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
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.
CENTRAL QUESTIONS: How can I seek justice on behalf of another person? On behalf of myself?

Post or project this definition of justice (as a civic virtue): Standing for equally applied rules and making sure everyone obeys them.

Ask: Have you ever wished you had said or done something in response to someone’s words or actions, but thought of just the right words or action when it was too late to do or say it? Allow time for brief discussion.

Introduce a “quick-write” using the following prompt: Describe a time you either witnessed or experienced an injustice. What happened? How did you respond? Are you satisfied with how you responded? Why or why not?

Assign students to groups of 3-4 and have students discuss and compare how they responded in their respective situations. Have them compare and discuss any regrets. After they have had some time to discuss, ask: Does having at least one other person with you help you to address injustice? Why?

As a large group, discuss: Why can it be helpful to have others join in addressing unjust situations?

Transition to the Jourdan Anderson narrative and letter, telling students that in 1865, a man who had fled injustice had an opportunity to say some things he had previously not said to his oppressor. As you read about him, pay attention to the people along the way who stood alongside him in ways that may seem small to us now. And think about what character traits it required for Mr. Anderson to say what he did.
**JUSTICE**

*Jourdon Anderson and Justice*

Jourdon Anderson was enslaved in Tennessee. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in rebelling territories in 1863, but because Tennessee was under Union control, the Proclamation did not free the slaves there. Anderson was soon able to escape to Ohio, where he raised his family. In August of 1865, just a few months before the final passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery throughout the United States, he received a letter from his former master. His old master asked him to come back as a paid servant. Anderson dictated this letter in response.

Dayton, Ohio
August 7, 1865

To My Old Master, Colonel P. H. Anderson, Big Spring, Tennessee

Sir: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten [me], and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin’s to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy (the folks call her Mrs. Anderson) and the children—Milly, Jane, and Grundy—go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, “Them colored people were slaves” down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. …Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to $11,680. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor’s visits
to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adamss Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve—and die, if it come to that—than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me.

From your old servant,

Jourdon Anderson

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**Defining Civic Virtues: Justice**

Standing for equally applied rules and making sure everyone obeys them.
Discussion Guide

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

1. What kind of man wrote this letter?
2. When was it written? What did Anderson claim was his purpose in writing it? Describe Anderson’s tone. Do you believe he expects compensation? If not, why does he include that language in his letter?
3. What events does he describe that give you clues about what his life as a slave was like?
4. Go through the narrative and circle each occurrence of a term, or variations of a given term, that is repeatedly used. Identify the term. What theme emerges in Anderson’s repeated use of this word?
5. What does Anderson mean by “the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to”? How would you define the term “justice” in this context?
6. To what does Anderson refer with this statement: “surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire”? How does this relate to your response to question 4?
7. Anderson says of his family: “the great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.” What kinds of virtuous habits might he mean? What is the relationship between education and justice?
8. Think of justice in the context of other virtues. Do other virtues depend on just purposes? For example, can courage in defense of an evil cause rightly be called courage? Explain whether justice should be considered a primary virtue.
9. What effect might Anderson’s understanding of justice have had on his family? On the recipient of the letter? On the person who transcribed it for him?
10. How is Anderson’s vigilant stand for justice effective a “snapshot” of the role of individual people in maintaining a republic based on inalienable rights, liberty, and equality?
11. Do you think Anderson’s response to his old master was just? Explain.
12. Who is V. Winters, Esquire? What role did he play in this situation? Identify and tell about a time you aided someone else in their pursuit of justice in a similar way (or when you witnessed it).
13. What, in human nature, leads to injustice? What, in human nature, leads us to desire justice?
14. List three or four specific ways you can act justly.
Philosophers have wrestled with the definition for justice for millennia. Think about ways you can act justly and promote justice.

• Investigate the ways great thinkers have defined the term from ancient times to today. Create collages of the definitions and principles, and post them around the classroom.

• At school and in your community, stand for equally-applied rules that respect the rights of all. Help leaders make sure everyone obeys them.

• When you become aware of unjust laws, work for their repeal by contacting your legislators, writing letters to the editor, assembling with others, and taking informed action.

• Research non-profits that work against modern-day slavery and bonded labor (e.g., Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, Polaris Project, International Justice Mission). In what practical activities can you engage to be a part of the modern-day anti-slavery movement?

Sources & Further Reading


Below are corresponding literature and film suggestions to help you teach this virtue across the curriculum. Sample prompts have been provided for the key corresponding works. For the other suggested works, or others that are already part of your curriculum, create your own similar prompts.

**Les Miserables by Victor Hugo**
Jean Valjean is willing to forfeit all that he has and all that he has worked for in order to prevent an innocent man from serving a prison sentence meant for him. How does this action display a commitment to justice? How do other characters act virtuously?

**The Law of the Wolves by Rudyard Kipling**
Compare and contrast “the law of the jungle”, as described in this poem, with “standing for equally applied rules and making sure everyone obeys them.”

**Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom**
*by Carole Boston Weatherford*
Closely read both the words and illustrations in this picture book to identify and discuss the themes of justice included in it. With what specific actions did Harriet Tubman address injustice? What else do you know about Tubman? What additional civic virtues are evident in Tubman’s life and actions? In those of the other people represented in the book? Compare Harriet Tubman to Frederick Douglass. What character traits did they have in common?

**OTHER WORKS**

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
*Freeman* by Leonard Pitts, Jr.
*Antigone* by Sophocles
Justice

Directions  Think about what a just society looks like. Is a just society one where the laws treat everyone the same, or one where the laws treat people differently? Explain.

“Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit.”

–JAMES MADISON
5. Franklin did appear to see a difference between being humble and appearing humble. In applying the question to themselves, accept reasoned responses and follow up with questions that encourage further, honest self-examination.

6. Franklin saw social benefits in appearing humble. His conversations with people became more pleasant, and people were less apt to contradict him.

Student responses to the additional questions will vary. Encourage a transfer of understandings beyond Franklin and to themselves and their own actions.

**Frederick Douglass and Responsibility: Discussion Guide (p. 25)**

1. Historically, enslaved were prevented from learning to read because literacy was the domain of free people, and because of a concern that if slaves were exposed to the ideas of philosophy and politics, they could revolt.

2. When Douglass was eight years old, his master’s wife began to teach him the alphabet and basic reading skills.

3. Douglass found time to spend with peers who helped him by showing him how to read in exchange for his bread. He also challenged boys to writing contests, and when the other boys wrote letters he didn’t know, even though he lost, it was his way of learning more letters.

4. Students may reason that Douglass’s actions were virtuous because they were done in the pursuit of justice. Others may say that breaking the law is never virtuous. Some may note that the law he was breaking was unjust, thus making his act virtuous. Some may also refer to the statement “Virtue require a just end,” from the What is Virtue? handout in the Virtue Teaching Tool chapter.

5. Responses will vary; accept reasoned responses that address his key points.

6. Accept reasoned answers that are based on the texts.

7. Accept reasoned answers that address Shaw’s quotation.

8. Student responses may vary, but should include references to other texts that they have studied, and to an appropriate understanding of the Constitution and republic.

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.

**Jourdan Anderson and Justice: Discussion Guide (p. 32)**

1. Responses will vary, but may include confident, honest, straightforward, just.

2. It was written in August 1865, in response to a letter he had received from his former master (Col. Anderson) asking him to come back to work for him as a paid servant. Students may identify a sarcastic or derisive tone and infer that he aimed to remind Col. Anderson of the injustice of his enslavement.
3. His former master’s attempt to kill a Union soldier; his master shot at Anderson twice; he heard that someone named Henry had also threatened to shoot him; his reference to not wanting his girls “brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters” implies a concern based on events that may have been common.

4. “Just,” or variations of it, occur repeatedly in the text, thus highlighting a theme of justice.

5. Anderson is indicating first, that he and his wife are entitled to something they never received from their former master; and second, he alludes to a higher form of justice. “Justice” in this instance may refer to more than simply “equally applied rules” but also to eventual judgment for his former master.

6. Anderson may be referring to an eventual, eternal form of judgment for people who owned slaves. This reinforces the theme of justice that flows through the entire letter.

7. Student responses may vary, but could include perseverance, responsibility, or contribution. Regarding the relationship between education and justice, accept reasoned answers that demonstrate an understanding of justice.

8. Student responses may vary; accept reasoned answers that demonstrate growth in a personal understanding of the ideas and definitions of justice, courage, and other civic virtues.

9. Anderson’s understanding of justice may have given strength and self-respect to his family, shame or anger to the recipient of the letter, and pride or satisfaction to the person who transcribed it for him.

10. Anderson’s stand for justice highlighted the universality and significance of inalienable rights, liberty, and equality in his society.

11. Accept reasoned responses that are based on the text.

12. V. Winters is the person who transcribed Anderson’s letter for him. (V. Winters is listed as a banker in Dayton, and Anderson named a child after him). Since Anderson likely was not taught, as a slave, to read and write, Mr. Winters appears to have been helping him in both reading the letter from his former master as well as in drafting a reply. Student responses will vary in regard to times they either helped another person in pursuit of justice or witnessed someone else help someone in such a way.

13. Students may answer that injustice may come from humans’ tendency toward greed, selfishness, power, or other vices. They may respond that humans’ desire for justice may come from a human sense of fairness, the worth of the individual, caring, community, or other virtuous ends.

14. Responses will vary. Encourage responses that are personal and specific, and in which students can engage immediately or very soon.

Alice Paul and Perseverance: Discussion Guide (p. 40)

1. Alice Paul was working toward the cause of gaining women the right to vote.

2. Students may infer that Paul had experienced, and survived, nasogastric feeding and that, while she found it unpleasant, she was willing to encounter it again for the sake of her cause.

3. The events reveal a great deal of determination and steadfastness on the part of Alice Paul.

4. Some students may believe that Paul should have deferred to, and trusted, the president. Others may believe that, based on her previous experiences, she had little reason to believe that voting rights for women would ever be given serious consideration without drastic measures and extreme persistence.