

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 2 Lesson 3 – Social Liberals and Conservatives  
*What are the differences between social liberals and social conservatives?*

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TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

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ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.3

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MATERIALS

**Social Issues** – Student Page

**Social Issues: Liberals v. Conservatives** – Student Page

4 pieces of paper posted in four corners of the classroom with letters A, B, C, D written on them (leave these up through Lesson 8)

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LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Be able to define describe a social liberal and a social conservative
  - Be able to identify oneself as mostly a social liberal or mostly a social conservative
  - Analyze an issue and be able to explain both liberal and conservative responses
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FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/initial complete homework assignments. Pass back graded work and have students place in the appropriate section of their binders.
  - 2) **Agenda** – Have students copy the goal, agenda and homework onto the next clean page in a notebook
  - 3) Current Events – Collect the overhead transparencies from the Current Events presenters for today. Below the goal/agenda, copy the titles for three current events stories that they have chosen. Have students copy these and prepare to take notes.
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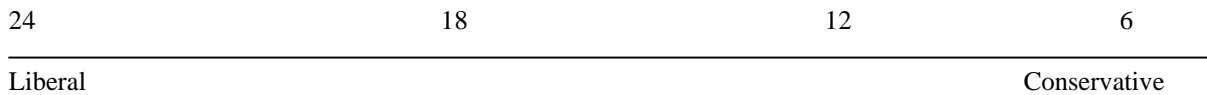
ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Current Events Presentations – Have students come to the front of the class one at a time to present their articles. They should give a quick 1 minute maximum summary of their story (remember their GIP Persuasive Essay presentations!), show their notes on the overhead, and field questions from students. They should not spend a lot of time on this – only about 3 minutes. Though the first time through this might take some time, the goal should be short, concise presentations and notes. At the end of each presentation the students should turn in their **Current Events Presentation** sheet stapled to a copy of the news article. Grades and comments should be written on the back of the **Current Events Presentation** sheet and returned to the students the next lesson. Choose the presenters for the next day that current events are due (Lesson 5) immediately and give them a copy of the **Current Events Presentation** sheet to complete.
2. Social Issues Activity – Students should take out their **Social Issues** (student page) handout and quickly look over the answers that they circled yesterday. Next, draw students’ attention to the fact that in each corner of the room there are four letters posted on sheets of paper. Explain that for each topic, the students are to look at their answer and then move to the corner that corresponds to their position. For example, if a student chose letter “B” for the topic “Death Penalty” then that student needs to stand under the letter B. Note that the most liberal position is choice D, while the most conservative position is choice A for each topic. When all students understand what is expected of them, have them move to their respective positions for the first topic. When everyone is in their correct place (by the way, the teacher too, should be moving to each corner depending on his/her beliefs), try to stoke debate and discussion by distinguishing nuances between or among groups For

example, start large by distinguishing between answers A and B (more strict, less freedoms) and answers C and D (more freedoms, less punitive). Then begin to try to make distinctions within groups (for example, do students who answered A for drug use all believe that all drugs should be illegal? What about alcohol or tobacco?) You should be able to demonstrate to students that even within some categories there are still distinctions between beliefs. Try to get students to maybe change their positions or defend their positions on each issue. Call students' attention to the fact that for some topics, some choices may have nobody standing there. Why is that? In addition, call students' attention to particular members of the class who seem to be moving around a lot and others who stay under the same letter the entire time. Why is that? Although this activity could easily take an entire class period to complete, plan accordingly to leave about 15 minutes to complete the remaining tasks. Permit students to change their opinion during the discussion (this is normal) and move to the respective letter in the room, but make sure that they make the change on their sheet of paper.

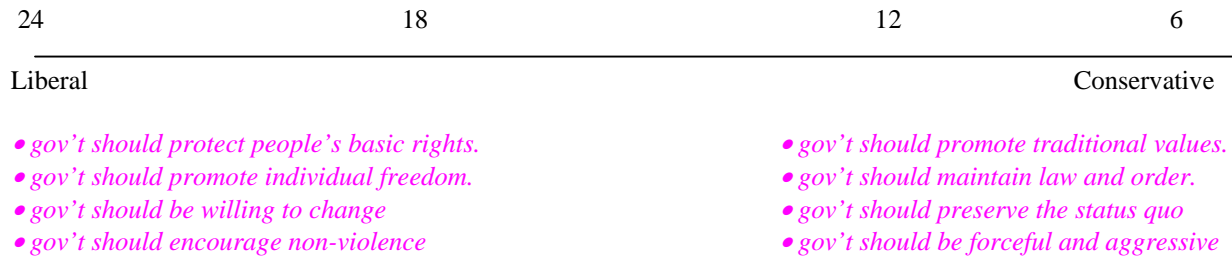
3. Spectrum – Have students go back to their desks and assign a numerical value to each of their final choices for each topic. A = 1 pt., B = 2 pts., C = 3pts., and D = 4 pts. Have them come up with a grand total for their sheet (these should range in number from the lowest total of 6 to the highest total of 24). When they are finished, have them come to the front board and put their initials on the spectrum in the correct place. By doing this, students will be able to get a sense of the overall beliefs in the class (Are most students liberal or conservative? How liberal? How conservative? ) and begin to see how political parties might form (why might all the students at number 24 form a group together?). Students will later be using this spectrum, and another one, to form political parties and attempt to pass laws during the Model congress activity in later lessons. They will need to know where their class mates fall on the political spectrum. The spectrum, before it becomes initialed with student names should look like the following:

Fig. 3.1 Social Issues Spectrum



4. **Vocabulary** – Using the **Social Issues** handout, ask students in their groups to try to create a definition of a social issue, a social liberal, and a social conservative. This might be a little hard to do, but guide them by having them frequently refer to their handout to determine the answers. When groups have agreed on definitions, ask them to share with the class. Then have the class come to consensus about the definitions. Have students copy the spectrum into their notebook and copy the definitions as you write them on the poster. At the conclusion the spectrum should look like this (with the students' initials written along the spectrum):

Fig. 3.2 Social Issues Spectrum (*issues that have to do with society and culture*)



5. Homework – Pass out the **Social Issues: Liberals v. Conservatives** to the students. Go over #1 with them so that they understand what is expected of them. This might be difficult for them to complete, but tell them that they should use their Social Issues handout for help and that they should only complete the front side of the page (#1 through #5).

HOMEWORK

1. Complete #1 through #5 on the **Social Issues: Liberals v. Conservatives** handout.
  2. Continue service requirement work.
  3. Transfer definitions for the vocabulary terms social issues, social liberals, social conservatives, and status quo from the spectrum to the vocabulary list.
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GROUP ROLES

None

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DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

**Unit 1**

Action Plan

Persuasive Essay or Flash Argument: Why should government care...?

American Government Unit 1 Final Exam

**Unit 2**

None