

TITLE OF LESSON

American Government Unit 2 Lesson 7 – Politician Economic Beliefs
What is the difference between economic liberals and economic conservatives?

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – History 12.3

MATERIALS

Economic Issues: Liberals v. Conservatives – Student page
Economic Issues: Political Profiles – Student page
Current Events 3 – Student page
Economic Issues Spectrum – Teacher created

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To be able to determine if politicians' arguments are liberal or conservative
 - To place politicians onto the economic spectrum
 - To compare politicians' political stances on economic issues to student's personal beliefs and to compare both to the class's beliefs in general
 - To understand economic and social issues in order to better prepare to participate in a democratic system
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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) **Journal 4: Current Events** – Display a current newspaper headline that focuses on a specific economic issue (such as social security or medicare) and have students write, in their notebook, what a liberal and conservative position would be for the issue stated in the headline.
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ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. Current Events – After students have completed the warm-up have students get into groups and read aloud each group members' definitions. Have each group choose the best explanation for a liberal and conservative position and then have them present these to the class. Facilitate a discussion to have them justify their reasoning for what a liberal or conservative would say by using the economic issues spectrum. For example: "I think liberals would be in favor of protections for social security because they believe that 'government should provide a safety-net'".
2. Economic Issues Spectrum – Have students take out their homework from last night and review #6 through #9 with them. Again, make sure that the students are using the definitions for liberals and conservatives to complete the "why" section for each topic. Although these definitions are kind of rigid, they give students a good structure for understanding the underlying reasons for differing viewpoints. Explore nuances in beliefs with them and also explain that for some issues, some people may be very conservative, but that on most issues they are liberal. For question 9, encourage students (if they changed their position) to come up to the Economic Issues Spectrum, cross out their old initials and re-write their initials in a place where they think their beliefs are more accurately reflected.

3. Gun Control -- By a show of hands, take an informal poll about whether or not gun control should be a social or economic issue (or both). Write the statistics from the class poll on the front board. Ask students to get into groups with the people who agreed with their position. In groups, have students compile a list of their most compelling reasons for why this issue should be social or economic or both. Then ask each group to present their argument to the class. List their reasons on the board. When finished, take another poll. Did anyone change their mind? Why or why not? Ideally, what you want students to see is the complexity of the issue.
4. Politician Analysis – Pass out the **Economic Issues – Political Profiles** (student page) to each student and ask them to determine where these 4 politicians would be placed on the ECONOMIC issues spectrum poster. Students should have enough time to be able to analyze all of these politicians.
5. Wrap Up – With about 10 minutes left in class, lead a discussion focused on these politicians and attempting to come to a consensus on where they would be put on the **Economic Issues Spectrum**. This might be difficult, but at the end you should have students copy down the four names onto their **Economic Issues Spectrums** in their notebook so that it looks like this:

Fig. 7.1 Economic Issues Spectrum (*issues that have to do with finance and money*)

Nader	Kerry	Feinstein	Bush	Conservative
Liberal <i>Government should ...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be involved in the economy (regulate businesses). • provide a safety-net • be pro-workers, working class • encourage economic equality 		<i>Government should ...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not be involved in the economy. • give control to local gov't (states, cities). • be pro-business, promote econ. growth • encourage econ. freedom (laissez-faire) 		

6. Homework – Pass out the **Current Events 3** to students and remind current events presenters to bring in their articles and be prepared to present at the beginning of class.

HOMEWORK

- 1) Continue service requirement work.
- 2) Complete **Current Events 3**.

GROUP ROLES

None

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