



2012 Homework Packet:
Four Day Class
Alumni Students

Four Day First Time Students Pre-Class Homework (ages 13-19)

Please Note: Students attending a class in a state other than their own need to do the homework for the state where they are attending, not the state where they live. For example, if a student is from Idaho but is attending the Washington class, they need to do the homework for Washington.

Updated August 11, 2011

1 Pray for your STATE Representative and STATE Senator by name every day before you come to the class.

- **Type a letter to both of them.** We recommend that you spell-check and grammar-check your letter, thank them for serving and tell them about one issue/idea you think is important to your state.
- Remember to be respectful and to **address them with their proper titles** (Representative, Senator).
- **Mail them** (no emails please) at least 2 weeks before the class to ensure they arrive in time.
- **Bring one copy** of each letter to turn in.
- *Purpose: to experience how easy it is to communicate to your governmental leaders and to participate in the process of making your opinions known*



- Tip: Try asking questions about their personal beliefs on specific issues or why they wanted to become involved with the political arena.
- Tip: Remember to write your STATE senator and STATE representative, not federal.

2 Review the vocabulary and questions from the Pre-Class Vocabulary List (below).

- All students, first-timers and alumni, will be responsible for this information on the first quiz. Alumni are **not** required to turn in the vocabulary and definitions.
- *Purpose: to be prepared for in-class discussions*



- Tip: Review your definitions from last year.

3 Write a one-page bill on an issue (serious topic for the first bill, optional: write a second bill with a funny topic) important to you and relevant to your state. (Our

Sample Bill below shows a format to use.)

- **Bring three copies of your bill:** one copy to turn in, one for the committee, and one to keep for your own use during the class.
- **Include at least three sections in your bill:** a purpose, a section explaining the bill's goal and plan of action, and a section listing when the bill will become law. Check the Sample Bill to make sure that your format is correct.
- Please choose topics that are appropriate for the age and environment of the class.
- *Purpose: to be presented before the TeenPact Legislature.*



- Tip: Think outside the box about issues that will spark conversation between you and your peers. Be respectful and age appropriate.

4 Complete the State Political Fact Sheet (below) using resources on the Internet and in your local library.

- You may have to use several sources to get this information: Type <http://www.state.xx.us> (insert your state's abbreviation in place of xx) to log onto your state's official web site.
 - Your local library is also likely to have an index of elected officials in your state.
 - Stateline.org
 - [Project Vote Smart](http://ProjectVoteSmart.org)
- *If you are completing the homework before January 1* it is possible that some government seats may change occupants because of elections. It is better to wait and complete the Fact Sheet after you are sure that all elections are over and the current officials are serving in their respective roles.
- **Bring two copies of your Fact Sheet:** one copy to turn in and one to keep as a reference during the class. You will be responsible for this information on the first quiz.
- *Purpose: to be informed regarding the current leaders and political trends in your state*



- Tip: Remember to complete the fact sheet according to your STATE government information, not federal.
- Tip: Don't be intimidated— all this project takes is a little patience! Make sure that all of your information is up to date. Double check the number of legislators in the House and Senate. Be sure that you fill this out on your state level.

5 Read or watch your Governor's most recent State of the State Address.

- You can usually find the speech on your governor's web site under "Press Releases" or "Speeches". In some cases you may have to call the Governor's office and ask how to get a copy. If your governor was recently elected or hasn't given an address yet, use the last Address available.
- **Create a list of the issues addressed** (at least 3 or more) by the Governor in his or her speech.
- **Bring two copies of this list:** one copy to turn in and one to keep as a reference during the class.
- *Purpose: to know the current issues in your state, as defined by your current (or recent) Governor*



- Keep these questions in mind while you read— How does this affect your state? What does this tell you about your governors priorities? What key issues didn't they address?

6 Constitutional Analysis

Read the first Five Articles of the United States Constitution, as well as the first Ten Amendments (the Bill of Rights). **Consider as you read:**

- What right(s) does this secure?
- How does this amendment provide checks and balances to federal government?
- What is a possible example (real or fictional) of the federal government stepping outside its bounds in relation to this amendment?
- How would you interpret the purpose of this amendment?

7 PART TWO: ALUMNI TRACK PREPARATION

Research the history of entitlement programs in US history starting with the New Deal in the 1930's, how they have impacted spending and economics, and how they are perceived by both conservatives and liberals nationwide.

Why is this important? Because debt ceiling debates and economic instability have placed a heavy emphasis on the discussion of entitlement reform in Congress in order to reduce our national debt. However, many people disagree on the value and even Constitutionality of US entitlement programs such as Social Security,

Medicare, Medicaid and the newly passed Health Care program. **As citizens we must be informed as to what we believe on these topics and why we believe it so we can do our part to help our country remain strong.** As renowned journalist Jim Lehrer once said, “If we don't have an informed electorate we don't have a democracy.”

- Using the questions below as a guide (you **don't** have to answer all of them), examine the history of entitlement programs in US history.
- **Write two essays (500 words each minimum), one defending the concept of entitlements in the United States, and one critiquing them.**
- Bring two copies of each essay, one to turn in and one to discuss during the class.
- *Purpose: to understand the nature of entitlements and what role we should play in them.*

Questions to consider:

1. What role, if any, should the government play in creating or sustaining economic growth?
2. Millions of Americans cannot afford healthcare. How should the government address this crisis if not through a government healthcare program?
3. Why shouldn't those who have resources and finances give more in order to help those who have less?
4. If the government doesn't help the underprivileged, and the church doesn't have the resources, who will provide the basic care needed for those in poverty such as the disabled, children and others?
5. Is there a Biblical call to Christians regarding caring for the underprivileged or those who need assistance? How should that impact our political views on such programs?
6. What was the New Deal and how did it impact the role of government?
7. What were the short term consequences?
8. What were the long term consequences?
9. Should the government play a role in helping people prepare for retirement? Why or why not?
10. What does it mean when people refer to a “culture of entitlement”?



- Tip: Read this article by the Cato Institute: [cato.org/pubs/pas/pa673.pdf](https://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa673.pdf), or head to your local library for books such as *New Deal or Raw Deal* by Burt Folsom or *Life at the Bottom* by Theodore Dalrymple. Books and Think Tanks can be great resources for research projects like this one.

Please make sure that you show your parents your homework before turning it in. Student assignments not completed will impact a student's final score in the class.

TeenPact Pre-Class Vocabulary List

Name: _____

1. Review the vocabulary terms below to be ready for in-class quizzes.

SECTION ONE

Government

"That government is best which governs least." Based on this quote (which is commonly attributed to Thomas Jefferson) and the general definition of the term "government," do you agree or disagree with this quote? Why or why not?

Considering the definition of the term "government," how would you define the term "self-government"?

SECTION TWO

Justice

Liberty

Compare and contrast "justice" and "liberty."

SECTION THREE

Democracy

Republic

Based on the definitions you found of the terms "democracy" and "republic," which of these terms best describes the systems of government we have in the United States? _____

In your state? _____ Why?

SECTION FOUR

Legislative

Executive

Judicial

Considering Isaiah 33:22 and the definitions of the words "legislative," "executive," and "judicial," what is the role of each of the three branches of government?

Separation of Powers

Checks and Balances

How do the three branches of government provide "checks and balances" to each other?

SECTION FIVE

Statesman

Politician

Compare and contrast the two terms. How are they different?

SECTION SIX

Election

Appointment

Considering the definitions of these two terms, what are some governmental positions that are "by election?"

What are some governmental positions that are "by appointment?"

What are some advantages and disadvantages to election? Appointment?

SECTION SEVEN

State (as in government)

Church

Family

Considering the definitions of the last four terms, what is the role of each of the three authorities, "state," church," and "family," and how are they different?



Sample letter to your senator or representative

123 My Street
Small Town, State 11233

Senator Fred Dyson
100 State Capitol Avenue, Room 225
Capital City, State 22311

Always use the correct title (Representative, Senator, or Delegate) when writing to your legislators!

Dear Senator Dyson,

In the body of your letter, make sure that you:

- Thank your legislator for his service to your community and state.*
- Tell him that you are praying for him.*
- Briefly tell him about TeenPact and what you will be learning about during the class.*

Other ideas include:

- Respectfully write about an issue that relates to your state.*
- Ask if you can stop by your legislator's office either before TeenPact begins on Monday or after it ends on Thursday. (NOTE: This may not be possible if you have a residential class. Contact your State Coordinator if you have questions about the best time to set up an appointment!)*

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Jane Doe



Sample Bill

This is a standard format for making your bill for TeenPact Legislature. Each state legislature has their own design for their bills. Take a look at a bill from your state to check out the similarities and differences.

Author
Bill number

By: John Doe
House Bill # _____

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT

Title To reduce the speed of motorist traveling the highways of this state.

Reasons you think this bill is important. **PURPOSE:** To reduce the number of deaths and severe injuries, caused by traffic accidents.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF (your state's name):

The actual specific law that you want to pass with all the details spelled out. This will include definitions, plan of action and details of enforcement.

Section 1. For the purpose of this act, "motorist" shall mean any person controlling a motorized vehicle used for the purpose of moving persons or freight on the highways of this state.

Section 2. It is unlawful for a motorist to travel at a speed of more than 65 miles per hour on an interstate or more than 55 miles per hour on any other highway in this state.

Section 3. Any person who violates this act shall be subject to a fine not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per violation.

Section 4. All laws or parts of laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

Exactly when your bill will take effect if passed.

Section 5. This act shall become effective 30 days after approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law.



State Political Fact Sheet

Name (first and last): _____ State: _____

Research and fill in the blanks. Write as neatly as possible! All information should be memorized.

- 1.) My Senator's name is _____
- 2.) My Representative's name is _____
- 3.) There are (#) _____ Representatives in my state.
- 4.) There are (#) _____ Senators in my state.
- 5.) The number of Democrats and Republicans in the House is _____ D to _____ R.
- 6.) The number of Democrats and Republicans in the Senate is _____ D to _____ R.
- 7.) My Governor's name is _____.
- 8.) My Lt. Governor's name is (if applicable) _____.
- 9.) My Attorney General's name is _____.
- 10.) My Secretary of State's name is _____.
- 11.) My Chief Justice is _____.
- 12.) My Speaker of the House is _____.
- 13.) My President of the Senate is _____.
- 14.) I live in State House District number _____.
- 15.) I live in State Senate District number _____.
- 16.) There are (#) _____ of State Supreme Court Justices in my state.
- 17.) Are my State Supreme Court Justices elected or appointed? _____.