

# TeenPact Four Day State Class:

## Alumni Student Pre-Class Homework (ages 13-19)

*Please bring two copies of your completed homework: one to turn in and one to reference throughout the week. Bring a third copy of your bill.*

**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 lives in Idaho but is attending the Washington class, they need to do the homework for Washington.

**Note:** Students attending a class in **Nebraska** should complete the homework packets found [here](#). DO NOT complete the homework below if you are signing up for a Nebraska class.

### 1 Send a letter to your STATE representative and STATE senator, thanking them for serving and telling them about one issue/idea you think is important in your state.

- Remember to check your grammar and spelling.
- In everything be respectful and **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.
- Remember to **pray for your senator and representative** by name.
- *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 quizzes throughout the week. 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 important to you and relevant to your state. Please choose a serious topic for the first bill; you may write a second bill with a fun topic if you choose. (Our Sample Bill below shows a format to use.)

- **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.
  - [Project Vote Smart](#) also has information on your elected officials.
- *If you are completing the homework before January 1* it is possible that some government seats may have changed because of recent 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.
- *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.

---

### 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 using the worksheet (below) of the issues addressed** (at least 3 or more) by the governor in his or her speech.
- *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 governor's 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 the questions listed in the Constitutional Analysis as you read** (see below).
- All students will be responsible for this information. Alumni are **not** required to turn in any work from this assignment.
- *Purpose: to better understand the Constitution.*

---

## 7 Research and write two essays (see details below) about entitlement programs. Our goal is to help you study, understand, and develop convictions regarding the role of government and your responsibility as a Christian citizen of the United States of America.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law by President Obama in 2010 and upheld in the Supreme Court in 2012. Often referred to as "Obamacare," it is just one of several historic entitlement program initiatives. Federal spending on entitlements has grown significantly under President Obama's administration. However, the legacy of entitlement programs began much earlier, most notably with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933 and President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society in 1964.

Take a look at recent federal spending. According to the [Heritage Foundation](#), "In 2015, the national debt reached \$18.8 trillion and exceeded 100 percent of everything the economy produced in goods and services, as defined by gross domestic product". However, some federal spending categories are actually decreasing in relation to the size of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, [CNN](#) reported that, "Within a decade, defense and domestic spending is on track to fall to its lowest level as a share of GDP since 1962, according to the Congressional Budget Office." So what is really driving our ever-increasing debt?

This year's TeenPact Alumni Track is "**The Age of Entitlements.**" As the 'Baby Boomer' generation exits the workforce, American taxpayers are more aware than ever of the growing financial burden of maintaining programs such as healthcare and Social Security. According to [CNN](#), "lawmakers and candidates typically dodge dealing with the real debt drivers -- 'entitlement' spending, which includes the major healthcare programs (Medicare, Medicaid and insurance subsidies) as well as Social Security, and interest on the debt. Within 20 years, CBO (the Congressional Budget Office) projects that entitlement spending plus interest will suck up virtually every tax dollar coming into the federal government, up from 65% of revenue today." These kinds of figures force the question: Is this sustainable?

The following assignments will direct your pre-class study and prepare you for in-class sessions. Throughout the week you will dialogue with your Program Director and other alumni students,

---

participate in a survey to discover general public opinion on these matters, and discuss what kind of entitlement reform could viably take shape in the United States.

As you research this topic, consider the roles of government, church, family, and the individual. How should our Christian faith affect these social and political matters? We must develop convictions about what we believe, why we believe it, and understand how that affects our lives and communities. As renowned journalist Jim Lehrer once said, "If we don't have an informed electorate we don't have a democracy."

### Part I - Research

Research the following 3 historic entitlement program initiatives.

- New Deal (Roosevelt)
- Great Society (Johnson)
- Affordable Care Act (Obama)

Use the following questions to guide your research:

- What political figures were the driving force behind these legislative acts?
- What was the social and political context that led to this legislation?
- What was the short term result of these policies?
- What was the long term result of these policies?
- How would you address entitlement reform?

### Part II - Essays

- Write one 500-700 word essay presenting the argument **for**, and the **positive** effects of, entitlement programs.
- Write one 500-700 word essay presenting the argument **against**, and the **negative** effects of, entitlement programs.

**Bring two copies of EACH of your essays to class.** You will submit one copy of EACH essay for class credit. You will keep the other copies for reference in your discussion.



- Tip: Don't forget to start early on this assignment! Remember to use credible sources, not Wikipedia.

---

## 8

### CAMPAIGN PREPARATION

**OPTIONAL:** *The following assignment will give students a better understanding of the Four Day class, however is not required.*

During the TeenPact week we will hold class elections for governor and senator. Begin thinking about running, as it is a tremendous learning experience and a ton of fun! For those interested in running, we recommend that you:

- Develop a campaign slogan.
- Write a short speech on why you might make a good class governor or senator.
- Think about a favorite Bible verse or message you can share with your fellow students.
- *Purpose: to be prepared for in-class elections.*

## **COMPLETED HOMEWORK CHECKLIST**

***Please bring these items to class on Monday.***

- Two copies of your letter to your STATE representative.
- Two copies of your letter to your STATE senator.
- Three copies of your bill.
- Two copies of your state political fact sheet.
- Two copies of your State of the State Address worksheet.
- Two copies of each of your alumni essays.
- One copy of your campaign preparation notes (optional).

***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.***



## 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



# TeenPact Pre-Class Vocabulary List

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Research the terms in **bold** using your family dictionary or other printed/online references, then define each term in your own words.
2. To receive full credit, respond to all questions and do all comparisons and contrasts.

## 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**

---

---

---

## SECTION THREE

---

### **Direct Democracy**

---

---

**Representative Democracy**

---

---

Based on the definitions you found of the terms "direct democracy" and "representative democracy," 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**

---

---

**Separation of Powers**

---

---

**Checks and Balances**

---

---

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

---

---

---

**SECTION FIVE**

---

**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 SIX**

---

**District**

---

---

**Redistrict**

---

---

**Gerrymander**

---

---

What is the difference between redistricting and gerrymandering?

---

---

---

**SECTION SEVEN**

---

**Primary Election**

---

---

**General Election**

---

---

**Runoff election**

---

---

**Grassroots**

---

---

What are examples of grassroots involvement in elections?

---

---

---



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Research and fill in the blanks. 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? \_\_\_\_\_  
If both, please explain the process: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# State of the State Address

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read or watch your governor's most recent State of the State Address.
2. **Create a list of the issues addressed** (at least 3 or more) by the governor in his or her speech.

**Issue # 1:**

---

---

**Issue # 2:**

---

---

**Issue # 3:**

---

---

**Issue # 4 (optional):**

---

---

**Issue #5 (optional):**

---

---



# Constitutional Analysis

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the first Five Articles of the United States Constitution, as well as the first Ten Amendments (the Bill of Rights).
2. **Choose three of the first Ten Amendments and write a paragraph of 3-5 sentences answering the following questions about each:**
  - What right(s) does this secure?
  - How does this amendment provide checks and balances to federal government?
  - How would you interpret the purpose of this amendment?

**Amendment #:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Amendment #:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Amendment #:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---