Alumni Nebraska Pre-Class Homework

2026 STATE CLASSES

TeenPact®
LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

FOR STUDENTS AGES 13-19

2026 FOUR DAY ALUMNI HOMEWORK - NEBRASKA

Students should bring two copies of their completed homework: one to turn in and one to reference throughout the week. They should bring three copies of their bill. We encourage you to refer to the Homework Checklist on page 10 when preparing your homework for class.

If you are attending a class in a state other than your own, you will need to do the homework for the state where you are attending, not the state where you live. For example, if you live in Nebraska but are attending the Kansas State Class, you should do the homework for Kansas.

1 Review the vocabulary and questions from the Pre-Class Vocabulary List (pages 11-16).

- All students 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.**

HOMEWORK TIP

If you still have your homework from your first time at the Four Day Class, feel free to reference that as you complete the Pre-Class Vocabulary List.

2 Complete the State Political Fact Sheet (page 17) using resources on the internet and in your local library.

- You may have to use several sources to get this information:
  - Visit **teenpact.com/state-official-website** to find your state's official website.
  - Open States (**openstates.org**) 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.**

HOMEWORK TIP

*Remember to complete the fact sheet according to your **STATE** government information, not federal. Don't be intimidated–it just takes a little patience! Make sure all of your information is up-to-date.*

3 Send a letter to your state senator (not federal), thanking him/her for serving and telling him/her about one issue or idea you think is important in your state.

- ★ Refer to the Sample Letter (page 18) when formatting your letter.
- ★ Need to know where to send the letter? Go to Open States (**openstates.org**) and search for your state (not federal) senator.
- ★ Remember to check your grammar and spelling.
- ★ In everything, be respectful and use the proper title of senator when addressing him/her.
- ★ Take time to pray for your senator by name before sending your letter.
- ★ Mail the letter at least two weeks before the class to ensure it arrives in time.
- ★ If preferred, it is also acceptable to send your letter with proper formatting via email.
- ★ **Purpose: To experience how easy it is to communicate with your elected official and to participate in the legislative process by making your opinions known.**

★ **HOMEWORK TIP**

Consider asking questions about why he/she supports a particular issue or what he/she hopes to accomplish during his/her time in the legislature. Remember to write your state senator, not federal.

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4 Read or watch your governor's most recent State of the State Address. Create a list using the worksheet (page 19) of the issues addressed (three or more) by the governor in his/her speech.

- ★ You can usually find the speech on your governor's website under *press releases* or *speeches*. In some cases, you may have to call the governor's office and ask how to obtain a copy. If your governor was recently elected or hasn't given an address yet, use the last address available.
- ★ **Purpose: To know the current issues in your state, as defined by your current governor**

★ **HOMEWORK TIP**

Keep these questions in mind while you read/watch the State of the State Address: how does this affect your state? What does this tell you about your governor's priorities? What key issues did he/she not address?

5 Write a one-page bill on an issue important to you and relevant to your state.

- ★ Please choose a serious topic for your bill. If you want to write an additional bill, you may write it on a serious or fun topic.
- ★ Refer to our Sample Bill (page 20) for the correct format when writing your bill.
- ★ Include at least five sections in your bill:
  1. The title
  2. The purpose
  3. The plan of action
  4. When the bill will take effect after becoming law
  5. How the bill will be funded
- ★ Please choose topics which are appropriate for the age and environment of the class.
- ★ **Purpose: To develop a better understanding of the legislative process.**

★ **HOMEWORK TIP**

Think outside the box about issues that will spark conversation between you and your peers. Be respectful and try to write your bill on a new topic that you haven't used before.

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6 Complete the Forms of Government Fact Sheet (page 21).

- ★ **Purpose: To prepare for in-class discussions about American government.**

7 Complete the Constitutional Interpretations Analysis (page 22-23).

- ★ **Purpose: To prepare for in-class discussions about the authority of the Constitution.**

8 Alumni Track Preparation

Our nation's Founders ordained and established the Constitution for the United States of America, writing that a primary aim was to "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." (1) On December 15, 1791, a little more than three years after the Constitution was ratified, Virginia became the 10th state to approve the Bill of Rights, and so the first ten amendments were added to the Constitution. (2)

Foremost among the Bill of Rights was the First Amendment, which among other liberties, sought to protect the Freedom of Speech (and of the Press). Few liberties are more fundamental than the Freedom of Speech. Religious freedom is only protected insofar as Freedom of Speech (and of the Press) is protected. Voting and fair elections are only protected insofar as Freedom of Speech (and of the Press) is protected. People must be free to speak and free not to speak, free to express their opinion and free to express their disagreement of another's opinion. Freedom of Speech is truly essential to a free society.

Despite America's historic legacy of Freedom of Speech, this liberty is not always protected as it should be. Increased censorship, viewpoint discrimination, and the redefinition of hate speech are all current examples of where this liberty is under attack in our society. It is incumbent upon us, then, to learn to understand this liberty so that it may be protected for all people, for ourselves, and our posterity.

With our nation's Founders, "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." What will we do with the liberties our Creator has given us? How are we to protect these liberties and steward them well?

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 about your research, participate in a survey to discover general public opinion on these issues, and discuss what opportunities and responsibilities you have been given with regard to your Freedom of Speech.

1 law.cornell.edu/constitution/preamble

2 history.com/this-day-in-history/bill-of-rights-is-finally-ratified

1. Definitions

Research and describe the following terms. When possible, please use Webster's 1828 Dictionary. (**webstersdictionary1828.com**).

- Civil Liberty
- Jurisdiction
- Viewppoint Distinction
- Freedom of Speech
- Unalienable
- Censorship

2. Biblical Foundation

Read the following scripture and write out an answer to each of the questions below.

- **Read Genesis 2:16-17.**
  Although the Lord provided the first humans the freedom of choice, there were certainly consequences for what that freedom was used for. How do you think that remains true today?

- **Read James 3.**
  Write down the illustrations James uses for the tongue. Why is it so important for us to be wise with our words?

- **Read Acts 4:1-21 and Acts 5:17-29.**
  Governments and leaders are often opposed to Christianity. How should we respond when censored for speaking the truth in love?

- **Read Acts 16:16-40.**
  Paul and Silas were wrongly beaten and imprisoned and so made an appeal to their status as Roman citizens. What can we learn from their example of understanding their liberty and their courage to hold authorities accountable?

- **Read Acts 25.**
  Paul boldly appealed to Caesar for a just trial, claiming he had not broken any law, either legal or religious. What can we learn from Paul's example when he was being faced with censorship from the Chief Priests?

- **Read Proverbs 31:8-9.**

  Our words are often used for selfish purposes. How does this passage instruct us to use our words?

3. American Origin

Read the following documents and write out an answer to each of the questions below.

- **Reference constitutioncenter.org/rights/.**
  Identify the number of documents that the Founders drew from in drafting the language of the First Amendment. Consider how carefully the Founders arrived at the final language articulated in the First Amendment.

- **Read Amendment I to the U.S. Constitution.**
  Identify the six freedoms articulated in the First Amendment. Why do you think this was prioritized as the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights?

- **Read and research the summary of *Schenck v. United States* and *Brandenburg v. Ohio.***
  In 1919 the Supreme Court created a standard for regulating speech with creation of the clear and present danger test. In 1969 the Court modified their standard for reviewing speech cases crafting the imminent lawless action tests. How has the courts' standard for reviewing free speech cases evolved over time?

4. Essays (*500 word minimum each*)

Must follow MLA academic Standards.

- *Minimum of 500 words*
- *One-inch page margins*
- *Double-spaced paragraph*
- *Typeface: Times New Roman, 11pts*
- *A header with author's last name and page number, one-half inch from the top of each page*

Write one (1) essay about why the Freedom of Speech is an essential foundation for a free society that promotes and protects liberty and justice for all.

Write one (1) essay comparing and contrasting two of the following case studies. Describe whether or not you believe Freedom of Speech was appropriately or inappropriately protected or was otherwise compromised.

- **West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943)** - Freedom of speech includes the right: Not to speak (specifically, the right not to salute the flag)
- **Tinker v. Des Moines, 393 U.S. 503 (1969)** - Freedom of speech includes the right: Of students to wear black armbands to school to protest a war ("Students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate.")
- **Texas v. Johnson, 491 U.S. 397 (1989); United States v. Eichman, 496 U.S. 310 (1990)** - Freedom of speech includes the right: To engage in symbolic speech, (e.g., burning the flag in protest).
- **United States v. O'Brien, 391 U.S. 367 (1968)** - Freedom of speech does not include the right: To burn draft cards as an anti-war protest.
- **Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988)** - Freedom of speech does not include the right: To permit students to print articles in a school newspaper over the objections of the school administration.
- **Island Trees School District v. Pico (1982)** - The Supreme Court ruled that officials could not remove books from school libraries because they disagreed with the content of the books' messages.
- **Watchtower Bible and Tract Society v. Stratton (2002)** - City laws requiring permits for political advocates going door to door were unconstitutional because such a mandate would have a "chilling effect" on political communication.
- **Snyder v. Phelps (2011)** - Family of a fallen soldier sues Westboro Baptist Church over protests at funeral of soldier. Church protests included signs with statements such as, "Thank God for dead soldiers." SCOTUS holds that the First Amendment protects protesters at a funeral from liability for intentionally inflicting emotional distress on the family of the deceased.

- **Board of Education of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens By and Through Mergens (1990)** - Was Westside's prohibition against the formation of a Christian club consistent with the Establishment Clause, thereby rendering the Equal Access Act unconstitutional?
  oyez.org/cases/1989/88-1597
- **Good News Club v. Milford Central School, 533 U.S. 98 (2001)** - Did Milford Central School violate the First Amendment free speech rights of the Good News Club when it excluded the Club from meeting after hours at the school? If a violation occurred, was it justified by Milford's concern that permitting the Club's activities would violate the Establishment Clause?

HOMEWORK NOTE

Print two copies of each essay. *You will keep one copy of each essay for your own reference and will be required to turn in one copy of each essay for grading.* ***You will not be required to submit anything related to the terms or research sections of the Alumni Homework.***

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

The following assignment will give you a better understanding of the Four Day State Class and the fundamental ideas and strategies involved in the campaign process. While this assignment is not required, we do highly recommend that you complete it in preparation for the class.

9 Campaign Preparation

During the TeenPact week, we will hold class-wide elections for governor and senator. Once elected, these officials will have the distinct honor of representing the student body at graduation. During the week, every student will participate in elections in some capacity: candidate, campaign manager, grassroots activist, and voter. With so many options for participation, we recommend that you:

- **Develop a campaign slogan**. Your slogan should be memorable for the other students. Think about your goal for the campaign. You can make your slogan quick and catchy, or a little more thought provoking. Your slogan will help the students remember who you are and understand your campaign. Choose wisely!
- **Write a short speech on why you might make a good governor or senator to represent your fellow students**. During the class, you will have the opportunity to answer questions and convince the other students why you would represent the class well as their governor or senator. Think of a few reasons to present to the class, and you'll be that much more prepared.
- **Think about a favorite Bible verse or message you can share with your fellow students**. This will help in preparation for your campaign, give clear reasons for why you are running, and help students connect with your candidacy.
- **Bring campaign supplies.** Be creative with candy, signs, flyers, etc! Have fun thinking of ways to relate to your fellow students who will be voting in the election.
- **Read about campaigning**. Understanding what a campaign looks like will help you as you participate in campaigning throughout the week. Review some historical campaigns and basic principles that made them successful. If you plan to run for office, think of ways you can build a campaign team and share with them what you learn in your research.
- **Purpose: To be prepared for in-class elections.**

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Completed Homework Checklist

Please bring these items to class on Monday:

- ☐ ☐ Two copies of your State Political Fact Sheet
- ☐ ☐ Two copies of your letter to your **state** Senator *(for your district)*
- ☐ ☐ Two copies of your State of the State Address Worksheet
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Three copies of your bill
- ☐ ☐ Two copies of each of your Alumni essays
- ☐ Forms of Government Fact Sheet
- ☐ Complete the Constitutional Interpretations Analysis
- ☐ One copy of your Campaign Preparation notes (*optional*)

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Name: _____

Pre-Class Vocabulary List

Research the terms using a dictionary or other reference resources, then define each term in your own words. Remember, you won't need to turn in this worksheet, but you will need to bring a copy with you for your personal reference during the class.

SECTION ONE

Government _____

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"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 with this quote? Why or why not?

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Considering the definition of the term *Government*, how would you define the term *Self-Government?*

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SECTION TWO

Justice

Liberty

SECTION THREE

Republic

Democracy

Democratic Republic

Which of these terms best describes the United States' form of government at the federal and state level? Why?

SECTION FOUR

Legislative Branch _____

_____

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_____

Executive Branch _____

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_____

Judicial Branch _____

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Checks and Balances _____

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_____

How does the separation of powers between the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches provide *Checks and Balances* for one another? _____

_____

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_____

SECTION FIVE

Election _____

_____

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_____

Appointment _____

_____

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_____

Considering the definitions of these two terms, what are some governmental positions that are by *Election*?_____

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_____

_____

What are some governmental positions that are by *Appointment*?_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

What are some advantages and disadvantages to *Election* and *Appointment*? _____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

SECTION SIX

Political Party _____

Bipartisan _____

SECTION SEVEN

District _____

Redistrict _____

Gerrymander _____

What is the difference between *Redistricting* and *Gerrymandering*? _____

SECTION EIGHT

Primary Election _____

_____

_____

_____

General Election _____

_____

_____

_____

Runoff Election _____

_____

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_____

Grassroots _____

_____

_____

_____

What are examples of *Grassroots* involvement in elections? _____

_____

_____

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_____

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_____

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Name: _____

State Political Fact Sheet

Research and fill in the blanks. Remember to use state government information rather than federal government information. **All information should be memorized.**

1. My senator is _____.
2. There are (#) _____ senators currently in office in my state.
3. The ratio of democrats, republicans, independents, and vacancies in the senate is _____ D, _____ R, ____ I, and ____V.
4. My governor is _____.
5. My lieutenant-governor is _____.
6. My attorney general is _____.
7. My secretary of state is _____.
8. My chief justice is _____.
9. My president of the senate is _____.
10. I live in state senate district number _____.
11. There are (#) _____ supreme court justices in my state.
12. My state supreme court justices are: ☐ Elected ☐ Appointed

    If both, please explain the process: _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Sample Letter to Your Senator

123 My Street
Small Town, State 11233

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

Dear Senator Dyson,

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

- ★ Thank your legislator for his/her service to your community and state.
- ★ Tell him/her that you are praying for him/her.
- ★ Tell him/her 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 after class ends on Thursday or Friday. *(**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

HOMEWORK TIP

Always use the correct title of senator when writing your letter!

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Name: _____

State of the State Address Worksheet

Read or watch your governor's most recent State of the State Address. Create a list of the issues addressed (three or more) by your governor in his/her speech.

ISSUE #1

ISSUE #2

ISSUE #3

ISSUE #4 (OPTIONAL)

ISSUE #5 (OPTIONAL)

Sample Bill

This is a standard format to follow when writing 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.

By: John Doe ← **Author**

Senate Bill # _____ ← **Bill number**

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Motorist Safety Act of 2026 ← **Title**

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

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

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.

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

Section 5. This act shall become effective 30 days after approval by the governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law. ← **State exactly when your bill will take effect if passed.**

Section 6. Upon approval by the governor, this bill will be reviewed by the Appropiation Committee for funding. ← **State how your bill will be funded.**

NOTE TO PARENTS

All students will have the chance to present their bills before the class; however, due to time constraints, not every bill will be further debated during TeenPact Legislature.

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Name: _____

Forms of Government Fact Sheet

Identify and research three forms of government (i.e. monarchy, republic, etc.) different from that of the United States. Compare and contrast the various forms of government by answering the prompts below.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT #1

Government Type _____

Example Country _____

Definition _____

_____

_____

_____

FORM OF GOVERNMENT #2

Government Type _____

Example Country _____

Definition _____

_____

_____

_____

FORM OF GOVERNMENT #3

Government Type _____

Example Country _____

Definition _____

_____

_____

_____

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Name: _____

Constitutional Interpretations Analysis

Research the following Constitutional Interpretations and define each of them in your own words:

SECTION #1

Originalism _____

_____

_____

_____

Living Constitutionalism _____

_____

_____

_____

Pragmatism _____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION #2

Identify and research a case of interest on **oyez.org.** Identify which of the above interpretations the ruling was closest to and write a short paragraph (3 - 5 sentences) on your personal opinion on the constitutionality of the ruling.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____

Constitutional Interpretations Analysis

SECTION #3

As you consider the lens through which you read and understand the Constitution, write a short paragraph (3 - 5 sentences) on what the most important values are (i.e. original intent, precedent, morality, etc.) when analyzing and interpreting the Constitution?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____