

» » » LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

DOCUMENTS THAT SHAPE SOCIETY

OBJECTIVES:

- Students analyze the human costs of war and the effects of Nazi policies, the Final Solution and the Holocaust on European Jews. (*California Content Standards for History-Social Science, Grade 10, Standard 10.8*)
- Students analyze the attempts of governments to impose certain philosophies by enforcing the ideas contained in important documents. (*California Content Standards for History-Social Science, Grade 11, Standard 11.1*)
- Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents. (*California Content Standards for History-Social Science, Grade 12, Standard 12.1*)
- Students take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens and how those rights should be secured. (*California Content Standards for History-Social Science, Grade 12, Standard 12.2*)
- Students compare the relationship of government and society in a democracy to the relationship of government and society in an authoritarian and totalitarian regime. (*California Content Standards for History-Social Science, Grade 12, Standard 12.3*)

ACTIVITY:

Students study and analyze the intentions and consequences of government documents that define or limit the rights of people. To complete this activity, students read and discuss (A) the Nuremberg Laws on Citizenship and Race and (B) the Bill of Rights to complete the following appropriate grade level activity.

ACTIVITY #1 CLASS DISCUSSION AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Read each of the documents supplied, then summarize what each says.

- A. What do you think was the intent of the author(s) of each document? Is there a stated intent that is different from the implied intent?
- B. How far should a government go to protect its people? When does government go too far in trying to protect its people?
- C. What should citizens do when their consciences and/or code of ethics causes them to disagree so strongly with a law that they are tempted to disobey the law?
- D. What would be the costs/benefits of breaking a law that a citizen did not agree with? Make sure you refer to the documents studied to support your ideas.

ACTIVITY #2 CLASS DISCUSSION AND SIMULATION:

Discuss and respond to the following questions based on your review of the two documents:

- A. Based on these two documents, what inferences can you draw about the role of government and the rights of citizens?
- D. What can you infer about the consequence(s) of exercising personal freedoms?

PRODUCT/APPLICATION:

Students participate in a role-playing activity to gain an understanding about two important documents. The purpose of the Hot Seat activity is to help students understand the rationale behind the Bill of Rights and the Nuremberg Laws. The lesson concludes with a challenge to students to compare and contrast the two documents by assuming roles that require them to look deeply into the motivations that led to these historical documents.

Students assume the roles of non-specific participants in this activity in an effort to better understand the motivations behind the creation of these two documents.

Suggested roles are:

- Nazi sympathizer in Germany, 1935
- A Jew who reads the Nuremberg Laws in Germany, 1935
- Delegate to the Constitutional Convention in the United States, 1791
- A citizen of the United States who reads the Bill of Rights in the United States, 1791

Student products can be individual or group presentations highlighting key aspects of the assignment. Appropriate grade level rubrics should be used to evaluate student writing. A model Hot Seat lesson is available in the Teachers' section of the Museum of Tolerance web site.

EXTENSION:

Following the visit to the Museum and a review of the documents above, students discuss and identify factors contributing to why one document has endured and one has not. This discussion/activity can be followed by "The Price of Personal Responsibility" lesson.

RESOURCE A**THE NUREMBERG LAWS ON CITIZENSHIP AND RACE**

Adopted by the Nazi Party at the Reich Party Rally of Freedom in Nuremberg, Germany on September 15, 1935.

THE REICHSTAG HAS ADOPTED by unanimous vote the following law which is herewith promulgated.

ARTICLE 1

- (1) A subject of the state is one who belongs to the protective union of the German Reich, and who, therefore, has specific obligations to the Reich.
- (2) The status of subject is to be acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and the state Citizenship Law.

ARTICLE 2

- (1) A citizen of the Reich may be only one who is of German or kindred blood, and who, through his behavior, shows that he is both desirous and personally fit to serve loyally the German people and the Reich.
- (2) The right to citizenship is obtained by the grant of Reich citizenship papers.
- (3) Only the citizen of the Reich may enjoy full political rights in consonance with the provisions of the laws.

ARTICLE 3

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy to the Fuehrer, will issue the required legal and administrative decrees for the implementation and amplification of this law.

Promulgated: September 16, 1935.

In force: September 30, 1935.

THE NUREMBERG LAWS ON CITIZENSHIP AND RACE

First Supplementary Decree of November 14, 1935

On the basis of Article III of the Reich Citizenship Law of September 1935, the following is hereby decreed:

ARTICLE 1

- (1) Until further provisions concerning citizenship papers, all subjects of German or kindred blood who possessed the right to vote in the Reichstag elections when the Citizenship Law came into effect, shall, for the present, possess the rights of Reich citizens. The same shall be true of those upon whom the Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy to the Fuehrer shall confer citizenship.
- (2) The Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy to the Fuehrer, may revoke citizenship.

ARTICLE 2

- (1) The provisions of Article I shall apply also to subjects who are of mixed Jewish blood.
- (2) An individual of mixed Jewish blood is one who is descended from one or two grandparents who, racially, were full Jews, insofar that he is not a Jew according to Section 2 of Article 5. Full-blooded Jewish grandparents are those who belonged to the Jewish religious community.

ARTICLE 3

Only citizens of the Reich, as bearers of full political rights, can exercise the right of voting in political matters, and have the right to hold public office. The Reich Minister of the Interior, or any agency he empowers, can make exceptions during the transition period on the matter of holding public office. The measures do not apply to matters concerning religious organizations.

ARTICLE 4

- (1) A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He cannot exercise the right to vote; he cannot hold public office.
- (2) Jewish officials will be retired as of December 31, 1935. In the event that such officials served at the front in the World War either for Germany or her allies, they shall receive as pension, until they reach the age limit, the full salary last received, on the basis of which their pension would have been computed. They shall not, however, be promoted according to their seniority in rank. When they reach the age limit, their pension will be computed again, according to the salary last received on which their pension was to be calculated.
- (3) These provisions do not concern the affairs of religious organizations.
- (4) The conditions regarding service of teachers in public Jewish schools remains unchanged until the promulgation of new laws on the Jewish school system.

ARTICLE 5

- (1) A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were, racially, full Jews....
- (2) A Jew is also an individual who is descended from two full-Jewish grandparents if: (a) he was a member of the Jewish religious community when this law was issued, or joined the community later; (b) when the law was issued, he was married to a person who was a Jew, or was subsequently married to a Jew; (c) he is the issue from a marriage with a Jew, in the sense of Section I, which was contracted after the coming into effect of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor of September 15, 1935; (d) he is the issue of an extramarital relationship with a Jew, in the sense of Section I, and was born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936.

ARTICLE 6

Insofar as there are, in the laws of the Reich or in the decrees of the National Socialist German Workers' Party and its affiliates, certain requirements for the purity of German blood which extend beyond Article 5, the same remain untouched....

ARTICLE 7

The Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich is empowered to release anyone from the provisions of these administrative decrees.

AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

AMENDMENT VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

AMENDMENT VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.



SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER
MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE

9786 WEST PICO BOULEVARD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90035

310.553.8403
WWW.MUSEUMOFTOLERANCE.COM

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