

Political Ideology Survey

Purpose: Students very often have little understanding of the meaning of ideological terms. While these terms are often vague and elusive to adults as well, it is possible through this survey and the subsequent two lessons for students to glean a sophisticated comprehension.

Objectives:

1. The student will examine her/his political beliefs.
2. The student will explain the difference between liberal and conservative political points of view.
3. The student will discern the significance of political ideology in examining political issues.

Key Words:

liberal	Second Amendment
conservative	ideology/political ideology

Materials:

1. Blackboard and copies of the handout *Ideological Survey*.
2. Sample editorials posted with this lesson:
 - a. *Gun Control Isn't Crime Control*
 - b. *Smith and Wesson accepts Gun Safety Pact*
 - c. *Janie's Got a Gun*
3. Copy of the Second Amendment

Procedures:

1. Create five columns on the board, labeling them as follows from left to right: "strong liberal," "moderate liberal," "moderate," "moderate conservative," and "strong conservative." Ask students to characterize themselves as one of the five without your explaining the meaning of the terms and tally their responses under each column.
2. Distribute the Student Handout *Ideological Survey*. Ask students individually to respond to each of the statements on the survey by placing a "A" for agree or "D" for disagree in the column labeled "agree/disagree." Students should write nothing yet in the column labeled "L/C."
3. After the students have completed the survey, go through the survey with them and reveal which statements are conservative and which are liberal using the list below. As you read through the list, have the students code their responses by placing an "L" for liberal and a "C" for conservative according to the nature of their response. For instance, if a student responds to a conservative statement with "A" then she/he should place a "C" in the last column. If responding to the same statement with an "D" the student would place and "L" in the column.

1. C	6. L	11. L	16. L	21. C
2. L	7. L	12. C	17. C	22. L
3. C	8. C	13. L	18. C	23. L
4. C	9. C	14. C	19. L	24. L

YOUTH & GOVERNMENT™

2010-2011 Advisor Handbook

5. C 10. L 15. L 20. C 25. C

4. After the students have coded their responses, ask them to characterize themselves again as “strong liberal,” “moderate liberal,” “moderate,” “moderate conservative,” and “strong conservative,” but this time according to the following scheme.

21-25 Liberal responses	=	Strong Liberal
16-20 Liberal responses	=	Moderate Liberal
21-25 Conservative responses	=	Strong Conservative
16-20 Conservative responses	=	Moderate Conservative
10-15 of either responses	=	Moderate

5. Chart the students’ responses on the board underneath the earlier tally. If there is a change, ask students to theorize about what may have caused the change.
6. Explain to the students that any ideological survey is imperfect in that it is not sophisticated enough to cover the entire gamut of a political belief system, and that they should continue to examine and hone their political beliefs.

Evaluation:

1. Use the attached matching quiz in which students must identify certain statements as liberal or conservative.
2. Ask students to find a newspaper editorial and analyze it for liberal or conservative ideology.
3. Have students write an essay theorizing why some students had a different ideology profile after the survey than before.
4. Ask students to read the following editorials featuring opinions about the right to bear arms guaranteed in the second amendment. (Attached)
 - + *Gun Control isn’t Crime Control*
 - + *Smith and Wesson Accepts Gun Safety Pact*
 - + *Janie’s Got a Gun*
5. After reading the editorials, ask students to explain how they relate to the second amendment of the constitution. Does the author support the 2nd amendment? Does the author feel this amendment needs to be changed? Can you change an amendment?

Political Ideology Survey

<i>Question</i>	<i>Agree/ Disagree</i>	<i>L/C</i>
1. The federal government places too many restrictions on businesses.		
2. Americans need to be protected from unnecessary police searches and other invasions of privacy.		
3. High taxes discourage people from working hard.		
4. Only people who cannot work should be eligible for welfare programs.		
5. National security is more important than an individual person's right to privacy.		
6. The government should create and pay for programs that help poor people in the United States.		
7. The wealthy should be taxed at a higher percentage than the lower and middle classes.		
8. The best way to help the poor is to help businesses earn a profit and create new jobs.		
9. Government programs on behalf of the disadvantaged discourage people from helping themselves.		
10. The government should not restrict abortion and other reproductive decisions.		
11. The government has a special responsibility to protect minority groups from discrimination.		
12. Crime can be reduced by enforcing stricter penalties and longer jail sentences on criminals.		
13. The government should do more to punish businesses that pollute the environment.		
14. The government should protect Americans from morally offensive films and publications.		
15. The arts should be protected from government censorship. Adults must be free to think and speak as they wish.		
16. Without government regulation, big businesses would take advantage of ordinary Americans.		
17. Crime, unemployment, poverty, and other problems will be reduced if Americans return to the traditional values of hard work, self-discipline, and belief in God.		
18. Our government spends too much on social services and other programs that could be run just as well by businesses, religious organizations, and/or non-profit		

charity groups.		
19. Homosexuals should receive the same rights and protections as other minority groups.		
20. Policies that create jobs are more important than policies that protect the environment.		
21. The federal government should not get involved in setting academic standards for local public school districts.		
22. Americans have a right to affordable health care.		
23. The death penalty is cruel and unusual punishment.		
24. One way to reduce crime would be to limit the sale and possession of firearms.		
25. The government should allow school-sponsored prayer in the public schools.		

Quiz: Identifying Ideology

Directions: Fill in the following blanks with the letter that best describes the statements.

A. Liberal B. Conservative

- _____ 1. Our national government should tax less and therefore allow its citizens to decide how best to spend their own money.
- _____ 2. When companies are given more economic freedoms they create more jobs and opportunities for citizens to become prosperous.
- _____ 3. Freedom of speech should be protected even if we find that speech offensive.
- _____ 4. Parents and students should be given the choice as to what type of schooling is best for their children, even if that choice is a religious school.
- _____ 5. Our government has an obligation to provide for all of its citizens basic necessities like food and healthcare.

Candidate Chart

Directions: Fill in the chart below by identifying the candidates and stances.

	<u>Republican nominee:</u>	<u>Democratic nominee:</u>
Stance on: Abortion -		
Social Security -		
Taxes -		
Guns -		

Does each candidate fit your idea of a conservative/liberal? Explain why or why not.