

LESSON PLAN 3

Personal Interest v. Public Welfare

By
Dr. Samantha Averett

Rationale:

Political and social leaders are regular people with opinions and personal interests. Some may argue that it is essential that a leader not allow her/his interests and ideas to overshadow the needs of the communities they serve. Also, social and political leaders have to determine the separation between personal interests and serving the interests of their constituents and community members.

Standard(s):

C3 NCSS

1. D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

Objectives:

1. Examine the role and responsibility of the president of the United States to the citizens of the United States
2. Evaluate President Wilson and his administration as it relates to democratic principles, constitutional rights, and civic virtues
3. Determine the motivation of the actions of President Wilson and his administration
4. Demonstrate knowledge and practical application of historical skills (analysis, sourcing, and corroboration).

Activity:

1. Students will analyze the documents.
2. Students will group and corroborate the sources.
3. Students will respond to examination prompts.

Guiding Questions:

1. To what extent are the expressed ideas representing personal interests or the interests of the community members.
2. How do Wilson's actions and the actions of his administration express exclusion or inclusion of democratic principles, constitutional rights, and civic virtues?

Sources:

1. Letters to and from the President
 - a. To Thomas Dixon Jr. from Woodrow Wilson
 - b. To Woodrow Wilson from Robert N. Wood
 - c. To Oswald Garrison Villard from Woodrow Wilson
 - d. To Robert Russa Moton from Woodrow Wilson
 - e.
2. Book
 - a. Excerpt from *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1880 -1950* by Constance Green

3. Newspaper Article

- a. Excerpt from the Chicago *Defender*; Col. Young Farewell Address, December 20, 1919

Suggested Lesson Plan:

1. Warm Up –
 - a. Lead a whole group discussion on the terms below and the historical context of the time period
 - i. Civic Virtue
 - ii. Democratic Principles
 - iii. Constitutional Rights
2. Examine – Teacher can choose either suggestion based on the needs of the students (individual work or group work)
 - a. Suggestion - Students will examine the documents and answer the questions on the worksheet related to each document
 - b. Suggestion - The teacher can have students focus on one document in a small group and then have students share the information from their document with other students in the form of a presentation, expert grouping, or by creating posters to hang around the classroom and all students will conduct a gallery walk to complete the worksheet
3. Extension Activity –
 - a. Students will research another president or government official who dealt with an issue that caused a conflict with their interest. (i.e. President Johnson and Civil Rights Act)
 - b. Students will conduct a debate on the ability of a government official to suspend their interest for the public good or will. (i.e. President Obama and Marriage Equality)

Suggested Grade Level:

This lesson is suggested for middle to high school age children.

Suggested Lesson Pace:

Schedule Type	Rationale
80 minute Block Schedule	This lesson structure may take one class period. Should add an additional class period for the extension activity.
45 minute Block Schedule	This lesson structure may take two class periods. Should add an additional class period for the extension activity.

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Document A

To Thomas Dixon Jr.

White House

July 29, 1913

I do not think you know what is going on down here. We are handling the force of colored people who are now in the departments in just the way in which they ought to be handled. We are trying – and by degrees succeeding – a plan of concentration which will put them all together and will not in any one bureau mix the two races. This change has already practically been effected in the bureau in which I proposed the appointment of Patterson.

It would not be right for me to look at this matter in any other way than as the leader of a great national party. I am trying to handle these matters with the best judgment but in the spirit of the whole country, though with entire comprehension of the considerations which certainly do not need to be pointed out to me

Cordially and sincerely yours,

Woodrow Wilson

Personal Interest v. Public Welfare
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Document B

From Robert N. Wood

Mr. President, Sir

New York

August 5, 1913

On behalf of the United Colored Democracy as a political organization and in order to voice the feeling and thought of the ten million persons of Negro blood who justly aspire to the maintenances of their privileges as citizens in this great democracy, I am reluctantly compelled to express to you a respectful, but none the less earnest, protest at the course your administration is pursuing were regard to the status of the colored people of this country.

In taking this step I have in mind the fact that never, perhaps since the first term of Abraham Lincoln has a President of the United States found himself obliged to face, immediately after his inauguration, questions of such momentous importance as have successively occupied your attention since the Fourth of March last. But while the Tariff, the California Alien Land Laws, the Mexican Government, the compensation of the family of an Italian who was lynched in Florida are certainly matters deserving of the consideration of the Chief Executive of the Nation, I feel that no question can be or more urgent concern to you than the future of ten million citizens within the borders of the United States. The apparent complacency which has marked the attitude of the colored people towards the campaign for their reduction to serfdom which certain reactionary elements in the Democratic Party have inaugurated coincidentally with your assumption of the Presidency cannot by any means be regarded as an indication of our satisfaction with the movement to place us in the condition which was ours before the Civil War.....

Knowing and believing, as I do that you are a man of courage, and mindful of you own personal assurance to me that you are a Christian and a gentleman, I feel that I can no longer disregard the insistent demands of those of my race who expressed their confidence in you by casting their vote to help secure your elevation.....

As well as of those whose fears for the safety of our citizenship under a Democratic Administration now seem only too well to have been justified, that I appeal to you for some expression by word or deed that will discourage and discountenance the enemies of the colored man at Washington.....

There stood in the person of Woodrow Wilson a man of Southern birth whose purpose was to unite the country in the bonds of good-will and mutual respect and whose comprehensive insight had taught him that the country could never be united except the colored people were considered part thereof. As a man of Southern birth, you are well aware. Mr. President that the attitude of the best teacher in the South toward the colored population in not the attitude represented by those persons in an out of Congress whose sole aim in life seems to be the suppression of the just

Personal Interest v. Public Welfare
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aspirations of colored people, after centuries of residence in this country, to the maintenance of “the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” in this land, so rich in opportunity to the most degraded refuse of Europe.....

The colored people deeply resent the segregation of clerks in the Civil Service at Washington, in the Post Office and in other departments of the Federal Government. We resent it, not at all because we are particularly anxious to eat in the same room or use the same soap and towels that white people use, but because we see in the separation in of the races in the matter of soap and soap the beginning of a movement to deprive the colored man entirely of soap and soap, to eliminate him wholly from the Civil Service of the United States.....

Intelligence and efficiency cannot now be measured according to the color of the skin. In past administrations individuals colored clerks of superior training and ability have been held back to permit of the promotion of white men of inferior attainments. In such cases there was always recourse to the proper authorities and the victim of such discrimination could thus abstain redress. But the present system of segregation is surely tending toward the total elimination of colored people from honest employment in the Civil Service of the United States.....

We protest against segregation because our interest are at stake. We protest against it none the less because of the absurd inadequacy of the reasons given for the change in the departmental service.....

Finally, Mr. President, as American citizens sincerely interested in the welfare of the country as a whole, we resent the segregation and the discrimination in the Federal Civil Service because, however necessary and important the enforced segregation of the races may be to the voters in rural communities in Alabama or Mississippi and to their candidates for office, it is not a business in which this great nation can engage with any profit to the people as a whole and it can be production only of evil and ill will among a large and important minority.....

Vert respectfully yours,

Robert N. Wood

Personal Interest v. Public Welfare
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Document C

To Oswald Garrison Villard

The White House

September 22, 1913

My dear Mr. Villard

I hope that you will try to see the real situation down here with regard to the treatment of the colored people. What I would do if I could act alone, you already know, but what I am trying to do must be done, if done at all, through the cooperation of those with whom I am associated here in the Government. I hope and, I may say, I believe that by the slow pressure of argument and persuasion the situation may be changed, and a great many things done eventually which now seem impossible. But they cannot be done, either now or at any future time, if a bitter agitation is inaugurated and carried to this natural ends. I appeal to you most earnestly to aid in holding things at a just and cool equipoise until I can discover whether it is possible to work out anything or not.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

Woodrow Wilson

Document D

In March 1914 when the House Committee on Civil Service Reform held hearings on two bills calling for mandatory racial separation of government employees, a Louisiana sponsor of the bills argued that to put a member of “this inferior race” in a position of authority over Caucasians was unrighteous. By the stamp of color, the Lord had decreed a lowly place for Negroes. When Congressman Martin Madden Illinois asked: “Who can say the Almighty decreed it?” the Louisianan replied: “History, experience, and first hand knowledge.” Northern representatives killed both bills in committee.

In the meantime, a Supreme Court ruling that the federal Civil Rights Act of 1875, which had long ago been declared unconstitutional in the states, was invalid also in federal territory opened the door to new discriminatory laws in the District of Columbia. But fresh attempts to exclude Negroes from government service, District anti-miscegenation and Jim Crow street car bills, and a segregated residential bill patterned on a Baltimore ordinance of 1913 all met with defeat. Pressures in fact eased slightly in 1915 when the Supreme Court in an unforeseen reversal of earlier opinions refused to allow nearby Maryland to write a “grandfather clause” into her constitution.

“More than seventy – five per cent of the present segregation the Bee reminded its readers in 1915, “was transmitted to President Wilson by the Republicans,” and the editor noted more Negro promotions in the civil service than in years past.

Source: Excerpt from Washington by Constance Green

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Document E

To Robert Russa Moton

The White House

November 6, 1914

My dear Major Moton:

I have been very much interested in the accounts I have heard of the work you are attempting to do through the instrumentality of the Negro Organization Society and feel that you are to be especially congratulated on the deep interest which had been manifested by the white people of Virginia and the South in the plans now maturing for the betterment of conditions among the negro people. I think one of the happiest circumstances of recent times is this cooperation between the white people and the negroes in the South in intelligent efforts to advance the economic success and comfort of negroes and put them in a position where they can work out their own fortunes with success and self-respect. I wish I might attend the meeting at Norfolk in person, in order to express my interest and sympathy, but I cannot, and I hope that you will feel at liberty to read this letter to the meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Woodrow Wilson

Document F

Col. Young Farewell Address

Col. Charles W. Young, the ranking officer of the Race, addressed a large audience Sunday afternoon at St. Mark M.E. church on a subject pertinent to the progressive movements among our people in America. The retired colonel is to sail the first of January for Africa as military attaché of the American legation in Liberia for an indefinite period. After the invocation by Dr. Brooks, Eugene Kinckle Jones, secretary of the National Urban League spoke, followed by A.L. Jackson formerly of Chicago, the educational secretary, who spoke along educational lines and Col. Wm J Schieffelin, who said that Christian intelligence is needed to solve many problems affecting the Race. He was loudly applauded when he turned to Col Young and said, "I believe that if you had been a white man you would have reached France." Col. Young spoke next. He said in part: "If congress wants to do anything for her black soldiers who died in France, let the congress of the United States give them the thing for which they fought – liberty and full democracy. That is the kind of memorial that is acceptable to loyal and true Americans." He attacked the American policy of discrimination, segregation and lynching. He suggested that the Race stand on two legs, one economic and the other political. In conclusion he urged us to boycott any candidate in the next presidential election who does not openly oppose the wrongs in question.

Source: The Chicago Defender, Col. Young Farewell, December 20, 1919

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/493591375/E6804B391AE54252PQ/14?accountid=11490>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Use the identified document to answer the questions below.

Document A.

1. Source the author and the recipient.
2. What does the statement "handling the force of colored people who are now in the departments in just the way in which they ought to be handled" tell you about President Wilson?
3. Is concentrating a group of people together in the government and not allowing the mixing of races in the workplace a violation of democratic principles and constitutional rights.
4. President Wilson states that he should look at the issue as "the leader of a great national party." To what extent is that personal interest? Does his interest hinder the constitutional rights of others and violate the civic virtues of the role and responsibilities of the Presidency? Explain your answer.

Document B

1. Source the author and the recipient.
2. According to Mr. Wood, what had changed during President Wilson's administration?
3. Why did Mr. Wood use Christianity in his argument? How is his use of Christianity the same or different from that found in document D and document F?
4. To what extent is Mr. Wood's argument against racial segregation based on social or economic needs?
5. To what extent are Mr. Wood's interests aligned with his activism. And how does his activism connect the concept of civic virtues?
6. How are the actions expressed in document A connected to the grievances expressed by Mr. Wood in his letter to President Wilson?

Document C

1. Source the author and the recipient.
2. What do you think President Wilson means by the statement, "I hope that you will try to see the real situation down here with regard to the treatment of the colored people."?
3. Who or what do you think President Wilson sees as "a bitter agitation" that can be "inaugurated and carried to this natural ends"?
4. What are the social, political, or economic motivations for keeping "things at a just and cool equipoise"?

Document D

1. Why do you think the Louisiana representative and the Illinois representative have a different perspectives? And how were their actions an expression of personal interest?
2. How and why is religion used to justify the racial segregation of government employees?
3. How were the actions discussed in paragraph two expanding or limiting constitutional rights?

Document E

1. Source the author and the recipient.
2. What assumptions were being made by President Wilson?
3. Who and what realities are being ignored by President Wilson? (i.e. race relations and racial challenges)
4. How is President Wilson's action economically motivated?

Document F

1. How did the actions of President Wilson discussed in document A, possibly impact Col Young and his career experience(s) and advancement(s)?
2. To what extent is Col. Young's Farewell Address related to democratic principles and constitutional rights?
3. How is Col. Wm J Schieffelin's use of religion similar or different from the Louisiana congressman in document D and Mr. Wood in Document B?
4. What does Col. Young mean when he states, "the Race stands on two legs, one economic and the other political"?



LESSON PLAN 3
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- Government Terminologies
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Civic Virtue

- Citizens have a responsibility to their communities, country and societies. Citizens should place their responsibility to community, country and society above individual needs and desires.

Democratic Principles

- Principles and practice that protect human freedoms and rights

Constitutional Rights

- Rights or liberties that are implied are expressed in the governing document


Four Corners *Activity*

- Now that you know the definition for each term. You will pick a corner (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) to reflect your answer to the following questions.
- Once in the corner discuss your thoughts with the group to the following guiding question then elect a presenter to share the summary of the group's discussion with the class.
- Guiding Question – why did you choose this corner?

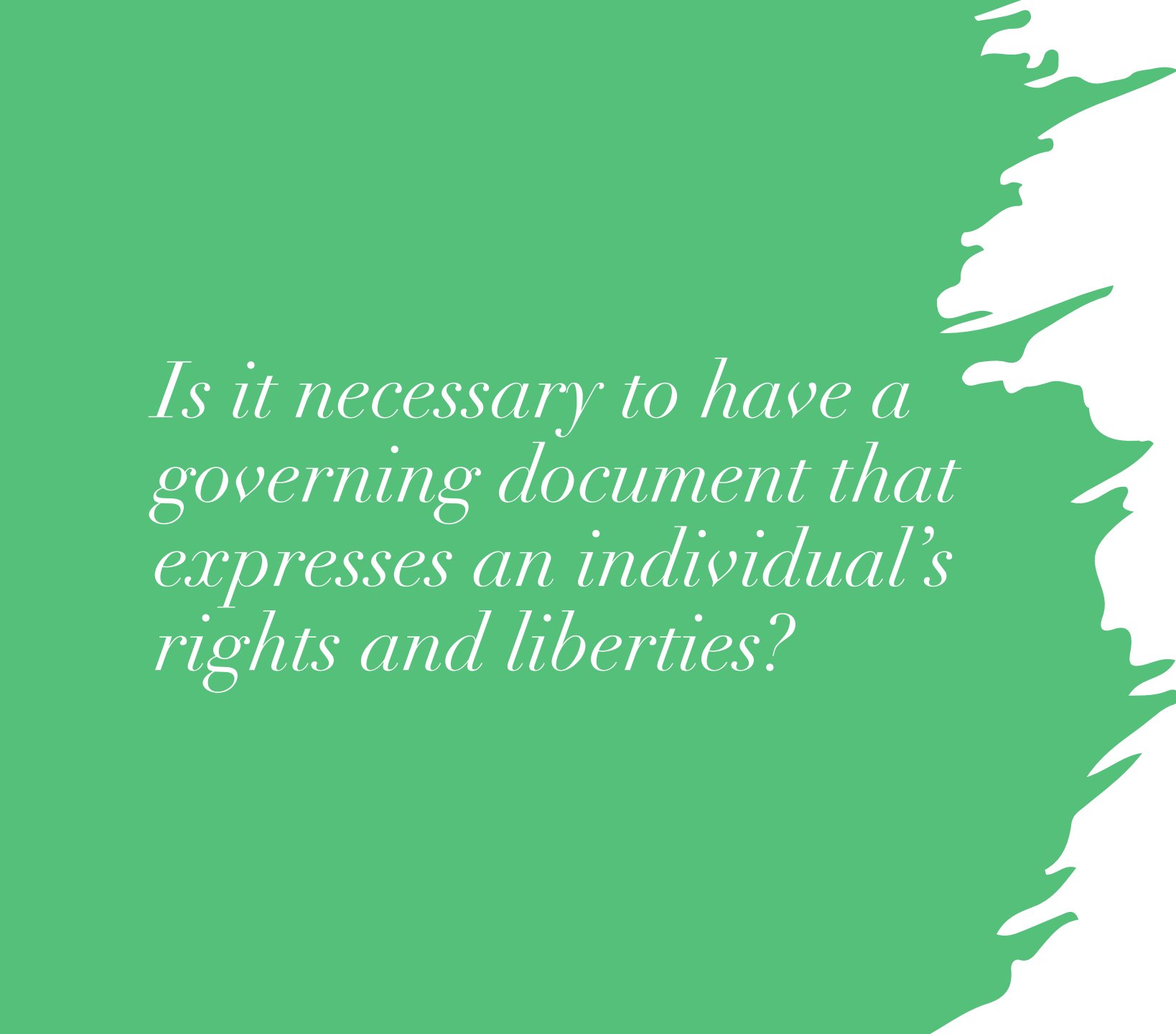


A green brushstroke background with a question in white cursive text.

*Should citizens put their
responsibility to community
above their personal interest?*



*Is it necessary to
protect human
freedoms and
rights?*



Is it necessary to have a governing document that expresses an individual's rights and liberties?