

Essential Questions

Directions: Each student will sign up to answer **two** of the following questions during the trimester. The student will be responsible for a class presentation no longer than **7 minutes** and a **1 page summary / outline** answering the question.

First Amendment

1. Outline a current First Amendment case recently decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.
2. Explain the judicial reasons teachers can not lead prayers in public schools.
3. Describe three organizations dedicated to the Separation of Church and State.

Shelby County and Tennessee

1. Explain how government works in Shelby County with both a county mayor and a city mayor.
2. Explain how Shelby County ranks in Tennessee with regards to: population, crime, education, health care, employment, and economic.
3. Compare and contrast Germantown, Collierville, Bartlett, and Arlington from city-data.com.

Immigration

1. Explain if the United States border with Mexico is secure.
2. Why would the United States should pass a law making it impossible for illegal immigrants to obtain a driver's license.
3. What is the impact of illegal immigrants on the United States economy?

Poverty

1. Explain what the poverty rate is in the United States and how it is derived.
2. Explain where in Tennessee and the United States the poverty rate is the highest. Why?
3. Describe two US policies to help lower poverty.

Wages

1. How does today's minimum wage compare with today's cost of living? Discuss your answer.
2. What is the impact of education on future employment opportunities? What is the average income for someone with a high school degree versus a college degree?
3. Explain why people are against raising the minimum wage in the United States.

China

1. Why does the United States have a One China Policy as it relates to China and Taiwan?
2. What human rights violations do the United States accuse China of committing?
3. How does China's emerging economy affect the world's energy supplies and environment?

World Population

1. Explain India's efforts to lower its population growth.
2. Explain why China has a One Child Policy.
3. Explain why population growth is highest in sub-Saharan Africa and lowest in Europe.

Energy

1. Explain the problems with the following renewable resources: wind, nuclear, biomass, solar, and hydroelectric.
2. In detail, where in the world is all the petroleum?
3. List and explain the differences in gas prices in the United States, Middle East, Europe, Asia, Mexico, and Oceania.

Popular Culture

1. Explain how tabloids can print (usually lies) what they do about celebrities.
2. Explain the economic impact of under 18 year olds in the United States.
3. List the top five fast food restaurants in the United States. Describe a lawsuit filed against one of the fast food restaurants because of the quality or nutritional value of their food.
4. Where in the world is plastic surgery popular? Give examples of how different cultures view plastic surgery.

Drugs

1. What are examples of programs taught in American schools (with the purpose of deterring such behavior) which deal with unacceptable teenage behavior, e.g., drinking, drug use, sexual conduct?
2. Explain if the United States should make certain "soft" drugs, e.g., marijuana, legal?
3. Why is marijuana illegal in the United States?

Crime

1. Explain the gun laws of Tennessee.
2. Explain why the EU has outlawed capital punishment. How does this affect Turkey?
3. Describe the different types of prisons in the United States.

Capital Punishment

1. Where and why is capital punishment illegal in certain countries around the world?
2. How successful is capital punishment at deterring crime?
3. Explain if states with the death penalty have higher or lower violent crime rates.

Euthanasia

1. Explain where (and why) in the world euthanasia is allowed.
2. Discuss how we as a society should balance quality of life with quantity. If we live longer, then how are we living, e.g., kept alive by modern medicine. Are we as a society sometimes trying to cheat death?
3. Who is Jack Kavorkian, why was he called "Dr. Death," and should he be in jail?

Abortion

1. How are laws on abortion different in individual states?
2. Why are partial birth abortions illegal? Explain what has been the impact of Roe v. Wade.
3. How would changes in the United States Supreme Court possibly affect abortion laws?

Divorce and Families

1. Describe how the divorce rate has changed in the USA over the last 50 years. Why?
2. Explain why the divorce rate would be meaningless in Scandinavia. What is the role of marriage in Scandinavian countries?
3. Compare and contrast the divorce laws in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

Alternative Lifestyles

1. Why do some people support laws to prevent discrimination against a specific group of people, e.g., gay rights laws.
2. How do people explain the difference between a hate crime and other crimes committed?
3. Where in the U.S. has there been movements to allow (and not allow) gay marriages?

Racism

1. How is racism different in many European countries from racism in the United States?
2. What were the Los Angeles Riots? How did race impact the riots?
3. How is South Africa trying to integrate the black and white population? What are the greatest obstacles to this reconciliation?

Subsaharan Africa

1. What has been happening in the Congo region, and how has the world reacted?
2. Why was there a genocide in Rwanda in 1994?
3. What has happened to the white farmers in Zimbabwe?

Politics

1. Explain the history behind the Electoral College.
2. Explain five differences between the RNC platform and the DNC platform.
3. Explain the main differences between the USA government and the British government.
4. Why is Iowa and New Hampshire so important in electing the President of the USA?

Globalization

1. What areas of the United States are negatively affected by outsourcing? Which areas are positively affected?
2. Why are so many jobs outsourced to India? List the advantages to sending jobs to India.
3. What impact does American popular culture have on the rest of the world? List examples.