



College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action

Foundational
Unit

3

WORKSHOP MATERIALS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

IDENTIFYING QUESTIONS WORTH ANSWERING

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Directions for Participants

1. Refer to your copies of *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*.
2. Review Identifying Questions Worth Answering and coding guides (the key to labeling the questions).
3. Reread the excerpt from *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. Stop for a moment to consider as a group what understanding Monk wants to communicate in this excerpt.
4. Evaluate a couple of the questions together, applying the first category (i.e., Y/N: Could a student find evidence in the essay to answer this question?).

Then, working at your tables in pairs or small groups:

5. Continue to apply the first category to the remaining questions.
6. Evaluate a couple of the questions together, applying the second category (i.e., D: Does a reader have to dig deep to answer this question?).
7. Finish evaluating all of the remaining questions with that category, noting any questions or confusion to address during the debrief discussion with participants at your table.
8. Repeat the evaluation of questions, applying the next two categories (i.e., V: Does the question ask about a vocabulary word in the essay? and *: Is this a question worth asking? If not, could you revise it to make it worth asking?).
9. During the debrief discussion, share your answers to the different columns with other table members and discuss any points of agreement or disagreement. Talk about which questions were the most difficult to analyze and why.
10. After you finish the exercise, talk with your full table again about what is the enduring understanding (the big idea) of the excerpt. Discuss whether any one of the questions is asking about that big idea, and note it at the bottom of the worksheet.

Worksheet: Identifying Questions Worth Answering

The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution

Use the following key to label the questions below. Questions can receive more than one mark/fulfill more than one category. If you answer N to a question in step 1, you do not need to work with the question again until step 4.

1. **Y/N:** Could a student find evidence in the essay to answer this question?
2. **D:** Does a reader have to dig deep to answer this question?
3. **V:** Does the question ask about a vocabulary word in the essay?
4. ***:** Is this a question worth asking? If not, could you revise it to make it worth asking?

Y/N	D	V	*	Questions and Tasks:
				What is (and isn't) the meaning of "popular sovereignty"?
				Why does Monk claim that popular sovereignty is the form of government in America?
				What other forms of governments are possible?
				Is Lucy Stone confused when she asks, "Which 'We the People'"?
				Why does Monk ask this question, "Which 'We the People' has 'troubled the nation'"?
				What other groups in the United States have not been included as part of "We the People"?
				What does the phrase "founding fathers" mean?
				Who were the most famous and important founding fathers?
				Why does Marshall think the founding fathers could not have imagined a female or black Supreme Court justice?
				Having discussed the meaning of Marshall's quote, ask students to put his ideas into their own words, paraphrased briefly in two to three sentences while carefully considering sentence structure.
				What evidence is there in paragraph three to support Marshall's claim about the "evolving nature of the Constitution"?
				What other rights should be given to 18-year-olds along with the right to vote and serve in the Army?
				How does Marshall's presence on the Supreme Court illustrate the evolution of the Constitution?

After you've read *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* and discussed it with your partner, decide together what is the enduring understanding or essential idea of the article.

**Resource: Excerpt From Monk
The Words We Live By:
*Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution***

From “The Preamble: We the People”

The first three words of the Constitution are the most important. They clearly state that the people—not the king, not the legislature, not the courts—are the true rulers in American government. This principle is known as popular sovereignty.

But who are “We the People”? This question troubled the nation for centuries. As Lucy Stone, one of America’s first advocates for women’s rights, asked in 1853, “‘We the People’? Which ‘We the People’? The women were not included.” Neither were white males who did not own property, American Indians, or African-Americans—slave or free. Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American on the Supreme Court, described the limitation:

“For a sense of the evolving nature of the Constitution, we need look no further than the first three words of the document’s preamble: ‘we the people.’ When the founding fathers used this phrase in 1787, they did not have in mind the majority of America’s citizens ... the men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 could not ... have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme Court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendant of an African slave.”

Through the Amendment process, more and more Americans were eventually included in the Constitution’s definition of “We the People.” After the Civil War, the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment gave African-Americans citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave black men the vote. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote nationwide, and in 1971, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment extended suffrage to eighteen-year-olds.

Worksheet: Identifying Questions Worth Answering: Eleanor Roosevelt’s Speech to the Members of the American Civil Liberties Union

Use the following key to label the questions below. Questions can receive more than one mark/fulfill more than one category. If you answer N to a question in step 1, you do not need to work with the question again until step 4.

1. **Y/N:** Could a student find evidence in the essay to answer this question?
2. **D:** Does a reader have to dig deep to answer this question?
3. **V:** Does the question ask about a vocabulary word in the essay?
4. ***:** Is this a question worth asking? If not, could you revise it to make it worth asking?

Y/N	D	V	*	Questions and Tasks
				What broadcast had Eleanor Roosevelt listened to?
				What had Roosevelt forgotten? What had she almost forgotten? Why do you think she began her remarks in this way?
				A cudgel is a weapon, basically a club. In paragraph two, what contradiction does Roosevelt introduce in the sentence about cudgels and finish in the sentence after it?
				What does the word “that,” which begins the fourth sentence in paragraph two, refer to? Explain.
				What has to happen to make sure the long line of courageous people who fought for civil liberties continues in the future? Where did Roosevelt talk about this?
				According to Roosevelt, what does it mean to “take the law into your own hands”? Why is it so important to preserving democracy that people <i>not</i> take the law into their own hands?
				Why was Roosevelt an important voice on the issues of civil liberties and justice?
				How are the youth of the nation going to make the United States “an even more truly democratic nation”?

After you’ve read Eleanor Roosevelt’s speech and discussed it with your partner, together decide what is the enduring understanding or essential idea of the article.

Resource: Eleanor Roosevelt Speaks to Members of the American Civil Liberties Union

Chicago, March 14, 1940

Now I listened to the broadcast this afternoon with a great deal of interest. I almost forgot what a fight had been made to assure the rights of the working man. I know there was a time when hours were longer and wages lower, but I had forgotten just how long that fight for freedom, to bargain collectively, and to have freedom of assembly, had taken.

Sometimes, until some particular thing comes to your notice, you think something has been won for every working man, and then you come across, as I did the other day, a case where someone had taken the law into his own hands and beaten up a labor organizer. I didn't think we did those things any more in this country, but it appears that we do. Therefore, someone must be always on the lookout to see that someone is ready to take up the cudgels to defend those who can't defend themselves. That is the only way we are going to keep this country a law-abiding country, where law is looked upon with respect and where it is not considered necessary for anybody to take the law into his own hands. The minute you allow that, then you have acknowledged that you are no longer able to trust in your courts and in your law-enforcing machinery, and civil liberties are not very well off when anything like that happens; so I think that after listening to the broadcast today, I would like to remind you that behind all those who fight for the Constitution as it was written, for the rights of the weak and for the preservation of civil liberties, we have a long line of courageous people, which is something to be proud of and something to hold on to. Its only value lies, however, in the fact that we profit by example and continue the tradition in the future.

We must not let those people in back of us down; we must have courage; we must not succumb to fears of any kind; and we must live up to the things that we believe in and see that justice is done to the people under the Constitution, whether they belong to minority groups or not. This country is a united country in which all people have the same rights as citizens. We are grateful that we can trust in the youth of the nation that they are going on to uphold the real principles of democracy and put them into action in this country. They are going to make us an even more truly democratic nation.

Answer Key: Identifying Questions Worth Answering ***The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution***

Use the following key to label the questions below. Questions can receive more than one mark/fulfill more than one category. If you answer N to a question in step 1, you do not need to work with the question again until step 4.

1. **Y/N:** Could a student find evidence in the essay to answer this question?
2. **D:** Does a reader have to dig deep to answer this question?
3. **V:** Does the question ask about a vocabulary word in the essay?
4. ***:** Is this a question worth asking? If not, could you revise it to make it worth asking?

Y/N	D	V	*	Questions and Tasks:
Y	--	V	*	What is (and isn't) the meaning of "popular sovereignty"?
Y	--	--	--	Why does Monk claim that popular sovereignty is the form of government in America?
N	--	--	--	What other forms of governments are possible?
Y	--	--	*	Is Lucy Stone confused when she asks, "Which 'We the People'?"
Y	--	--	--	Why does Monk ask this question, "Which 'We the People' has 'troubled the nation'?"
Initially N but Y with revision in italics.				<i>According to the article, what other groups are there in the United States that have not been included as part of "we the people"?</i>
Initially N but Y with revision in italics.				<i>What does the phrase "founding fathers" mean in the context of Thurgood Marshall's quote?</i>
N	--	--	--	Who were the most famous and important of the founding fathers?
Y	D	--	*	Why does Marshall think the founding fathers could not have imagined a female or black Supreme Court justice?
Y	D	--		Having discussed the meaning of Marshall's quote, ask students to put his ideas into their own words in a brief two- to three-sentence paraphrase, carefully considering sentence structure as they do so.
Y	D	V	*	What evidence is there in paragraph three regarding Marshall's claim about the "evolving nature of the constitution"?
N	--	--	--	What other rights should be given to 18-year-olds along with the right to vote and serve in the Army?
Y	D	--	*	How does Marshall's presence on the Supreme Court illustrate the evolution of the Constitution?

The enduring understanding or essential idea of the article: *The enduring understanding should revolve around the historical evolution in the United States of who is included in the notion of popular sovereignty.*

Answer Key: Identifying Questions Worth Answering Eleanor Roosevelt’s Speech to the Members of the American Civil Liberties Union

Use the following key to label the questions below. Questions can receive more than one mark/fulfill more than one category. If you answer N to a question in step 1, you do not need to work with the question again until step 4.

1. **Y/N:** Could a student find evidence in the essay to answer this question?
2. **D:** Does a reader have to dig deep to answer this question?
3. **V:** Does the question ask about a vocabulary word in the essay?
4. ***:** Is this a question worth asking? If not, could you revise it to make it worth asking?

Y/N	D	V	*	Questions and Tasks
N	--	--	--	What broadcast had Eleanor Roosevelt listened to?
Y	D	--	*	What had Roosevelt forgotten? What had she almost forgotten? Why do you think she started her remarks in this way?
Y	D	V	*	A cudgel is a weapon, basically a club. In paragraph two, what contradiction does Roosevelt introduce in the sentence about cudgels and finish in the sentence after it?
Y	--	--	--	What does “that,” which begins the fourth sentence in paragraph two, refer to? Explain.
Y	D		*	What has to happen to make sure the long line of courageous people who fought for civil liberties continues in the future? Where did Roosevelt talk about this?
Y	--	--	*	According to Roosevelt, what does it mean to “take the law into your own hands”? Why is it so important to preserving democracy that people <i>not</i> take the law into their own hands?
N	--	--	--	Why was Roosevelt an important voice on this issue of civil liberties and justice?
Initially N but Y with revision in italics.				<i>According to Roosevelt, how are the youth of the nation going to make the United States “an even more truly democratic nation”?</i>

The enduring understanding or essential idea of the article: *The enduring understanding should revolve around the importance of upholding the principles of democracy as a way of honoring the courageous people before us who fought for the preservation of civil liberties and as a vehicle for bringing about more action and change.*