

## Review of TCI HS Gov Unit 1

Headings from text indicated in **blue**

Quotes from text indicated in **red**

### **Power, Authority, and Government Unit 1**

**Compelling Question:** Explore the relationship between power, politics, and government and examine different forms of government.

This is so very loosely written that it could mean anything, hence it meets the goal. It leaves many, many essential discussions out of the conversation.

#### **Unit Opener Video**

Why does the video focus on FreedomHouse.org and use them as a source? Why should an organization set and take precedent in a curriculum? As the FreedomHouse website changes, how will this curriculum manage the changes, or will this curriculum become archaic and useless before there is a budget for a new program?

In reference to Freedomhouse.org: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/freedom-house-left-progressive-bias-2018-report-united-states-great-britain-israel-denmark-poland/> "In assessing the state of democracy in free nations, it favors the Left." Let's have an even handed approach, please.

In addition, the topic challenges democracies around the world by stating what is wrong with many. Very fair, but, after seeing a major the focus on China in the other parts of the TCI curriculum, I noticed that they don't also mention the atrocities going on in China, such as the enslavement of the Uighurs, selling of body parts from live Uighurs, lockdowns of millions of Chinese to the point that, even with the Chinese digital prison, millions are in the streets protesting. Let's be even handed, please.

### **Lesson 1 – The Nature of Power, Politics, and Government**

“The United States of America was born in an explosion of rebellion against **authority**.” The United States was born as a recognition of Natural

Rights and the fact that the King of England was a tyrant. Rather than being “an explosion of rebellion of authority “, the Founders were wise, measured, and insightful.

“The Declaration of Independence, defending that rebellion, spit forth a list of all the British monarchy’s crimes against the American colonies.” This passage follows Wilson’s progressive declaration to “pay no attention to the preamble.” That approach IGNORES the most important development in political history: the acceptance of NATURAL RIGHTS, given by Nature’s God and the concept of Consent of the Governed, which is the foundation of our Republic.

“Conspiracy theories about government involvement in the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. continue to generate books and magazine articles even today.” While true, the recent revelations that the CIA was involved in the Kennedy Assassination gives lie to the concept that it was a conspiracy theory.

“Is this attitude that politicians and government in general cannot be trusted justified?” is a good question to ask.

The four questions in the Notes about how the student sees power and feels about power in their own life are so general that they are devoid of meaning. Why not include more in-depth questions such as when is power over someone justified? When is power over someone misused? Etc.

## **Section 1 – The Power to Rule**

“Sometimes it stems from tradition. For example, parents have authority over their children, while religious leaders have authority over their congregations.” Stipulating that parental power stems from tradition is as wrong as it is obnoxious. Parental power stems from the eternal fact that parents are the most likely people to be committed to the well being of their offspring. Calling it “tradition” is a manipulation and is demeaning to the family unit. That attitude

attacks one of the very aspects that has made the U.S. the most successful countries in history. The point that religious leaders have authority over their congregations is similarly misleading. It is not tradition, but consent of the congregation. They can always leave.

### **What Gives a Ruler Legitimacy?**

Why is there more info given on Wu than on political theorists that affected the development of the US system? This is about AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, not World Government.

“... the legitimacy of a government stems from an unwritten contract between the ruler and the ruled.” An unwritten contract can ALWAYS be changed to support any tyrant. Unlike other countries of the time, the U.S. Constitution is written so as to NOT be at the whims of tyrants, protecting the people. This is only one aspect of the Founder’s genius.

### **Notes Section:**

Does an instructor correct these entries or is it simply completed or not completed? A student could go far afield if the answers are not reviewed, and feedback given to the student.

Also, the use of a drawing to represent each term undermines the quality and level of the coursework. This is high school, not kindergarten and this will NOT prepare students for the real world. As a teacher credentialed and having taught both Art and Science, I do appreciate the power of images. Nevertheless, make this age appropriate and have them use words, unless the design is to make it simple for the teacher to say nothing about the student’s work. Don’t dumb it down. People, especially students, live up OR DOWN to expectations.

## **Section 2- The Foundations of Government**

Glad to see the Mayflower Compact included. It would have been a good idea to include the fact that, under the original agreement with their sponsors, they were to have all received the same rewards for their work, regardless of their contributions. The young men did more and wanted more. The colony starved and nearly perished because they were communal. When that was rectified and each were rewarded

according to their input, the colony became a thriving endeavor. You might also include the fact that the Indians had abandoned the area years prior, so the colonists in Plymouth did not take anyone's land, contrary to popular misinformation.

Nice description of the purposes of government and of public/ private goods.

Why the picture of the Great Wall of China (as well as continual reference to Wu)? Save this for WORLD history, not American History. Is this a subliminal bow to Chinese planned, stated, and published World Domination?

### **The Building Blocks of Government: Coercion and Revenue Collection**

This is only true of a tyrannical government. There are also methods that don't involve coercion, such as training good citizens and citizen responsibility. Yes, laws and enforcement are essential, but coercion is NOT the only way. Are you trying to build a hatred of our government and a predilection towards overthrow?

"China received tribute from peoples on its borders. China also levied taxes on its citizens. Through taxation, the Qin dynasty acquired the resources it needed to build one of history's early public goods." "...most governments, like that of China, were headed by a single, powerful ruler." Again: why the emphasis on China in an American history class? China's wall was not built only through taxation, but through coercion and enslavement.

### **Aristotle's Classification of Governments**

Yes, the historic context is interesting, but political science has moved on. What about other forms? Monarchy ruled by "one", Oligarchy ruled by a few, Democracy ruled by many, Republic ruled by Law, and Anarchy ruled by no one.

Much more useful approach is explained in the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VogzExP3qhl>

### **Section 3 - Politics and Political Activity**

This is a reasonable section. Again, as in the previous sections, the "Notes" don't reinforce much learning or encourage much thought.

## Section 4 - Political Games People Play

Interesting that the authors chose to spend so much time on Machiavelli. Not a bad choice, but uncharacteristically detailed. Is this designed to encourage the thought that government is all evil?

This curriculum certainly encourages students to become politically active, but they haven't been given enough information previously to be able to apply it with wisdom. That amounts to propaganda rather and can result in movements such as the communist BLM, the fascist Antifa, and others.

### Lesson Summary

**"Power** The term power is often defined as the ability to make people act in ways they might not otherwise choose to act. The power to influence others comes from many sources, from formal authority to coercion. Historically, rulers have used power for both good and ill." NOWHERE in this lesson has the genius of our Founders been presented: Power in the United States comes from Consent of the Governed. That means that the Power belongs to and comes from the People of these United States. This omission is a HUGE, ENORMOUS, and INSURMOUNTABLE error! If this is representative of the program, it should be scrapped. Perhaps it will likely be covered elsewhere, but it is FUNDAMENTAL and needs to at least be referenced here.

**"Government** Groups of people organize government to maintain order and provide public goods, such as roads and national defense. To fulfill these functions, governments must have the means to coerce the population and to extract revenue from it." This is a misleading description of government and biased to present a negative impression of government by coercion. Government, according to the United States Founding Documents, is for the benefit of the People. Yes, Human Nature sucks, but our government was designed with checks and balances. They don't always work, but they are essential to understanding our Country. This does NOT do justice to the young minds that are supposed to be influenced by education.

**“Politics”** While not as ghastly as the other two, it has truth.

### **Lesson Game: Universal Knowledge**

Poorly designed. Several do not even offer the correct answer.

## **Lesson 2- Comparing Forms of Government**

### **Introduction**

The introduction to this section does not even mention a Republic. There is a HUGE difference between a Democracy (often leading to mob rule) and a Republic (Rule of Law). It also does not mention Oligarchy as a form of government.

Good move to include the definitions of Market Economy and Traditional Economy.

### **Section 1- The Origins and Evolution of Government**

Cartoon: “This cartoon pokes fun at the belief held by most people living in a democracy that their form of government is superior to all other forms.” Very questionable assumption and, to a young mind, is leading and can be seen as propaganda.

Nice to see the Roman Republic mentioned.

### **The Age of Revolutions: Democracies and Dictatorships**

“The American Revolution led to the creation of the first modern **constitutional democracy** [constitutional democracy: a democratic government based on a written constitution] —a democratic government based on a written constitution.” NO, NO, NO!!! The U.S. is a **Constitutional Republic** and this curriculum FLUNKS right there. What a disservice to our youth and future voters.



The American and French revolutions rejected monarchy in favor of democracy. In both revolutions, a military hero played a large role in the formation of a new regime. In the United States, George Washington helped forge a constitutional democracy that still endures. In France, Napoleon Bonaparte established a short-lived dictatorship. Washington died a hero while Napoleon died in disgrace. After his fall from power, Napoleon reportedly lamented, "They wanted me to be another Washington."

The above text compares Washington and Napoleon, saying that they were both military leaders. It never mentions the essential fact that Napoleon declared himself Emperor, while Washington declined the offer to become King because he recognized that leadership in a Republic MUST be elected and changed periodically. Comparing the two in this way is inaccurate and prejudicial, missing the most important point of a comparison between the two.

## **Section 2 - Forms of Government in Today's World**

"As Aristotle observed more than 2,000 years ago, these governments fall into three broad groups: rule by the one (monarchies and dictatorships), rule by the few (theocracies and single-party states), and rule by the many (parliamentary and presidential democracies)." While this is not the most current delineation, it does convey the idea, but what in the world is a "presidential democracy?" There are many dictatorships whose "leader for life" is called President and the crooked elections are called "democratic". Is the author deliberately trying to confuse our students? We are a Democratic Republic.

In addition, this section, dedicated to Forms of Government in Today's World commits a grievous error of omissions by not even mentioning Oligarchy. This is arguable the most common form of government in today's world.

One might even argue that the United States is or is becoming an oligarchy. Our children must be prepared for today's world.

An important omission is Majority Tyranny which is the result of Direct Democracy. Our Founders wrote the Constitution and structured our government to avoid that very issue. That is an essential point in understanding the significance of the Electoral College, presented later in the curriculum.

"The United States, Indonesia, and most countries in Latin America are **presidential democracies**. Voters in these countries choose a president to lead the government as the head of the executive branch." Incorrect. As previously stated, we are NOT a presidential democracy.

Per <https://constitutionus.com/democracy/all-you-need-to-know-about-presidential-democracy/> regarding a presidential democracy: "In a presidential system, it's common for the president to be the leader of their political party. Thus, the president controls what laws get passed within the country and which don't. Because they control both branches of government (the executive and legislative), there is no separation between these two powers." That is not the U.S. system. Although a President may veto a bill, the congress has the ability to override a veto, thus providing a check and balance. There is absolutely a separation between the executive and legislative branches of the US government. This is misinformation that TCI conveys to students.

Further, this completely ignores the Electoral College. This is a means by which every state, even those that have small populations, has a voice in the election of our President. If the



popular vote were used, small states would be ruled by the highly populated areas and the needs of the small states would be overrun. This sounds to me like an education that is setting up our students to have such limited information that they will easily fall prey to the whims of the Machiavellian forces in politics. Government BY the People requires education OF the People! This does NOT accomplish that goal. Although it is discussed later in the Curriculum, at least a mention of the Electoral College is in order.

### **Section 3 - The Distribution of Power in Governments Today**

Unusual terminology, but not a bad section. It is important that students learn common terminology in order to communicate with other citizens on civic matters. Without a common language, conversations cannot be productive and will result in deep divides.

### **Section 4 - Economic Systems Around the World**

#### **Market Economies: Decision Making by Individuals**

“Another disadvantage of a market economy is its unequal distribution of wealth. The market divides wealth among people according to how society values what they do. For example, a CEO of a successful company earns more than a regular employee. This may seem unfair, but society may value the CEO’s contribution more than that of the employee.” While this section is not bad overall, the above quote from the curriculum is, at least, very misleading and at worst, a definite piece of propaganda. Is that a disadvantage or advantage, as it does encourage people to make decisions that support their individual values. Unequal distribution according to whose standards? By allowing every person to work for what they want, we have the most freedom. Do you choose to not work?

Then you don't have as much money or goods. Your decision. Do you choose to work in a poorly paid profession? That is your decision, and you are free to change your career whenever you like. If you choose to work hard, then you have the freedom to take vacations, go out to diner, and **MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICES** as to how to run your life. No one has the right to take what another person has earned. People are not paid "according to how **society** values what they do." They are paid according to how the **market** values what they do" and **we are all part of that market.**

That last paragraph leads an untrained mind to believe that, if someone has more than you, it's OK to demand that they give it up to you. That's wrong. A curriculum that directs a student to that conclusion, rather than educating and challenging a student to draw their own conclusions, is propaganda.

Of course, there is the entire question of Social Welfare programs, which rob hard workers of their earned benefits. We must, however, as a moral people, help those who actually need it. By giving that responsibility to the Federal Government, we invite misuse. A discussion of those issues would be important here since the curriculum has introduced the concept of wealth distribution..

### **Command Economies: Decision Making by Government Planners**

"In practice, however, the performance of command economies has been disappointing". Not disappointing, disastrous. This section is OK, but not strong enough. It doesn't mention the millions of people who have died from the tyranny of command economies.

### **Mixed Economies: Shared Decision Making**

"However, the Communist Party has remained in overall control of the economy. As Deng Xiaoping, the leader of this change, explained, "Planning and market forces are both ways of controlling economic activity." AND they are both ways of LIMITING freedom and controlling the populations! The Chinese Communists are the biggest threat to freedom (and also

enslave many of their people) to exist in modern times. This text is giving them a complete pass and is NOT acceptable.

Students MUST be made aware of the inherent danger in the Chinese approach. This text does nothing of the sort. It soft peddles the tyranny of China, making it sound appealing. The question needs to be asked: Is this written by a Chinese operative?

## **Lesson Summary**

Innocuous but continues to say "presidential democracy" which is just propaganda.

### **EXPLORE: Ancient Greece and Rome and Their Influence on Modern Western Civilization**

Interesting that they included gender roles in their history. It seems like an artificial insertion.

### **EXPLORE: The Rise and Fall of Communism**

**SO... why didn't they mention how many people have been killed by Communism?** According to Reason, a left of center source, "communism was the leading ideological cause of death between 1900 and 2000. The 94 million that perished in China, the Soviet Union, North Korea, Afghanistan, and Eastern Europe easily (and tragically) trump the 28 million that died under fascist regimes during the same period." <https://reason.com/2013/03/13/communism-killed-94m-in-20th-century/>