

Civics: A Christian Worldview. Law, Perversion, or Neither?

(TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY)

Purpose

Students will apply Bastiat's definitions of law, lawful defense, and the "perversion of the law" by classifying real-world scenarios.

Time

10–15 minutes

Materials

- Page 2 scenario list (students)
- Optional: 3 sticky notes or headings on the board: "Proper Law (Lawful Defense) / Perversion (Legal Plunder) / Neutral (Not Law's Job)"

How to Run It (Teacher Instructions)

1. Pair students. Give each pair Page 2 (the scenario list).
2. Explain the three categories (write them on the board):
 - (A) Proper Law (Lawful Defense): law protects life, liberty, and property.
 - (B) Perversion of Law: law is used to violate or transfer life, liberty, or property (legal plunder).
 - (C) Neutral/Not Law's Job: a scenario that is not primarily about law using force, or is personal choice / private action.
3. Give students **10 minutes** to label each scenario A, B, or C. Require a 1-sentence justification for at least 4 scenarios using Bastiat's terms (life, liberty, property, self-defense, plunder).
4. Review answers: Call on a few pairs to defend one "hard" scenario.
5. Wrap-up question (1 minute): "*What is the true purpose of law, according to Bastiat?*"

Answer Key

Suggested classifications (answers may vary slightly depending on student reasoning):

1. A
2. A
3. B (stealing, but done via the force of law, so *legal* plunder)
4. A
5. B (stealing other companies' opportunity to sell goods, so *legal* plunder)
6. C
7. A
8. B (theft by taking money forcefully from individuals via the law, so *legal* plunder)
9. C
10. B (theft by forcing individuals to pay, so *legal* plunder)
11. C
12. A

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Directions: With your partner,
read each scenario and label it:

A = Proper Law (Lawful Defense)

B = Perversion of the Law (Legal Plunder)

C = Neutral/Not the Law's Job

Write your letter (A/B/C) next to each number.

Be ready to explain your reasoning for at least four items.

1. Police stop a robbery in progress and return stolen property to the victim.
2. A court punishes a person for fraud (lying to take someone else's money).
3. A new law takes money from one group of citizens to give direct cash payments to another group.
4. Government enforces contracts so that people receive what they freely agreed to in a deal.
5. A law gives one company exclusive rights to sell a product, so competitors are forced out.
6. A student chooses to donate part of his paycheck to help a classmate buy lunch.
7. Government prosecutes assault and protects citizens from physical harm.
8. A law requires citizens to buy a product from a specific business "for the public good."
9. A private charity raises money voluntarily to build homes after a storm.
10. A law limits peaceful people from working in a job unless they pay a large fee to a board of existing workers.
11. A family decides to share their food with a neighbor who lost a job.
12. Government prevents theft by punishing burglary and protecting homes and property.

