

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Constitution Translator (15–20 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Students experience how bias changes “interpretation” of written rules by rewriting common rules and competing for points awarded by voters.

Instructions

1. Students work in pairs.
2. Give students 8-10 minutes to read the statements and come up with and write down a twisted “interpretation” that benefits them for each one.
3. Go around the room and ask each team for its answer for the first statement, and students vote for which statement they like the best. Ask for votes on (a) the funniest “reinterpretation” and (b) the most convincing interpretation.
4. The team with the most points wins. (You might award bonus points for the team that wins!)

Wrap-up/Debrief

Ask students these questions (or other ones you think of!):

- Why do written rules sometimes become controversial?
- Does personal bias affect interpretation?
- What is it about human nature that leads to “interpreting” things to benefit ourselves?
- Can governments be trusted to limit themselves?

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“Interpret” each one of the following rule statements in a way that revises it to where it’s no longer very effective, undoes its intent, or benefits you in some way. Feel free to have fun with these, use humor, and be sneaky!

STATEMENT 1

“There is no food allowed in class.”

STATEMENT 2

“Homework is due on Friday.”

STATEMENT 3

“Running is not allowed in the halls.”

STATEMENT 4 (from the U.S. Constitution)

“The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”

