

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Washington's Warning (15–20 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Students experience how difficult it is to make wise decisions when important viewpoints are hidden.

Instructions

1. Divide students into pairs or groups of 3–4.
2. Read the instructions together.
3. Have students discuss the handout (give groups 8–10 minutes to complete this part).
4. Review the answers as a class.

Debrief/Wrap-Up Questions

1. Was your Round 1 decision based on complete information?
2. How confident were you in Round 1 compared with Round 2?
3. Did hearing opposing information automatically prove the medicine was bad?
4. Did hearing opposing information help you make a more informed decision?
5. What might happen if people in society only heard the information on the front page?
6. Which situation is more dangerous: hearing too many viewpoints or hearing only one viewpoint?
7. How does this connect to Washington's warning that people may be led "like sheep to the slaughter" if freedom of speech is taken away?

DO NOT TURN OVER THIS PAGE YET!

You are members of a decision-making council. Your job is to make the best possible decision using the information given.

Scenario: The New Medicine

A dangerous illness is spreading through your town. A pharmaceutical company has created a new medicine. The town council must decide whether to encourage everyone to take it.

Information on the Medicine:

- It reduced symptoms in many patients.
- It appears to shorten recovery time.
- It has been praised by several doctors.
- It could help prevent the illness from spreading.

As a group, answer these:

Should the town strongly encourage everyone to take the medicine? Why?



INFORMATION UPDATE:

Now the council receives information that was previously withheld.

Here is more information on the medicine mentioned previously:

- It was tested on a relatively small number of people.
- It caused significant side effects in some patients.
- It has not been studied for long-term effects.
- Several doctors disagree about how effective it really is.

As a group, answer again:

1. Should the town strongly encourage everyone to take the medicine? Why or why not?
2. Should there be limits, warnings, or additional research?
3. Did your decision change? Why?