

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.

Tariff Spin Doctors (20–25 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Students create an advertising campaign to demonstrate how politicians promote tariffs by emphasizing benefits to producers while minimizing or ignoring increased costs to consumers.

Instructions

1. Put students in pairs/small groups, and let them work for 12–15 minutes.
2. Have pairs/groups present their slogans and commercials; volunteers may speak for their groups or all students may give input.

Debrief/Wrap-Up Questions

- Why are orange growers likely to support the tariff?
- Why are the benefits of a tariff often easier to see than the costs?
- How might a politician gain votes from a policy even if many people pay more because of it?

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Background: Governor Clementine Peel is worried about orange growers in her state. Cheaper oranges from other countries are being sold in stores, making it harder for local orange growers to compete. To help the growers, Governor Peel supports a tariff on imported oranges. The tariff will likely:

- Help orange growers sell more oranges
- Help some workers employed by orange growers
- Raise the price of oranges and orange juice
- Cost families more money when they shop
- Cost restaurants, grocery stores, and juice companies more money

Governor Peel wants voters to support the tariff anyway. Your advertising agency has been hired to help. Your mission is to work with a partner or small group to complete these tasks:

PART 1: TARIFF SLOGAN:

Write a campaign slogan of 10 words or fewer that makes the tariff sound beneficial.

PART 2: 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL SCRIPT

Write a brief television commercial in which Governor Peel explains why the tariff is a good idea for everyone.

Requirements for the Commercial:

1. Mention local orange growers.
2. Claim the tariff benefits the state.
3. Explain why higher orange or orange juice prices are not a problem.
4. Avoid directly discussing the costs to consumers.
5. Make the tariff sound positive and necessary.

Your commercial should sound persuasive, like a real political advertisement! You can also use humor to make your point, of course.

Groups will present their slogans and commercials to the class when time is up! (Use this page and the back of this page to jot down ideas, or use your own note paper.)

