Defining Civic Virtue (p. v)

1. Answers will vary. Some students may say that when they encounter the term “civic virtue,” they assume it refers to religious morality, or some sort of general morality. Others may be more specific, saying that it refers to personal conduct that affects society in a positive way.


3. Sample responses: Because human beings are imperfect, no one person should have too much power—hence, separation of powers. Because no one group should have too much power—limited government.

Clarifying Civic Virtue (p. x)

1. Students’ responses should expand on their previous answers and incorporate historical and philosophical context, perhaps including Aristotle and indicating that it may include, but does not require, religious belief. Some students should also note that it involves a balance between extremes, action rather than just ideals, regular habits, and must be related to just purposes.

2. If student response did change, response should be a reasoned explanation of what points in the reading contributed to this change. If the student response did not change, response should provide a reasoned explanation for why, based on the text, it did not.

3. Student responses should have expanded beyond their first response and make a direct connection between the U.S. constitution and a constitutional republic, as well as to the ideas about human nature and the constitutional republic as addressed in the reading.

Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue (p. xi)

Student responses will vary; accept answers that make a reasonable connection among the civic virtue, the person or character, and the justification based on the definition.

Benjamin Franklin and Civic Virtue - Questions to Consider (p. xix)

1. Franklin understood virtue to be habits or traits that would reflect good conduct (“rectitude of conduct”) and bring a person closer to moral perfection. He refined his understanding as he concluded that moral perfection was not possible, but that the ambition and attempt toward it made him a better and a happier person.

2. Franklin ordered the virtues because he thought that working on all of them at the same time would be distracting and that focusing on one at a time would be a more effective way to work on them. He put them in an order so that virtues he acquired earlier might help him to develop others that were later on his list.

3. “Contrary Habits” or “Inclination” led him to keep slipping into habits that were not virtuous.

4. Given how frequently Franklin refers “habit” as a part of his attempt to become more “morally
perfect,” and the system he devised in order to increase his practice of virtues, he appears to have agreed with Aristotle that virtue was, indeed, a habit.

5. Franklin intended to master one virtue at a time, focusing on each one for a week and marking in his book the number of times he failed at that virtue. His goal was to keep each week clear of marks indicating when he had failed.

6. Franklin has difficulty living as virtuously as was his goal. He had difficulty keeping his weekly lines “marked clear of spots.” He did, however, see his faults diminish. Moral perfection: Student responses will vary, but should be reasonable and related to the student’s overall beliefs and understandings. Challenge students to identify the bases of their motivations to act virtuously.

7. Franklin’s words are based on assumptions that right and wrong are universal and absolute, even while moral perfection may not be humanly impossible.

8. Franklin did not accomplish his initial goal of moral perfection because he never did rid himself of the faults he sought to eliminate because he found himself “so much fuller of Faults” than he had imagined.

9. He did eventually begin to see his faults diminish, and he did become a happier person than he would have been if he had not made the attempt, and he believes he was made better for having tried.

10. Student responses will vary, but should be based on the text.

11. Similarities students may find are:
   - Contribution – Industry.
   - Integrity – Sincerity.
   - Perseverance – Industry.
   - Respect – Chastity.

Students may find several differences, including that some of Franklin’s virtues may not seem to correlate to those in the “Identifying and Defining Civic Virtue” list. Students may also identify differences in the definition of virtues that may otherwise seem similar.


Tanks in the Square (p. 3)

1. Students may be somewhat familiar with this scene, including the fact that it is often referred to as “Tank Man” and that it took place in China. Some may know the decade or year it took place. Some may also know something about the political context and its place in history. Use responses to inform instruction.

2. Student responses will vary. Use responses to inform instruction throughout the rest of the activity. Provide answers, to students’ additional questions, or provide a means for them to research them in class.

3. Accept reasoned responses that are based on what can be observed in the photograph. Students should spot the man standing in front of the tank.

4. Students should identify the man standing in front of the tank on the left side of the photo. In the context of the size of the Square, and the size and number of the tanks, he appears quite small—and could almost be missed by someone not looking closely.

Students may say that he is making a statement about his determination in his protest, about his lack of fear of the tanks and troops, or of his willingness to sacrifice for what he is demanding.
5. Franklin did appear to see a difference between being humble and appearing humble. In applying the question to themselves, accept reasoned responses and follow up with questions that encourage further, honest self-examination.

6. Franklin saw social benefits in appearing humble. His conversations with people became more pleasant, and people were less apt to contradict him.

Student responses to the additional questions will vary. Encourage a transfer of understandings beyond Franklin and to themselves and their own actions.

Frederick Douglass and Responsibility: Discussion Guide (p. 25)

1. Historically, enslaved were prevented from learning to read because literacy was the domain of free people, and because of a concern that if slaves were exposed to the ideas of philosophy and politics, they could revolt.

2. When Douglass was eight years old, his master's wife began to teach him the alphabet and basic reading skills.

3. Douglass found time to spend with peers who helped him by showing him how to read in exchange for his bread. He also challenged boys to writing contests, and when the other boys wrote letters he didn't know, even though he lost, it was his way of learning more letters.

4. Students may reason that Douglass's actions were virtuous because they were done in the pursuit of justice. Others may say that breaking the law is never virtuous. Some may note that the law he was breaking was unjust, thus making his act virtuous. Some may also refer to the statement “Virtue requires a just end,” from the What is Virtue? handout in the Virtue Teaching Tool chapter.

Frederick Douglass and Responsibility: Discussion Guide (p. 25)

5. Responses will vary; accept reasoned responses that address his key points.

6. Accept reasoned answers that are based on the texts.

7. Accept reasoned answers that address Shaw's quotation.

8. Student responses may vary, but should include references to other texts that they have studied, and to an appropriate understanding of the Constitution and republic.

9. Students should state a connection between freedom and responsibility. They may, in addition, note principles such as checks and balances, separation of powers, and limited government, and note a relationship between human nature and those checks on power that are intended to curb lack of virtue.

10. Some students may mention part-time jobs, household chores, community service, or extracurricular responsibilities. (Ideally, someone will mention homework!) In five years, they may be responsible for increased work responsibility, college or graduate school studies, or volunteer responsibilities. Some students may also mention family responsibilities, car ownership, or having to provide for their own food and home.

11. Answers will vary; accept reasoned responses.

Jourdan Anderson and Justice: Discussion Guide (p. 32)

1. Responses will vary, but may include confident, honest, straightforward, just.

2. It was written in August 1865, in response to a letter he had received from his former master (Col. Anderson) asking him to come back to work for him as a paid servant. Students may identify a sarcastic or derisive tone and infer that he aimed to remind Col. Anderson of the injustice of his enslavement.
3. His former master’s attempt to kill a Union soldier; his master shot at Anderson twice; he heard that someone named Henry had also threatened to shoot him; his reference to not wanting his girls “brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters” implies a concern based on events that may have been common.

4. “Just,” or variations of it, occur repeatedly in the text, thus highlighting a theme of justice.

5. Anderson is indicating first, that he and his wife are entitled to something they never received from their former master; and second, he alludes to a higher form of justice. “Justice” in this instance may refer to more than simply “equally applied rules” but also to eventual judgment for his former master.

6. Anderson may be referring to an eventual, eternal form of judgment for people who owned slaves. This reinforces the theme of justice that flows through the entire letter.

7. Student responses may vary, but could include perseverance, responsibility, or contribution. Regarding the relationship between education and justice, accept reasoned answers that demonstrate an understanding of justice.

8. Student responses may vary; accept reasoned answers that demonstrate growth in a personal understanding of the ideas and definitions of justice, courage, and other civic virtues.

9. Anderson’s understanding of justice may have given strength and self-respect to his family, shame or anger to the recipient of the letter, and pride or satisfaction to the person who transcribed it for him.

10. Anderson’s stand for justice highlighted the universality and significance of inalienable rights, liberty, and equality in his society.

11. Accept reasoned responses that are based on the text.

12. V. Winters is the person who transcribed Anderson’s letter for him. (V. Winters is listed as a banker in Dayton, and Anderson named a child after him). Since Anderson likely was not taught, as a slave, to read and write, Mr. Winters appears to have been helping him in both reading the letter from his former master as well as in drafting a reply. Student responses will vary in regard to times they either helped another person in pursuit of justice or witnessed someone else help someone in such a way.

13. Students may answer that injustice may come from humans’ tendency toward greed, selfishness, power, or other vices. They may respond that humans’ desire for justice may come from a human sense of fairness, the worth of the individual, caring, community, or other virtuous ends.

14. Responses will vary. Encourage responses that are personal and specific, and in which students can engage immediately or very soon.

Alice Paul and Perseverance: Discussion Guide (p. 40)

1. Alice Paul was working toward the cause of gaining women the right to vote.

2. Students may infer that Paul had experienced, and survived, nasogastric feeding and that, while she found it unpleasant, she was willing to encounter it again for the sake of her cause.

3. The events reveal a great deal of determination and steadfastness on the part of Alice Paul.

4. Some students may believe that Paul should have deferred to, and trusted, the president. Others may believe that, based on her previous experiences, she had little reason to believe that voting rights for women would ever be given serious consideration without drastic measures and extreme persistence.