1. Note the definition of “contribution” as a civic virtue that follows the Contribution: Schechter Brothers narrative. Describe the various ways the Schechter brothers contributed to their communities.

2. With what crimes were they charged?

3. Describe your reaction to learning of the crimes with which they were charged. What does your instinctive response reveal about whether what happened to the Schechter brothers was right or wrong? How does this affect your ideas about whether an objective right and wrong exist?

4. How do contributions like those that the Schechter brothers made to their community, when multiplied by many citizens around the country, contribute to society in general?


6. Which of the following might constitute “unfair competition”? Explain.
   - Remaining open on Sundays when most other businesses are closed (because your religion’s Sabbath is on a different day).
   - Keeping labor costs down so your prices stay low as well—lower than those of your competitors.
   - Secretly agreeing with one of your competitors not to lower prices below a certain level.
   - Stealing from your distributors.
   - Bribing an employee at your rival’s soup company to give you his secret recipes.
   - Others?

7. One scholar notes that, at the time the Schechter brothers’ case was being heard in court, much of the coverage of the case was biased against them: “[c]overage of the case … was highly tinged with the standard anti-Semitism of the time, especially because the Schechters were … immigrants with their Eastern European cadences and traditional Jewish dress.” How does this information help you understand this historical event?

8. How do the Schechter brothers’ actions help you understand contribution as a civic virtue? Given the economic conditions of the time, how could many other individuals like the Schechter brothers contribute to the social fabric of the whole United States?

10. Explain how the level of freedom in a society relates to a person's ability to maximize his or her contribution to society.

11. Why might the U.S. Founders have believed that this virtue was essential in a constitutional republic?

12. Given the unprecedented crisis of the Great Depression, would it have been more or less virtuous for the Schechter brothers to set aside their personal religious beliefs in order to obey laws that were meant to improve economic conditions for all? Explain.

13. Take a stand: Whose contribution to society was greater during the Great Depression: the National Recovery Administration or individuals like the Schechter brothers? Whatever your response, be prepared to defend it based on historical facts.

14. Think about your own interests and talents. How do you use them to make a contribution to your family and community?