Handout A: Defining Tolerance and Liberty

Suggested definitions: Tolerance: sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from, or conflicting with, one’s own; recognizing and putting up with the beliefs or practices of others; Liberty: the quality or state of being free; the freedom or power to do as one pleases; freedom from unauthorized restraint.

The difference between Mason’s draft and Madison’s amendment reflects a shift from religious toleration (the assumption of the existence of an authority – the civil state and/or established church – that can either grant or revoke the “privilege” of exercising one’s religion), towards religious liberty (the understanding that religious belief is a natural and inalienable right beyond the reach of the civil state).

Handout B: Religion and America’s Past – Tolerance, Liberty, or Both?

Reasoned arguments can be made that many documents could be either. Documents most likely to be categorized as “toleration”: 2, 4, and 5; Documents most likely to be categorized as “liberty”: 1, 3, 6, 7, and 8.

Handout D: Document Guide

Vocabulary (provided definitions are specific to the context of each word’s use in Handout D)

1. broad; generous
2. freedom of moral intellect
3. freedoms; protections
4. extension; allowance
5. innate; permanent and inseparable
6. rights that belong to an individual by virtue of birth; not granted by a ruler/government
7. prejudice; irrational hatred based on preconceived notions or stereotypes
8. explicit or official approval; enforcement by means of law
9. to harass or punish; to cause undeserved suffering
10. to conduct oneself; behave
11. valid or binding, as an agreement
12. earn; deserve by virtue of character or conduct

Context Questions
1. George Washington
2. August, 1790
3. A reply to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, addressing the state of religious liberty under the new Constitution

Comprehension Questions
1. “The just administration of a good government”
2. “Liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship”
3. Suggested response: religious practice, and the exercise of it, is no longer dependent on the charity of others to allow it. Liberty of conscience is a birthright.
4. The government of the United States does not support, and will not legally or politically enforce/assist punishment of its law-abiding citizens based on religious or other forms of prejudice.
5. That citizens should conduct themselves in a law-abiding and civil manner and give to the government their active agreement and support.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Accept reasoned answers.
2. Accept reasoned answers.
3. Accept reasoned answers.
4. Accept reasoned answers.

Lesson Four

First Amendment Principles and Jefferson’s “Wall”

Essay: First Amendment Principles and Jefferson’s “Wall”

1. The phrase most famously comes from Thomas Jefferson’s letter to the Danbury Baptists.
2. Reynolds v. United States (1878)—the Court upheld a federal anti-bigamy statute; Everson v. Board of Education (1947)—the Court upheld a New Jersey law reimbursing parents of Catholic school students for the cost of transporting their children.
to school; *Engel v. Vitale* (1962)—the Court struck down New York’s authorization of a voluntary, non-denominational prayer.

3. Accept reasoned answers.

**Handout A: Thomas Jefferson’s Letter to the Danbury Baptists**

1. A person only owes an account of his religious beliefs to his god; no one should be made to suffer because of his or her religious beliefs; laws should have no power to punish a person unless s/he harm others.

2. Jefferson agrees with them.

3. Accept reasoned answers.

4. As President of the United States, Jefferson had no power over states or their religious establishments.

5. The valid powers of government can only be over actions people take, and not over what they think. Accept reasoned answers.

**Essay: Religious Liberty and the Supreme Court**

1. The First Amendment protects citizens’ right to be free from established religion, and to exercise their beliefs freely.

2. When the Supreme Court used the Fourteenth Amendment to apply the First Amendment’s Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses to the states, there were more numerous opportunities for constitutional conflicts.

3. Public schools may not impose religious beliefs or practices. Voluntary student religious groups have similar freedoms to non-religious groups as long as they are student-initiated and student-led.

4. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly may apply in cases where a student wishes to express his or her religious beliefs, distribute literature, religious texts, or other religious materials, wear religious clothing or symbols, meet with others in a club setting, and other situations.