OVERVIEW

The Founders believed citizens could best pursue happiness if government was limited to protecting the life, liberty, and property of individuals. They believed that people were naturally flawed, and government should be structured so that people’s natural self-interest would lead officials to check one another’s attempts to exercise more power than the Constitution allows. Unlike the Framers of the Constitution, Progressives believed that man’s nature can and should be bettered by enlightened rulers. Therefore, they believed, government should provide citizens with the environment and the means to improve themselves through government-sponsored programs and policies and economic redistribution. Concepts such as natural rights did not matter as much as improving social order. Therefore, the question for those in favor of Prohibition was not whether limiting the right to manufacture and sell alcohol infringed on anyone’s personal liberty, but whether a ban on alcohol would serve to improve the progress of mankind.
LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

• Examine quotations demonstrating the Founders’ view of the purpose of government.

• Examine quotations demonstrating the Progressives’ view of the purpose of government.

• Evaluate the differences between the Founders’ and Progressives’ views.

HOMEWORK

Have students find their own quotes from the Founding and Progressive eras to compare. They can quiz other students or share with the class to sort into a list.

ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

• Copy quotes from the Founders and quotes from progressives on different colored paper. Once students have paraphrased and understood all the quotations, have them place the cards on a timeline. Begin the timeline with the first quote, and extend it through the Prohibition era or beyond. Have students look for more modern quotations on the nature of freedom and the purpose of government to fill in the later years to today.

• Post a sign one side of the room that says “Founders” and on the other side one that says “Progressives.” Have students choose one card to paraphrase and analyze, and then stand closest to the sign they believe correctly describes the author of their quotation. Check answers and then debrief as a large group on the differences between the points of view in the quotations.

• Have students chose one card each to paraphrase and analyze. They should come to a decision individually as to whether the quotation comes from a Founder or a progressive. Then have students mingle with each other, sharing their quotations and taking on identities as “Founders” or “Progressives.” Founders should look for other Founders; progressives should look for other progressives. One all students have assembled into two large groups, check answers. Invite volunteers from each group to participate, one at a time, in a “fishbowl” discussion about their respective points of view. Allow several pairs the chance to discuss, and debrief as a large group.
A. Before class, copy several sets of the quote cards on the **Who Said It? Quote Sorting** handout.

B. Put students in small groups, and give each group a complete set of quotes. Students should read and discuss the quotations.

C. Have them paraphrase the ideas expressed on the lines below each quote. Clarify any questions as needed.

D. Students should analyze each quotation to determine what views it expresses. To help in their analysis, they could ask:
   - What does this quotation seem to assume about human nature?
   - How does this quotation define the purpose of government?
   - What does this quotation express about the powers government should have?
   - How does this quotation characterize the proper relationship between the citizen and government?

E. Have students sort the quotations into two stacks – one for Founders and one for Progressives.

F. As a class, read all the quotations aloud and have students share their answers. Discuss as needed to clarify understanding.

G. Ask students to summarize what they observe in these quotations about the differences between the Founders’ philosophy on citizens and government and the Progressives’ philosophy.

H. Have students place cards on a timeline or create another visual representation of the quotations and how they show change over time.

**VARIATION:** Depending on students’ reading level, break the set of quote cards into smaller groups and have students analyze a smaller number of the primary sources. Groups could then jigsaw and students could explain their quotations to their new group members.
1. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

2. “‘Personal liberty’ is at last an uncrowned, dethroned king, with no one to do him reverence. ...We are no longer frightened by that ancient bogy—‘paternalism in government.’ We affirm boldly, it is the business of government to be just that—paternal. ..Nothing human can be foreign to a true government.”

3. “Can the liberties of a nation be sure when we remove their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are a gift from God?”

4. “Better the occasional faults of a government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.”
5  “Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

6  “[N]atural liberty is a gift of the beneficent Creator, to the whole human race; and ... civil liberty is founded in that; and cannot be wrested from any people, without the most manifest violation of justice. Civil liberty is only natural liberty, modified and secured by the sanctions of civil society.”

7  “This is not a contest between persons. The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error.”

8  “In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.”
9 “As a man is said to have a right to his property, he may be equally said to have a property in his rights. Where an excess of power prevails, property of no sort is duly respected. No man is safe in his opinions, his person, his faculties, or his possessions.”

11 “Our country has deliberately undertaken a great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose.”

10 “For it is very clear that in fundamental theory socialism and democracy are almost if not quite one and the same. They both rest at bottom upon the absolute right of the community to determine its own destiny and that of its members. Men as communities are supreme over men as individuals.”

12 “The doctrine of ‘personal liberty’ as applied to the use of liquor has been over-worked by the liquor men. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as an absolute individual right to do any particular thing, or to eat or drink any particular thing, or to enjoy the association of one’s own family, or even to live, if that thing is in conflict with ‘the law of public necessity.’”
1. **Founder** – The Declaration of Independence, 1776
3. **Founder** – Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 1785
4. **Progressive** – Franklin D. Roosevelt, Speech to the Democratic National Convention, 1936
5. **Founder** - Patrick Henry, Speech to the Second Virginia Convention, 1775
8. **Founder** - Thomas Jefferson, Resolutions Relative to the Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798
11. **Progressive** – Herbert Hoover, Letter on the Passage of the 18th Amendment to an Idaho Senator, 1928
12. **Progressive** – Charles Stelze, *Why Prohibition!*, 1918