UNIT 1 — What Were the Founders' Basic Ideas about Government?

1. What impact did the Roman Republic have on the way in which the Founders structured state and national governments?

- How did the founders most differ from ideas articulated in republican government?

- What role, if any, should classical stories and examples play in contemporary ideas about government and citizenship?

2. To natural rights philosophers like John Locke, why was it necessary to have a government?

- What did Locke think people were like in a state of nature? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment? Why?

- Do you think government might have other purposes that Locke did not mention? Explain.

- What are the implications of the *purpose* of government for the *structure and limits* of government?

UNIT 2 — What Shaped the Founders' Thinking about Government?

1. To what degree did the Framers rely on history and precedent in their thinking about government?

- What eras, places, or nations in history did the Founders rely on most, and how did that influence their thinking?

- To what extent should history and tradition continue to influence how we view the Constitution?

2. How did concerns about the safety and security of the nation under the Articles of Confederation motivate the Framers to create the U.S. Constitution?

- How did the Constitution address the need to protect national security?

- Has the national government effectively guaranteed peace and security?

UNIT 3   What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?

1. Why did the delegates at the Philadelphia Convention decide on the electoral college as the mode of selection for the executive branch?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the electoral college?

- Is the electoral college still an appropriate method for selecting the president? Why or why not?

2. What was the Great Compromise, and what contentious issues did it solve?

- What important principles were at stake in the debate about the Great Compromise?

- Why did James Madison, James Wilson, and several other delegates oppose the Great Compromise?

UNIT 4   How Was the Constitution Used to Establish Our Government?

1. What role did the question of federalism play in the debates about whether or not to ratify the Constitution?

- How have changes in the Constitution altered the concept of federalism over time?

- Is the concept of federalism more valuable or less valuable now than it was in 1789, or is it equal in value? Explain your position.

2. The Constitution leaves a lot of aspects of government undefined. Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

- What is the most important way Congress has changed the way our government works?

- Has the Supreme Court been too aggressive in checking congressional action?

| UNIT 5 | How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights? |

1. How does the Constitution protect the right to vote directly or indirectly?

- What has been the most significant change throughout American history to the right to vote?

- What part of the American governing system is most effective at protecting the right to vote?

- To what degree is the right to vote properly protected today?

2. Do students and teachers encounter constraints on their First Amendment rights when schools decide to regulate access to certain materials or online content?

- Who should determine whether to ban certain books or restrict access to them?

- What criteria should they use to assess student access to books and online materials?

UNIT 6 — What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?

1. "Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."* What did the late John Lewis mean by "good trouble?"

- What are some examples of "good trouble" in history?

- Can breaking the law ever be an act of good citizenship? Why or why not?

* John Lewis, speech, Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama, March 1, 2020.

2. An English historian once said, "The powers of technology appear to be unlimited. If some of the dangers may be great, the potential rewards are greater still."* Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

- How might the Internet encourage or discourage the achievement of democratic principles and values?

- What actions, if any, do you think citizens, Congress, or your state legislature should take to limit the tools of modern technology, such as social media?

* D.S.L. Cardwell, *Dictionary of the History of Ideas, vol. 4, Technology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 364, quoted in *Practically Speaking: A Dictionary of Quotations on Engineering, Technology and Architecture*, ed. Carl C. Gaither and Alma E. Cavados-Gaither (Bristol, UK: Institute of Physics Publishing, 1999), 364.