

LESSON 14

Domestic Policy

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

Pay very close attention when watching the video program. Review the video objectives and be prepared to record possible answers, in abbreviated form, as you view the video. The titles and numbers of the textbook chapters may differ from the video program. Keep in mind that the video program examines contemporary examples to illustrate your government in action. An attempt is made to show how you can participate in the political arena and bring about changes in the political process.

Video:

“Domestic Policy,” from the series, *Voices in Democracy: United States Government*.

Activities:

One or more activities may be assigned to this lesson. Refer to your syllabus.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, we will focus on U.S. domestic policy, including economic policy and general welfare issues. The U.S. system and its economic policies are placed within the context of economic theories. Fiscal and monetary policies are distinguished and are illustrated with examples of U.S. policy. U.S. spending policies are analyzed, particularly trends in deficit spending and the national debt. U.S. trade policy is discussed by identifying the key components of trade policy and by tracing the development of U.S. trade agreements. The area of domestic policy that deals with general welfare issues include government regulation of business and labor and consumer protection. This lesson traces the development and evaluates the effectiveness of: 1) key social insurance programs such as Social Security, unemployment insurance, and Medicare and 2) key public assistance such as the former AFDC and Medicaid. Finally, the role of government in education and environmental policy is discussed. Ultimately this lesson should provide you with the information you would need to evaluate the appropriate role of government in this broad policy area and to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and their place in future U.S. policy.

LESSON GOAL

Explain the factors and influence that shape domestic policy and the policy’s impact on people in the United States.

VIDEO OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are designed to assist the viewer in identifying the most significant aspects of the video segment of this lesson. You should take succinct notes while viewing the video.

1. Explain some of the factors and influences that shape domestic policy and its impact on individuals in the United States, focusing on the Freedom to Farm Act of 1996.
2. Explain the pros and cons of U.S. labor policy and its effect on domestic policy.
3. Identify the potential conflicts between groups involved in shaping domestic policy.

WEB ACTIVITIES

These activities are not required unless your teacher assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

Visit the Project Vote Smart web page at <http://www.vote-smart.org/> and then click on “Candidate’s Issues and Much More.” Then click on the “Congress” link located on the left-hand side of the screen. This will take you to a map of the U.S.

Click on your state and then select one of your senators to research. Go through the “Voting Record” link to see their votes by issue area. Choose an issue area that deals with domestic politics that interests you. For example, you might choose welfare, Social Security, abortion, budget, AIDS, education, health, family issues, environment, and so forth.

Review your senator’s votes and write a brief summary of the votes.

Look at each of the votes in this issue area and see if you can generalize about your senator’s support for/opposition to the issue.

Assess and explain whether his/her votes generally are supportive of conservative or liberal positions.

PRACTICE TEST

After watching the video and reviewing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. When you have completed the Practice Test, turn to the Answer Key to score your answers.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

Select the single best answer. If more than one answer is required, it will be so indicated.

1. After over 50 years of government quotas and controls, U.S. farmers themselves can decide what to grow, due to...
 - A. strong farmer union membership
 - B. reduction in the amount of farming regulations
 - C. a major overhaul in domestic farm policy
 - D. new farming techniques
2. The legislation moving U.S. agriculture from government dependence to a free-market approach is the 1996...
 - A. Farmers Relief Act
 - B. Farmers Free-Market Act
 - C. Freedom for Agriculture Act
 - D. Freedom to Farm Act
3. The nation's farm policy used to protect farmers through a program of government...
 - A. subsidies that fluctuated with market prices
 - B. subsidies that stabilized market prices
 - C. giveaways that caused increased market prices
 - D. giveaways that resulted in decreased market prices
4. Invoking a 70-year-old statute, the Railway Labor Act, President Clinton intervened because a strike threatened...
 - A. the railroad industry
 - B. interstate commerce
 - C. international trade
 - D. labor relations
5. The largest labor union in the United States is the...
 - A. Labor Negotiators Union
 - B. Union of Workers and Employers
 - C. NAACP
 - D. AFL-CIO
6. The U.S. fishing industry has lost a billion dollars and tens of thousands of jobs because of ____ by fishers from the United States and other countries...
 - A. catching of the breeding fish
 - B. destroying the natural habitats
 - C. over-harvesting
 - D. under-harvesting

ESSAY/PROBLEM QUESTIONS

7. Compare and contrast the provisions for farmers in New Deal policies and in the Freedom to Farm Act.
8. Explain the ramifications of an airline's threat to strike and the UPS strike on domestic policy.
9. What problems might arise between one group that wants to develop policy to safeguard and improve its means of making a living and another group that attempts to protect the environment? Also explain the conflicts which have arisen between fishers in Canada and the United States due to the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

ANSWER KEY

The following provides the answers and references for the practice test questions. Video objectives are referenced using the following abbreviation: V=Video Objectives.

1. C Ref: V 1 (Video)
2. D Ref: V 1 (Video)
3. A Ref: V 1 (Video)
4. B Ref: V 2 (Video)
5. D Ref: V 2 (Video)
6. C Ref: V 3 (Video)
7. Ref: V 1 (Video)
8. Ref: V 2 (Video)
9. Ref: V 3 (Video)