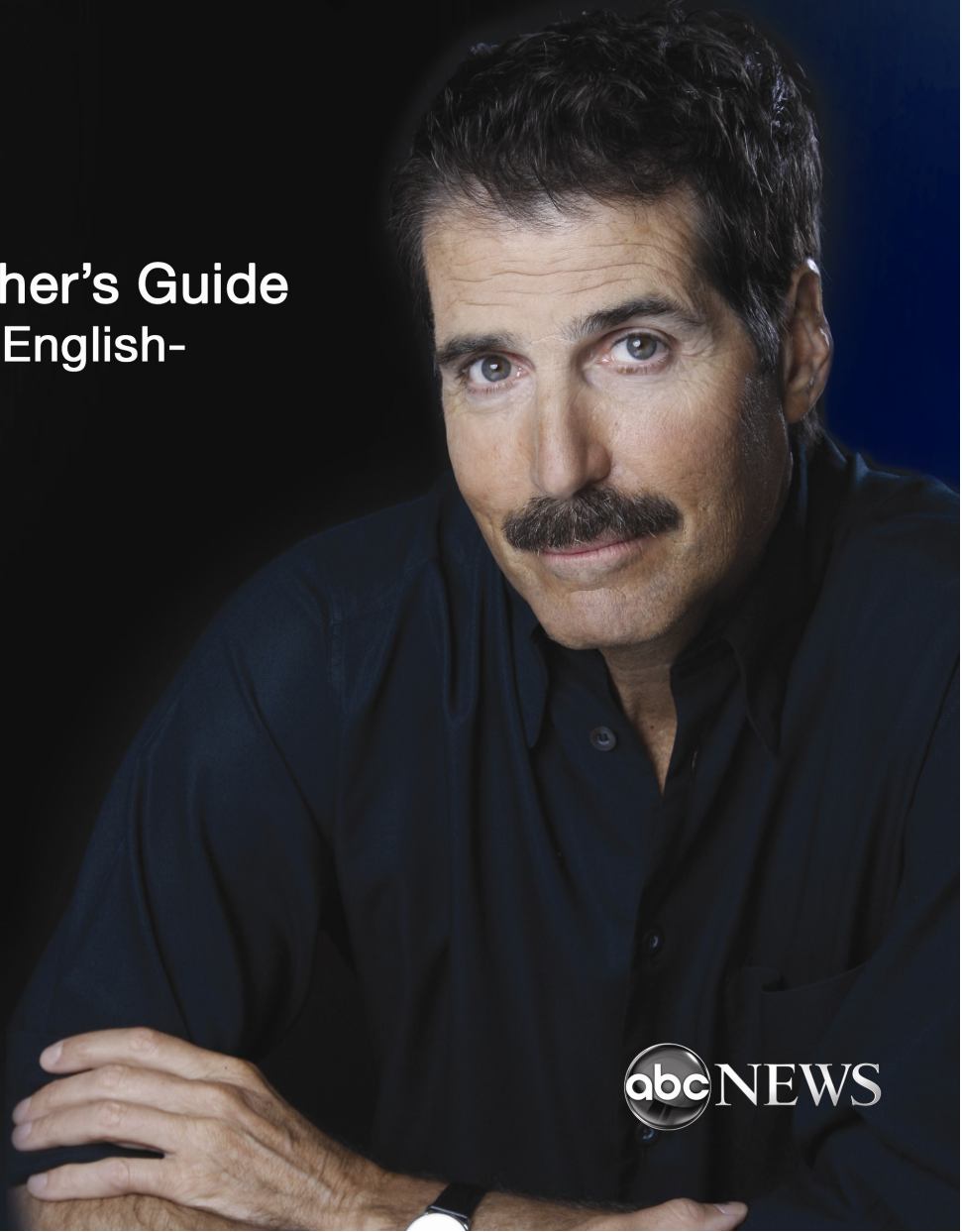


Stossel

IN THE CLASSROOM

2010 EDITION

Teacher's Guide
-English-



abc NEWS

STOSSEL IN THE CLASSROOM

2010 Edition

From: Stossel in the Classroom (<http://stosselintheclassroom.org>)

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Grade Levels: High School and Advanced Middle School (Grades 7-12)

Subject Areas: Social Studies, Current Events, Civics/Government, Political Science, Economics, and Journalism

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Vote or Die

Segment Length: 4:59 minutes

Lesson Description:

Should everyone who is eligible to vote, vote? Does it matter if voters are uninformed? What are the ramifications of uninformed voters? This segment looks at the idea that all eligible voters should vote regardless of their knowledge.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Elitism – The belief that certain persons or members of certain classes or groups deserve favored treatment by virtue of their perceived superiority, as in intellect, social status, or financial resources.

Informed Electorate – Citizens who have the necessary information to protect their own interests when voting. The voting public who actually can vote knowing what is best for them.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss the arguments in favor of and against the concept that all eligible voters should vote.
- formulate why it is important to have “an informed electorate.”
- evaluate the arguments in favor of and against the concept that all eligible voters should vote.

Preview Questions:

- Does everyone who is eligible vote? Why might some people who are eligible to vote not vote?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____

Class/Section _____

Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition
VOTE OR DIE!
Viewing Guide

1. We keep hearing how important it is for everyone to vote, that voting is your _____
_____.
2. The organization Headcount registered over _____ people.
3. What about Puff Daddy's _____ or _____ campaign?
4. _____ made fun of it.
5. Maybe it's not fair to pick on kids at a _____.
6. The public's knowledge of _____ is shockingly low, said Bryan Caplan.
7. We always hear it's our civic duty to vote. This is very much like saying, it's our civic duty to give _____.
8. It's so _____ to say only some people should vote.
9. The bottom line is, if you don't know what you're doing, you're not doing the _____
a favor by voting.
10. Democracy works best when people _____ themselves.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. civic duty
2. 100,000
3. vote, die
4. South Park
5. rock concert
6. politics
7. surgery advice
8. elitist
9. country
10. educate

Discussion and Analysis:

1. The term “vote or die” is said to be a false choice? Why? Is it really a false choice?
2. Why would South Park creators make fun of Puff Daddy’s Vote or Die message?
3. What about the people who didn’t know how many states or senators there are? Should they vote?
4. Why do some people suggest that if you aren’t an informed voter, then you shouldn’t vote?
5. Do you know who Joe Biden is?
6. More people knew Judge Judy than Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Why?
7. John Stossel says that democracy works best when people educate themselves. Is that true? Why / Why not? What do they need to be educated about?
8. What are some reasons people choose one candidate over another candidate?
9. What if you don’t agree with the candidates running for office? What should you do then?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. Let your opinion be heard, you’ve gotta make a choice.
2. There are 51 states in the U.S.
3. Isn’t knowledge important to voting?
4. There are a lot of uninformed voters out there.
5. Maybe it’s their civic duty not to vote because they don’t know anything.
6. It’s so elitist to say only some people should vote.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "Voting is a civic sacrament." – *Theodore Hesburgh*
- "Half of the American people never read a newspaper. Half never voted for president. One hopes it is the same half." – *Gore Vidal*
- "I don't feel responsible for things I didn't vote for." – *Byron Dorgan*
- "Bad politicians are sent to Washington by good people who don't vote." – *William E. Simon*
- "You've got to vote for someone. It's a shame, but it's got to be done." – *Whoopi Goldberg*
- "Elections are won by men and women chiefly because most people vote against somebody rather than for somebody." – *Franklin P. Adams*
- "People aren't as stupid as the politicians think. More and more of us are laughing off our 'civic duty' to vote, rejecting the role of compulsory constituent." – *Bob Black*
- "No matter who you vote for, the government always gets in." – *Anonymous*
- "If you're listening to a rock star in order to get your information on who to vote for, you're a bigger moron than they are." – *Alice Cooper*
- "It is no crime to be ignorant of economics, which is, after all, a specialized discipline and one that most people consider to be a "dismal science." But it is totally irresponsible to have a loud and vociferous opinion on economic subjects while remaining in this state of ignorance." – *Murray Rothbard*
- "To make democracy work, we must be a nation of participants, not simply observers. One who does not vote has no right to complain." – *Louis L'Amour*
- "It's very important to vote. People died for this right." – *Lenny Kravitz*

Activities:

1. Produce a public service announcement (PSA)—either serious or humorous—about voting. You may take any position you want, providing you advocate strongly for the position you take. The PSA may be presented as a video (TV spot), audio (radio spot), PowerPoint presentation, or on a storyboard. The PSA may be a group or individual project.
2. What percentage of people voted in the last presidential election? How many people was that? How about previous presidential elections? Has the trend been up or down? Create a chart of the percentages of eligible voters who have voted in past elections.
3. Why might some people not vote? Is it true that people who don't vote have no right to complain? Write an essay in which you explain your views on this topic.
4. What was the case *Roe v. Wade*? What was significant about it? Why is it still a major political issue? Survey your classmates about this topic. Is it controversial? Why / Why not?

5. Take the American Civic Liberty quiz (www.americancivilliteracy.org/resources/quiz.aspx). How did you do? What questions did you get wrong? How did your results compare with others who took the test (see Report Card and Major Findings).
6. Read Bryan Caplan's *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies*. What's the main point he makes? What are the bad policies he writes of? Why do people choose those policies? What makes them bad?

Resources:

American Civic Literacy Program, sponsored by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute has an online quiz, video lectures, Our Fading Heritage: Americans Fail a Basic Test on Their History and Institutions

<http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/>

Project Vote Smart says it provides voters access to abundant, accurate, and relevant information:

<http://www.votesmart.org/>

The article "Not voting and proud: Don't throw away your life; throw away your vote" by Brian Doherty, is a short but interesting article defending non-voters:

[HTTP://WWW.REASON.COM/NEWS/SHOW/32846.HTML](http://www.reason.com/news/show/32846.html)

Book:

The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies by Bryan Caplan

Magic Politician / “Rinkonomics”

Segment Length: 7:15 minutes

Lesson Description:

Who do we vote for? Why? This segment takes a look at some of the promises politicians make, and what we expect from our elected officials.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Spontaneous Order - an order that emerges as result of the voluntary activities of individuals.

Central Planning - a system in which decisions about what will be produced, how much will be produced, and for whom it will be produced is decided by government officials.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss politicians’ promises, as they relate to their goal of getting elected.
- explain the concept of spontaneous order.
- illustrate how the self-interest of individuals coincides.

Preview Questions:

- What would you do if you were the president? What changes do we need in America? What’s “right” for our country? How is a skating rink similar to society?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____

Class/Section _____

Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition
MAGIC POLITICIAN/ “RINKONOMICS”
Viewing Guide

1. According to David Boaz, voters would have to believe that every politician is some combination of _____, _____, and _____.
2. According to John Stossel, politicians tell us _____.
3. People believe that if the president were a good man, he'd get everybody a _____.
4. _____ don't create jobs, _____ do.
5. Most of our lives are self-directed. Economists call this _____.
6. On the ice-rink, skaters' _____ - _____ coincide, they want to be free, but not crash.
7. Economist Russ Roberts points out that spontaneous order, not government, guides most of _____, we just don't think about it.
8. Under the central planning of communism, planners never could anticipate the myriad _____ of different people. There were constant shortages.
9. Soviets waited in line an average _____ every day.
10. The political class acts as if they must direct life. And when there are problems, it must be politicians who _____.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. Superman, Santa Claus, Mother Teresa
2. what we want to hear
3. job
4. presidents, entrepreneurs
5. spontaneous order
6. self-interest
7. life
8. wants
9. two hours
10. solve them

Discussion and Analysis:

1. Why does the video begin with the song “Do You Believe in Magic”?
2. Why do politicians promise to give things to voters?
3. Based on the video, what are some promises politicians made to voters?
4. What do you think about the scene with Hillary Clinton and the Christmas gifts? How is the government like Santa Claus? How is it not like Santa Claus?
5. Who pays for what the politicians promise? From where does government get its money?
6. What is the purpose of government?
7. If you wanted to find out what the role of the president is, where would you look?
8. If every president since Richard Nixon promised to lead America to energy independence, why are we still not energy independent?
9. John Stossel says that “presidents don’t create jobs, entrepreneurs do.” Is he correct? What examples can you cite to defend your answer?
10. Skating at the roller rink is used as an example of spontaneous order. Skaters’ self-interests coincide: they want to be free, but not crash. How does that affect their behavior? Can you cite any examples from your experiences?
11. John uses Esperanto as an example of a centrally-planned language. There was even a clip from *Incubus*, a black and white movie from 1965. Have you ever heard of Esperanto? Why do you think it hasn’t worked out?
12. Why did central planning not work out well in the Soviet Union? Why couldn’t government accurately predict what people want?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. The politicians are going to fix America. They're going to give us great free healthcare, fix the education system, lower gas prices, keep us safe.
2. It's kind of an instinctive reaction: Government should do more on healthcare. Government should do more for children. But a president can't fix all the problems in your life.
3. If the president were a good man, he'd get everybody a job.
4. Even the Olympian [Brian Boitano], with his vastly greater knowledge, can't make the skating better by being a boss.
5. Much of life would be a drag if a leader directed everything.
6. Spontaneous order, not government, guides most of life, we just don't think about it.
7. Yeah, it kind of ruins the fun of it. Like people bossing you around. I don't want to do it then if someone's telling me what to do. It's not going to be fun. What's the point of coming then?
8. Central planning doomed [communism] because planners never could anticipate the myriad wants of different people. There were constant shortages. Soviets waited in line an average two hours every day.
9. The political class acts as if they must direct life. And when there are problems, it must be politicians who solve them.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "Our spontaneous action is always the best. You cannot, with your best deliberation and heed, come so close to any question as your spontaneous glance shall bring you." – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- "We are born charming, fresh, and spontaneous and must be civilized before we are fit to participate in society." – *Judith Martin*
- "Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them—that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like." – *Lao Tzu*

Activities:

1. Research the powers and duties of the president. How have those powers and duties changed over time? Present this information on a timeline, either on paper, poster board, or in a PowerPoint slide show presentation.
2. Research job creation in America. Report on how jobs are created, and the number of jobs created in the private sector and in the public sector. Use poster board or a slide show to present your findings.

3. Every president since Richard Nixon promised to lead America to energy independence. So why are we still not energy independent? Where does our energy come from? Why? What types of energy do we use? Is it important for America to be energy independent? Why / Why not?
4. Research Esperanto. When was it first proposed as a universal language? Is it still in use? What is the prognosis for future use? What do you think about this issue?
5. Imagine that you have just been elected president. What do you want to do? What limits are there to your power? Can you implement any changes you want? Should you be able to? What new laws would you implement, and why. How would you go about persuading the American public and the elected legislators to go along with your plans? Develop a new Constitution, Bill of Rights, or Declaration of Independence to reflect what you think are the most important points of law. In addition, what would you say at news conferences and speeches to the American public and to Congress? How would you pay for your plans?
6. Lao Tzu believed that over-regulation can upset the spontaneous order of free markets and destroy a nation's economy: "The more restrictions and limitations there are, the more impoverished men will be." He said the wise ruler knows that through "non-interfering, men spontaneously increase their wealth." Research Lao Tzu, and Confucius and Han Fei Tzu, two other well-known Chinese philosophers. Compare and contrast their philosophies.
7. Create a PowerPoint presentation of people coming together in a spontaneous order.
8. In *Economics in One Lesson*, by Henry Hazlitt, people tend to look only at the immediate effects of government policies, while ignoring the secondary effects. "In this lies almost the whole difference between good economics and bad. The bad economist sees only what immediately strikes the eye; the good economist also looks beyond. The bad economist sees only the direct consequences of a proposed course; the good economist looks also at the longer and indirect consequences. The bad economist sees only what the effect of a given policy has been or will be on one particular group; the good economist inquires also what the effect of the policy will be on all groups." How might this relate to promises made by politicians?
9. In *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (1949), Ludwig von Mises wrote, "Human action originates change. As far as there is human action there is no stability, but ceaseless alteration..." How does this compare and contrast with people's desires for security? Cite examples from past political campaigns.
10. Read Daniel B. Klein's "Rinkonomics: A Window on Spontaneous Order." Write a summary using Cornell (two-column) notes.
11. Research origins of languages. What language did your ancestors speak? How did that language develop?
12. "The Story of English" was an Emmy Award winning nine-part television series, and a book, that detailed the development of the English language. The book and the television series were written by Robert MacNeil, Robert McCrum, and William Cran. Read the book or view the video. How does this demonstrate spontaneous order?

13. The “Socialist Calculation” debate began at the end of the 19th Century. Tying the vast poverty of the industrial revolution to laissez-faire practices, Socialists, Marxians, and others argued that free markets had, in effect, failed and that a benevolent government with control over the means of production and distribution, could allocate goods more efficiently and fairly. Research this debate and explain the position of each side.

Resources:

Read Daniel B. Klein’s “Rinkonomics: A Window on Spontaneous Order”:

<http://www.econlib.org/library/Columns/y2006/Kleinorder.html>

Read Henry Hazlitt’s *Economics in One Lesson* in PDF format:

http://www.fee.org/pdf/books/Economics_in_one_lesson.pdf

For a good, basic explanation on how to create PowerPoint presentations:

<http://www.west.asu.edu/achristie/powerpoint/howto/index.htm>

For a more detailed explanation of PowerPoint features:

<http://www.bcschools.net/staff/PowerPointHelp.htm#Intro>

For a clear, simple explanation of the Cornell note-taking system:

<http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>

<http://www.bucks.edu/~specpop/Cornl-ex.htm>

Rebuilding New Orleans: Private vs. Public

Segment Length: 6:31 minutes

Lesson Description:

What's happened in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina? How much of the city has been rebuilt? This segment looks at public and private efforts to rebuild the city ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Spontaneous Order - an order that emerges as result of the voluntary activities of individuals.

Bureaucracy – government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- compare and contrast effectiveness of public and private efforts.
- explain the concept of spontaneous order.
- evaluate the contributions of private individuals and groups in the aftermath of a crisis.

Preview Questions & Activity:

- What are natural disasters? What are some examples?
- Have students work in pairs to develop a K-W-L chart about Hurricane Katrina. Students can fill in the K and W sections. After showing the video, give students a few minutes to complete the L section, prior to beginning the class discussion.

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____

Class/Section _____

Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition

REBUILDING NEW ORLEANS: PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC

Viewing Guide

1. One thing everyone says we need government for is to come to our aid during a _____, like a hurricane.
2. Hurricane Katrina ravaged the _____ and slammed into New Orleans.
3. In the Ninth Ward, block after block is a disaster. Why hasn't the area been rebuilt? Partly because if you want to rebuild, you have to get a _____.
4. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin said that people had to go through _____ different approval processes before you can get something actually built.
5. Everyone wants to make sure there's _____ and _____.
6. Harry Connick, Jr. might have said "we." He helped build these homes. It was _____ . He and others just decided that building homes was the right thing to do.
7. Celebrities pitched in. _____ has done more for this community than anyone.
8. Every house that you see that has been rebuilt, has been rebuilt because of _____.
9. The private sector does it better because there's not a lot of _____ and _____.
10. That's what made America great. The government ain't made America great, its _____ made America great.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. disaster
2. Gulf, Coast
3. permit
4. ten
5. checks, balances
6. spontaneous, order
7. Brad Pitt
8. volunteers
9. rules, regulations
10. people

Discussion and Analysis:

1. Why do we need government's help after natural disasters?
2. Why has much of New Orleans not yet been rebuilt?
3. Should people need permits just to rebuild their homes and churches? Why / Why not?
4. Mayor Ray Nagin said that "governments are not built for speed." What are they built for? What is their purpose?
5. Harry Connick Jr. said that when Habitat for Humanity says "They're going to come in for a build, they build the houses. They're for real." What's his point?
6. Are you surprised that volunteers seem to be able to get more done than the government? Why are volunteers so effective?
7. What is "spontaneous order"? How does it help explain the success of volunteer organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Malik Rahim's Common Ground Relief?
8. Why do celebrities such as Brad Pitt, Michael Moore, Bruce Springsteen, and Bonnie Raitt volunteer their time to help? How might their participation encourage others to volunteer?
9. John Stossel said that "Habitat for Humanity employed specialists who know how to fight through bureaucracy." What is bureaucracy? How might bureaucracy slow down the rebuilding process? What might happen if there were no bureaucracy?
10. John Stossel seems to take an unfavorable view of the effectiveness of government in rebuilding New Orleans. Is he justified? Why / Why not?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. In the Ninth Ward, block after block is still a disaster.
2. Governments are not built for speed. Period.
3. It was spontaneous order. He and others just decided that building homes was the right thing to do.

4. Everything that we have done, we've been able to accomplish in spite of the government.
5. The private sector does it better.
6. Every house that you see that has been rebuilt, has been rebuilt because of volunteers. Not because of the government. Volunteers.
7. They had about nine different agencies that you had to go through. The average person didn't know what to do.
8. I don't think government can get totally out of the way. We can make it easier.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – *Margaret Mead*
- "One is not born into the world to do everything but to do something." – *Henry David Thoreau*
- "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." – *Mahatma Gandhi*
- "We are imperfect. We cannot expect perfect government." – *William Howard Taft*
- "No matter how big and powerful government gets, and the many services it provides, it can never take the place of volunteers." – *Ronald Reagan*
- "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love." – *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Activities:

1. Put together a slide show presentation that shows the damage done to New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina, and the rebuilding that has gone on in the city. Before and after pictures would help other students see the progress that has been made in the rebuilding process.
2. Research Habitat for Humanity. What projects are they involved in around the world? How effective are they? How many people volunteer? Are there any Habitat for Humanity programs in your neighborhood? If so, what do the programs in your neighborhood do?
3. Develop a voluntary class or schoolwide project in which students participate in a community service activity. You can contact local organizations, Volunteers of America, Habitat for Humanity, or one of many others. (See below for information on Action Teams, a program designed specifically for schools.)
4. Research Common Ground Relief, the nonprofit organization founded by Malik Rahim and others. Why was the organization started? What are its principles? Has the group been effective? What have been its results?

5. Look for articles that relate to disasters and spontaneous order. Two such articles appear in Reason magazine's August / September 2009 issue. One is "DIY Park Repairs," by Jeff Winkler, another is "Tweeting Under Fire," by Jesse Walker. How do these articles represent spontaneous order?
6. Research Grover Cleveland and the Texas Seed Bill veto. What was the issue? Why did President Cleveland veto the bill? What does it say about how the perception of the role of government has changed? What do you think about this issue?
7. Read "Not Yours to Give" by Davy Crockett. Summarize how Congressman Davy Crockett changed his views after speaking with his constituent, Horatio Bunce.
8. How has the situation in New Orleans changed since John Stossel filmed this segment? Research the progress in the Ninth Ward.
9. Mayor Nagin refers to the necessity of permits in historic districts. "Keep in mind that if you're doing any work in a historic district, you have to jump through some hoops," he said. What is a historic district? Why are the rules different? Are there any located in your neighborhood or nearby? Why was that location designated as a historic district?
10. How much money has been spent to rebuild New Orleans? How much of that has been government money? How much in private donations?
11. Research the origin and history of "bureaucracy." What are the characteristics of a bureaucracy?

Resources:

A good explanation of K-W-L, with a sample chart, and a chart for downloading:

http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/classroom/teach_strats/kwl_e.php

Sample K-W-L chart in Spanish

<http://www.unm.edu/~devalenz/593F02/kwlspan.html>

Malik Rahim's Common Ground Relief website:

<http://www.commongroundrelief.org/>

Habitat for Humanity:

<http://www.habitat.org/>

New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity:

<http://www.habitat-nola.org/>

Foundation for Teaching Economics – Economics of Disasters website has lessons and activities

<http://www.fte.org/disasters/>

"Not Yours to Give" – The story of Davy Crockett's coming to terms with the limits of government:

<http://fee.org/nff/not-yours-to-give/>

Library of Economics & Liberty has a podcast of Peter Boettke of George Mason University talking about the role of government and voluntary efforts in relieving suffering during and after a crisis such as Katrina:

http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2006/12/boettke_on_katr.html

Volunteers of America and the Major League Baseball Players Trust teamed up in 2002 to encourage high school students to get involved in their communities and help those in need. Action Teams, composed of Major League baseball players and area high school students who are selected to be Team Captains, work together to deliver an important message to students - volunteering is cool, fun, and personally rewarding.

<http://voa.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4576>

Campaign Finance

Segment Length: 7:37 minutes

Lesson Description:

Is there too much money in politics? Have campaign finance reforms helped? This segment looks at campaign finance laws, and how they have affected political campaigns and citizen participation in the political process.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Incumbent – the current holder of a political office

Law of Unintended Consequences – is used to explain outcomes that were not anticipated or intended by those who pursued a particular action.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- explain the goals of campaign finance reform.
- discuss the effects of campaign finance reform.
- evaluate the impact on free speech of laws that regulate political campaigns and activities.

Preview Questions:

- Ever think about running for office? How would you run your campaign? How would you raise funds to run your campaign?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____

Class/Section _____

Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Viewing Guide

1. Yet campaign finance law, like all our government's laws, is subject to a still more powerful law: the Law of _____.
2. Ada Fisher, a retired _____, ran Congress from North Carolina.
3. It was supposed to be _____, _____. But then they came up against campaign finance laws.
4. No wonder Fisher and her young treasurer had trouble wrestling with all that _____.
5. Smith does! The ex-chairman of the commission thinks campaign finance "reform" is a _____!
6. All she did was oppose a Colorado ballot measure which would have allowed a Denver suburb to annex her little town. She and some neighbors printed signs and t-shirts, and gathered signatures for a _____.
7. That's the problem: campaign finance rules have become a tool that insiders use to _____ their opponents.
8. Did the campaign finance reform bus at least flatten the fat cats too? No. Barack Obama backed out of public financing so he could keep attending _____ a plate fundraisers.
9. I'd rather just not get involved in the _____ if I have to go through the nonsense that I had to go through today."
10. The system is rigged for _____ and against _____, because incumbents already know the game. They have gamed the game to win."

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. Unintended Consequences
2. doctor
3. fun, educational
4. legalese
5. disaster
6. petition
7. silence
8. \$20,000
9. political process
10. incumbents, challengers

Discussion and Analysis:

1. John McCain said, “Stand up and fight.” Who or what was he urging people to fight? Who won the fight? How did it work out?
2. Ada Fisher, a candidate for Congress, pointed out that the rules for running for federal office were printed in a book that was nearly 500 pages long. How could that affect people interested in running for office?
3. Have campaign finance laws made it easier or harder for people to run for office? Is that really an *unintended* consequence of campaign finance reform laws?
4. Why did John Stossel use Giants Stadium to show how long the campaign finance rules were?
5. Is American politics all about money? Why do people donate to candidates? Why do people vote for candidates?
6. Paul Ryan said that “We have areas of law that are complex.” But should campaign finance laws be so complex that the average person might be dissuaded from running for office?
7. Cecilia Martinez said, “I think that it’s great that they’re trying to express their views, but there are rules on the books.” Why should we have to “try” to express our views when we have free speech? Should there be “rules on the books” that regulate our ability to communicate about issues that affect our lives? Why / Why not?
8. In the video, John Stossel said, “Did reform at least make elections more competitive? No, again. Just as many congressional incumbents are being re-elected now...” How did the people who supported these reforms expect different results?
9. Some people suggest that one way to take the money out of politics is for the government to completely fund campaigns. Who, then would be paying? Who would decide who gets the money? Who would decide how much money candidates get? How will this improve the system?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. This big book is the FEC rules; the book is close to 500 pages of small print, double columns
2. That's a great way to get volunteers out. Tell them if they fail to file a form on time, they're personally liable for fines and penalties. And it's just a classic example of the way in which the law benefits insiders.
3. We've created a system in which it's harder and harder to engage in real grassroots activity.
4. ...under Colorado's rules, Becky's group merely exercising some free speech was enough for their political opponents to slap them with a lawsuit...
5. The lawsuit was used in an effort to shut us up about the annexation. To scare us enough and clobber us with these laws so that we wouldn't talk about it any more.
6. A regular citizen cannot read this legalese.
7. I'd rather just not get involved in the process if I have to go through the nonsense that I had to go through today.
8. You can't take the money out of politics. As long as you've got \$3 trillion being taxed and spent by the federal government, people are going to want to get control of that.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "People who contribute get the ear of the member and the ear of the staff. They have the access and access is it. Access is power. Access is clout. That's how this thing works." – *Rep. Romano Mazzoli*
- "Elections are more often bought than won." – *Rep. Lee Hamilton*
- "But please know, whether you believe campaign contributions are speech or property, that I learned to love very dearly the right of free expression when I lived without that freedom for a while a long time ago." – *Sen. John McCain*
- "Money! It is money! Money! Money! Not ideas, nor principles, but money that reigns supreme in American politics." – *Sen. Robert C. Byrd*
- "As a consequence, the [U.S. Supreme] Court ruled that the limits on campaign spending violated the First Amendment, but it accepted the \$1,000 limit on individual contributions on the ground that the need to avoid the appearance of corruption justified this limited constraint on speech." – *James L. Buckley*
- "Actually criminal sanctions that are given could be up to five years for violating the rules and regulations under the campaign finance reform. This is like the Alien and Sedition Act..." – *Jay A. Sekulow*

Activities:

1. The McCain-Feingold bill was sponsored in the Senate by a Republican (John McCain), and a Democrat (Russell Feingold). How many Republicans in the Senate supported the bill? How many Democrats? How about in the House of Representatives? Create a bar graph showing support and opposition to the bill.
2. The Federal Elections Commission (FEC) publishes their regulations in Title 11 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Review this online (<http://www.fec.gov/law/cfr/cfr.shtml>) or get a printed copy from the FEC. As you read through the regulations, make a list of the requirements on candidates for federal office. You may use the internet, magazines, or books to help with your list. Then write up some of the requirements and put on a poster board or a bulletin board in your classroom.
3. The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, also known as McCain-Feingold, has been praised and also criticized. What did the sponsors hope the law would do? What did it do? Use a PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart to as you research what the law does.
4. Colorado's campaign finance regulations were discussed in the video. How about your state? What are your state's rules about campaigning and other activities such as neighbors working together, which Colorado's rules call "issue committees." Have there been any cases in your state in which people ran afoul of the laws while supporting or opposing an action or proposed action by the government?
5. Say you are trying to stop your local or city government from using the power of eminent domain to take your homes so that a developer could build a shopping mall. You and some neighbors get together to fight back. What laws must you follow so that you are not charged with any illegal activity? Research the laws that would apply to you and your neighbors, and conduct a "town hall meeting" in your class to inform your "neighbors" what you have found.
6. Research local (town or city), state, and federal laws that deal with public financing of campaigns. What are the rules for public financing? Do candidates have a choice to participate in public financing? With what requirements must the candidates comply? What are some reasons a candidate would participate? What are some reasons a candidate would not participate?
7. Some people say that campaign finance laws limit free speech. Others say that the laws don't limit free speech. Have students research this and conduct a classroom debate.

Resources:

For a simple yet helpful website that explains PMI and provides a sample chart:

<http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/PMI.htm>

Guides to conducting classroom debates:

<http://debate.uvm.edu/default.html>

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf

"Money Walks: Why campaign contributions aren't as corrupting as you think" by Jeff Milyo, in *Reason Magazine*

<http://www.reason.com/news/show/30323.html>

Title 11 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

<http://www.fec.gov/law/cfr/cfr.shtml>

“The Political Economics of Campaign Finance: Lessons for Reform,” Jeffrey Milyo.

http://www.independent.org/pdf/tir/tir_03_4_milyo.pdf

Books:

Unfree Speech: The Folly of Campaign Finance Reform by Bradley A. Smith

Campaign Finance Red Tape: Strangling Free Speech & Political Debate (Kindle Edition) by Jeffrey Milyo

Campaign Finance: An Illustrated Guide by Norman J. Ornstein, Jeremy C. Pope. Downloadable at <http://www.aei.org/book/23>

The Fallacy of Campaign Finance Reform by John Samples

Farm Subsidies

Segment Length: 7:33 minutes

Lesson Description:

Do farmers need money from the government just to survive? When the government helps farmers, are they helping us, too? What would happen to the food supply if some farms went out of business?

Concepts & Key Terms:

Agribusiness – a business, usually on a corporate-size scale, that is involved in the production of food. The term is often used to distinguish large-scale businesses from family farms.

Agricultural Subsidy – money paid to farmers and agribusinesses by the government to supplement their income, manage the supply of agricultural commodities, and influence the cost and supply of those commodities.

Commodity – a product that is practically the same regardless of who produces it, such as petroleum, salt, sugar, wheat, gold, etc.

Creative Destruction – the process that occurs when new products make other products obsolete.

Subsidy – financial assistance from the government, often used to support businesses or to encourage an activity. Subsidies pass part of the cost of the product or service onto the taxpayers, and lead to unintended consequences.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss the concept of creative destruction and its importance.
- explain the incentives for farmers to support candidates who support farm subsidies.
- evaluate the costs and benefits of government subsidies to farmers.

Preview Activity and Questions:

- Write this quote on the board:
“Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.” – *William Jennings Bryan*
- Have students work in pairs (Think, Pair, Share) to a) interpret the quotation, and, b) rewrite it in their own words. The student-pairs should then report out their interpretations.
- Ask the students: How important are farms to us? Why do people farm? Why are we so sure that each day, there will be enough food for us all to eat?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____

Class/Section _____

Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition
FARM SUBSIDIES
Viewing Guide

1. Every year politicians promise that they are going to save the family farm. When they say that, watch your _____.
2. Farm subsidies rarely go to _____ people.
3. A government study found that the more farm aid a county got, the more likely it was to lose _____.
4. We don't need farm subsidies to have an ample _____ _____. The growers of most crops don't get subsidies.
5. There's no cabbage _____ or pineapple _____.
6. This is just a crazy system, it's left over from the 1930s, left over from the _____, and it's a great example of how nothing is as permanent as a temporary government program.
7. Economists say that's part of the _____ _____ that makes America strong.
8. When there's progress, certain jobs are destroyed and certain jobs are created. The guy who delivered ice to my house, he doesn't have a job, because we have _____.
9. One country has abolished farm subsidies, New Zealand. Farm productivity _____.
10. If this works so well, why don't we just subsidize _____?

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. wallet
2. poor
3. population
4. food supply
5. crisis, panic
6. Depression
7. creative destruction
8. refrigerators
9. quintupled
10. everything

Discussion and Analysis:

1. Why does the government subsidize farmers?
2. Why do politicians think farms need to be saved? What about other businesses? Should the government support all businesses, and prevent them from going broke and closing down?
3. Why would so many members of Congress refuse to speak to John Stossel about the farm bill they supported?
4. Is it fair to suggest that farmers who go out of business will starve? Why / Why not?
5. Walter Williams says that subsidies make it harder for smaller farmers to compete. How can that be?
6. John Stossel said that agriculture in New Zealand boomed once they stopped farm subsidies. "Instead of sucking up to you politicians, they found ways to be more efficient as farmers." Why would efficiency be affected by subsidies?
7. What might be some unintended consequences of subsidizing crops?
8. If subsidies are good, why *shouldn't* the government subsidize everything?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. The average farmer makes twice what the average American earns.
2. I don't term it a handout, I term it an investment.
3. Another reason prices are high is that farmers get paid for not farming.
4. It is true that without subsidies, some bureaucrats would be out of work, and some farms would go out of business.
5. The farm subsidies go to very, very wealthy farmers, not the ma and pa farm.
6. Instead of sucking up to you politicians, they found ways to be more efficient as farmers.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country." – *William Jennings Bryan*
- "The greatest advances of civilization, whether in architecture or painting, in science and literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized government." – *Milton Friedman*
- "Agriculture, manufactures, commerce and navigation, the four pillars of our prosperity, are the most thriving when left most free to individual enterprise." – *Thomas Jefferson*
- "Things in our country run in spite of government, not by aid of it." – *Will Rogers*
- "Despite all of the scare tactics that we've had for 200 years about population inevitably outstripping agricultural production, agriculture is on the rise throughout the globe, except in those places where people are killing each other in civil wars. In the U.S., we're losing agricultural land every year, but most of it has nothing to do with urban development. Most of it's just because you don't need the land. The amount of land we have for agriculture is so great that about 50 percent of the annual income of farmers in the U.S. is government subsidy, because we just don't need all of that food." – *Robert Bruegmann*
- "Every time you cut programs, you take away a person who has a vested interest in high taxes and you put him on the tax rolls and make him a taxpayer. A farmer on subsidies is part welfare bum, whereas a free-market farmer is a small businessman..." – *Grover Norquist*

Activities:

1. Research the most recent farm bill passed by Congress. How many pages are in it? How much money does it cost the government? Where does the government get the money to subsidize farmers? What commodities are subsidized? How does the farm bill affect the price we pay for food?
2. Investigate the subsidies Maurice Wilder receives. Is farming his main business? What else does he do? What else does he own? Write a comprehensive report about Maurice Wilder.
3. The organization Farm Aid was created in 1985. What is its purpose? What has the organization done? Has it been an effective organization? How so?
4. Which farm products are subsidized? Why are those products subsidized and not others? Investigate and report back to the class.
5. Conduct a classroom debate on the topic of farm subsidies. For prepared arguments, go to: http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=613
6. Farm subsidies became an important part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal program. How did those farm subsidies work? What were the intended results? What were the results? Why is there still a debate in America about farm subsidies?

7. Creative destruction was considered “the essential fact about capitalism” by economist Joseph Schumpeter. How did he explain the process? Produce a chart or slide show presentation that shows examples of creative destruction.
8. Research the sugar industry in the America. How does the federal government support sugar growers? How does that affect the price we pay for sugar? How does that affect the price of products that contain sugar? High fructose corn syrup is used in many products as a substitute for sugar. Does its use affect prices of other goods? What are the unintended consequences of government support of sugar growers?
9. Subsidies can lead to unintended consequences, which, in economics, are also called secondary effects. What does “unintended consequences” mean, with regard to farm subsidies and price supports? Why are they called “secondary effects”? Produce a report about the unintended consequences of farm subsidies and price supports. After investigating the topic, determine whether or not you believe farm subsidies and price supports are good ideas.
10. Research the corn and ethanol industry in the America. How does the federal government support ethanol production? Why? How does that support affect the price we pay for corn? How does support for ethanol affect prices of other goods? What are the unintended consequences of government support of ethanol production?
11. Research President Grover Cleveland and the Texas Seed Bill veto. What was the issue? Why did President Cleveland veto the bill? How does what he did apply to the issue of farm subsidies today? What does it say about how the perception of the role of government has changed? What do you think about this issue?

Resources:

For a list of high-yield strategies for the classroom (can be printed out as classroom posters):

<http://www.tncdsb.on.ca/resources/CUR%20Res%20High%20Yield%20Strategies.pdf>

Debate Topic from the International Debate Education Association

http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=613

Guides to conducting classroom debates:

<http://debate.uvm.edu/default.html>

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf

The Cato Institute has numerous articles about the economic affects of farm subsidies:

<http://www.cato.org/>

Farm Aid was begun in 1985 to promote and assist family farming:

<http://www.farmaid.org>

“A Disgraceful Farm Bill” editorial, *The New York Times*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/opinion/16fri3.html?
_r=1&scp=2&sq=farm+bill&st=nyt](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/opinion/16fri3.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=farm+bill&st=nyt)

“How Farm Subsidies Became America’s Largest Corporate Welfare Program,” available for download:

<http://www.amazon.com/Subsidies-Americas-Largest-Corporate-Welfare/dp/B000066CZ1>

“Why U.S. Farm Subsidies Are Bad for the World” by Andrew Cassel

<http://www.commondreams.org/views02/0506-09.htm>

“How Farm Subsidies Harm Taxpayers, Consumers, and Farmers, Too” by [Brian M. Riedl](#)

<http://www.heritage.org/research/agriculture/bg2043.cfm>

Cato Institute Policy Forum: *Farm Bill Follies* by Daniel T. Griswold

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/365>

“Obama Targets Farm Subsidies As ‘Wasteful’” by Dereck Kravitz, *Washington Post*

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/washingtonpostinvestigations/2009/02/obama_targets_farm_subsidies_a.html

Books:

Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting its Role by Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell

Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble by Lester R. Brown

Middle Class

Segment Length: 6:06 minutes

Lesson Description:

Is the middle class really disappearing in America? Each day, we are confronted with reports about how middle class people are struggling to make ends meet, and how opportunities are dwindling. Is this gloom and doom true, or just a perception? This segment looks at statistical and anecdotal information about the middle class in America.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss the positive and negative claims about conditions of the middle class in America.
- formulate a definition of middle class.
- assess the reasons for people's methods of researching, and the claims they make.
- evaluate arguments about the future of the middle class.

Preview Activity and Questions:

- Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer the following questions:
What is the middle class? Who is in it?
- Have the students put their answers on the board.
- Why are the students' answers different? What reasons do they have for determining what middle class is?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____
Class/Section _____
Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition

MIDDLE CLASS

Viewing Guide

1. For years, some people have said the middle class is _____.
2. The new CEO of _____ started out as an hourly worker. Now he's the boss.
3. Adam Shepard went to Charlestown, South Carolina. He showed up with \$25. "I arrived, and right away, I figured I need to get into a _____."
4. Adam worked for a _____ company, earning \$8 an hour.
5. He saved enough to buy a _____.
6. Middle class people today live like rich people did in the _____.
7. We've always said yeah, but in the old days, things were _____.
8. They said that in the 1920s, they said that in the 1950s and we say it again today. It's not that we have less money, it's that our expectations have _____.
9. Nelson Juarez said he started working at the refinery at 18 and was able to learn different _____.
10. We have a society that rewards _____ and _____. Half of the poor actually are not poor ten years later. Nobody is stuck where they start out

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. suffering
2. Wal-Mart
3. homeless shelter
4. moving
5. used truck
6. 1950s
7. better
8. risen
9. trades
10. hard work, merit

Discussion and Analysis:

1. What does it mean to “make it” in America?
2. What facts are offered in the video to demonstrate that the middle class is worse off than before?
3. When John Stossel asks Barbara Ehrenreich, “If you do a good job, can’t you move up?” she responds, “Well, John, that’s not easy.” Is it supposed to be easy?
4. Barbara Ehrenreich said she worked as a waitress, an aide in a nursing home, a cleaning lady, and a Wal-Mart associate. And that didn’t do it. What didn’t that do?
5. Adam Shepard said he wanted to find out if the American dream is still alive. What is the American dream? Is it still alive? How do you achieve it?
6. How is it that two different people started out to discover if the American Dream is still alive and they end up with two very different experiences?
7. Adam Shepard claims that Barbara Ehrenreich set out to fail and write a book about it. Is that possible? What about him? Couldn’t a counter-argument be that he set out to succeed and write a book about it? How is that different?
8. What about the middle class people driving their vehicles around the sand dunes? What kinds of jobs do they have? Does your family spend some of the money they earn on leisure activities? On what activities?
9. What are some products, services, activities that we associate with a middle-class lifestyle? (Examples: cable TV, family vacations, etc.)
10. If the middle class was shrinking, would that necessarily demonstrate that those people are becoming poor? What else might be happening?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. It is definitely harder to be middle class than it was a decade ago.
2. It’s not that we have less money; it’s that our expectations have risen.

3. [Barbara Ehrenreich] has convinced lots of people that you can't make it in America.
4. Absolutely, I think she wanted to fail – and write the book about it.
5. I made sacrifices. She didn't make any sacrifices.
6. From 1950 to 2007, the middle class family income went, in real dollars, adjusted for inflation, from \$29,000 a year to \$75,000 a year. They're making three times as much.
7. Your kids will live better than mine; your grandchildren will live better than your kids.
8. Middle class people today live like rich people lived in the 1950s.
9. We have a society that rewards hard work and merit.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "Planning ahead is a measure of class. The rich and even the middle class plan for future generations, but the poor can plan ahead only a few weeks or days." – *Gloria Steinem*
- "There are three social classes in America: upper middle class, middle class, and lower middle class." – *Judith S. Marin*
- "Planning ahead is a measure of class. The rich and even the middle class plan for future generations, but the poor can plan ahead only a few weeks or days." – *Gloria Steinem*
- "The law of liberty tends to abolish the reign of race over race, of faith over faith, of class over class. It is not the realization of a political ideal it is the discharge of a moral obligation." – *John Dalberg*
- "Public education is the key civil rights issue of the 21st century. Our nation's knowledge-based economy demands that we provide young people from all backgrounds and circumstances with the education and skills necessary to become knowledge workers. If we don't, we run the risk of creating an even larger gap between the middle class and the poor. This gap threatens our democracy, our society and the economic future of America." – *Eli Broad*
- "It's the middle class that feels the luxury of being able to have causes." – *Orson Scott Card*
- "A moderately honest man with a moderately faithful wife, moderate drinkers both, in a moderately healthy house: that is the true middle-class unit." – *George Bernard Shaw*
- "I find in most novels no imagination at all. They seem to think the highest form of the novel is to write about marriage, because that's the most important thing there is for middle-class people." – *Gore Vidal*

Activities:

1. Research the concept of “middle class.” Who decides what middle class is? Is there a general agreement on just what it means to be in the middle class? Report your findings with various explanations you find for “middle class.” Why is there no definitive answer?
2. Read the book *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich. Report back to the class about what you read. How long did she work in each of the jobs she held while researching for the book? How did she live while working in those jobs? What can you tell about her desire and her efforts to succeed?
3. Read the book *Scratch Beginnings* by Adam Shepard. Report back to the class about what you read. How long did he work in each of the jobs he held while researching for the book? How did he live while working in those jobs? What can you tell about his desire and his efforts to succeed?
4. Would you rather be a rich person living in the year 1900 or a middle-class person in America today? Explain in an essay, or produce a collage slide show demonstrating those differences by juxtaposing rich people living in 1900 and middle class people living today.
5. Interview your parents and other relatives. Are their lives better or worse today than they were when they were growing up? What information can they provide that demonstrates their answer?
6. How hard is it to get a job in your community? Are any businesses hiring part-time or full-time workers? Survey neighboring businesses to find out what is required of new workers. Are any skills necessary in order to get a job? Is there on-the-job training? What is the starting pay? Are there possibilities for promotions? Raises? Do you think you could “make it” if you had to work to provide for yourself?
7. Research products and services that the typical middle-class American family can afford today that were either not available at all in 1970 or only available to the rich. Are there any products or services that were available that they could afford then but not now?
8. Read “Time Well Spent: The Declining *Real* Cost of Living in America” by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. (<http://dallasfed.org/fed/annual/1999p/ar97.pdf>) The researchers decided to compare the costs of products as a function of time spent working. Use the Dallas Fed’s report to demonstrate to your class how the amount of time working to purchase goods and services has changed.
9. How many millionaires are in America? How has that number changed over the past 50 years? Why? How many of them inherited their money rather than earned it? What other statistics can you find about millionaires in America.
10. Research Barbara Ehrenreich and her past writing. Is her book in character with what she has written in the past?
11. Research the price and features of a new computer from 20 years ago. What was the cost? How much RAM and hard drive capacity did the computer have? Was the average middle class person able to afford this? What does this tell you?

Resources:

Barbara Ehrenreich's website for her book. The website includes a teacher's guide, frequently asked questions, and additional resources:

<http://www.barbaraehrenreich.com/nickelanddime.htm>

Adam Shepard's website for his book. The website includes SAT vocabulary words, a reading guide, a link to his Facebook page, and more.

<http://www.scratchbeginnings.com/>

American Enterprise Institute researches and educates about government, politics, economics, and social welfare. AEI works to expand liberty, increase individual opportunity, and strengthen free enterprise:

<http://www.aei.org/>

Video panel discussion on the topic: The Myth of the Declining Middle Class:

<http://www.aei.org/video/100891>

Drew Carey and Reason.tv examine the plight of the American middle class. What do they find?

<http://reason.tv/video/show/living-large>

The article "America's No. 1 Endangered Species: Is the middle class losing 'its place at the table?'" by Nick Gillespie in *Reason Magazine*, has some facts to answer the question:

<http://www.reason.com/news/show/118611.html>

The comparative report: "Time Well Spent: The Declining *Real* Cost of Living in America" by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, has some insightful statistics that should be very interesting to students:

<http://dallasfed.org/fed/annual/1999p/ar97.pdf>

Books:

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America by Barbara Ehrenreich

Scratch Beginnings: Me, \$25, and the Search for the American Dream by Adam Shepard

Gross National Happiness: Why Happiness Matters for America—and How We Can Get More of It by Arthur C. Brooks

Private Roads

Segment Length: 6:43 minutes

Lesson Description:

How can the problems of traffic congestion be solved? Is there a place for entrepreneurs and businesses to help? Is it wrong for businesses to make money off those stuck in traffic? This segment looks at private toll roads and efforts to reduce traffic congestion.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Bureaucracy – government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority.

Infrastructure - the fundamental facilities and systems serving a country, city, or area, as transportation and communication systems, power plants, and schools.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss problems associated with traffic congestion.
- explain the reasons for and against private businesses running toll roads.
- criticize or defend the use of private toll roads to reduce traffic congestion.
- evaluate the benefits of private roads.

Preview Activity and Questions:

- What causes traffic congestion?
- Use Think, Pair, Share to have students solve the problems presented in the following questions:
 - What are some solutions that might reduce traffic?
 - Can you think of any suggestions that don't involve restricting people's use of their cars?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____

Class/Section _____

Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition

PRIVATE ROADS

Viewing Guide

1. The government says billions of your stimulus dollars will be spent to build new roads and fix old ones. They say they'll do it _____.
2. Atlanta is America's second-most _____ city.
3. In a lot of places in America, Drew Carey said, traffic is only going to get _____.
4. Josh Lipkin lives _____ miles from work, but the drive often takes him an hour and a half.
5. _____ road builders built a double-decker underground highway in Paris.
6. Three hundred-and-fifty cameras watch for traffic _____ or _____.
7. By paying, you save time. Traffic moves. And for some people, time is _____.
8. Privatizing existing taxpayer _____ is not a solution for anybody, said Congressman Peter DeFazio.
9. The "Big Dig" in _____ took ten years to complete, and cost more than twice as much as it was supposed to.
10. Private roads are mostly dead, because _____ and some _____ don't like them.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. efficiently
2. congested
3. worse
4. sixteen
5. private
6. delays, accidents
7. money
8. infrastructure
9. Boston
10. protestors, politicians

Discussion and Analysis:

1. What are toll roads? Why are they created? Are they private or government owned?
2. Are there any toll roads in our city or state? Which ones? How about bridges?
3. If government hadn't built roads, how would people have gotten around?
4. Should only government be allowed to build roads and charge people money to use them? Why / Why not?
5. Why should people have to pay to use roads? How about trains? Busses? Why shouldn't taxpayers pay for transportation systems?
6. If the people in the video have such a tough commute, why don't they find a job closer to home or move closer to where they work?
7. In California, a private company built two lanes in the middle of highway 91. People can choose to use them or not. But to use those lanes, they have to pay. Is that fair?
8. If so many people are using the toll express lanes in California, what does it tell us about their time? Is it worth it for them to spend that money? How do we know?
9. What prevents the owners of those toll express lanes from charging too much money?
10. If more people use those private lanes, what are the traffic implications for people who choose not to?
11. Can't the government just raise gas taxes to reduce traffic congestion? Surely some people would stop driving so much.
12. If the government contractor's work on the Big Dig was so sloppy that part of it collapsed, what's to say that the same problems won't arise from private road builders?
13. Using toll roads as an example, why don't some people like giving their money to business, but don't seem to mind when the government takes their money? What's the difference?
14. Why doesn't government seem to run roads as efficiently as private businesses do?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. You plan your day around traffic.
2. If you want to go this fast, you have to pay.
3. For some people, time is money.
4. Why is Washington rushing in to do something that private companies do better?
5. Your first insurance that [private companies] are going to run a better road than the politicians did is [that] if they don't, people won't drive on it and they'll lose a lot of money. They have every incentive to make traffic flow swiftly, and make that drive as pleasant and as safe as possible.
6. Government could run them [toll roads] just as well as the private sector because the private sector runs them well and makes a profit.
7. When government runs things, it's a monopoly and it has no competition, and there's no upside to doing a lot better job.
8. You only think that the government has to run the freeways because you've never thought of the government not running freeways.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "Outside of traffic, there is nothing that has held this country back as much as committees." – *Will Rogers*
- "Americans will put up with anything provided it doesn't block traffic." – *Dan Rather*
- "Life is too short for traffic." – *Dan Bellack*
- "Natives who beat drums to drive off evil spirits are objects of scorn to smart Americans who blow horns to break up traffic jams." – *Mary Ellen Kelly*
- "Traffic is only one of the side effects of growth." – *Roy Barnes*
- "Why do they call it rush hour when nothing moves?" – *Robin Williams* (from *Mork and Mindy*)
- "The last person to get across that town in under three hours was yelling, 'The British are coming! The British are coming!'" [On Boston traffic] – *Lewis Black*
- "Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?" – *George Carlin*

Activities:

1. Research the origin of toll roads. Why did they originate? Who owned them?

2. In the video, we learn that there is an underground, double-decker highway in Paris that was built by private road builders. Research this, and report back to the class on the cost for people to use the road, the time saved, and how the system works.
3. Indiana leased the Indiana toll road to a private company. How is that working out? Has service improved? How much money has the state received from the company that now runs the toll road? Research and report back to the class.
4. Produce a slideshow presentation of traffic in your town or a neighboring city and suggest some ways that traffic can be reduced.
5. Congestion pricing was proposed in New York City as a way to reduce traffic in Midtown Manhattan. What were some of the arguments in favor of congestion pricing? What were the arguments against it? What happened to the proposal? Why?
6. What are the top ten traffic-congested cities? Is traffic congestion improving in any of those cities? Why / Why not?
7. Write and perform a rap (or other type of) song, either live or on camera, about traffic congestion.
8. Governments often spend money collected from tolls on other projects. For example, in New York City, much of the money collected from bridge tolls is spent on the MTA, the government agency that also runs subways and buses.
 - A. Research the amount of much money the MTA collects in bridge tolls each year. How much has been spent on bridge repairs and upgrades? How much has been spent on non-bridge projects?
 - B. Is it fair to the toll-paying drivers for the MTA to redirect toll revenues to public transportation projects instead of spending it on auto transportation improvements? Why / Why not?

Resources:

A good explanation of the Think, Pair, Share instructional strategy, with examples:

<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/pd/instr/strats/think/index.html>

Drew Carey's "Gridlock" on Reason.TV

<http://www.reason.tv/video/show/gridlock>

Reason Magazine articles related to transportation issues:

<http://reason.com/topics/topic/216.html>

The Modern Transit has some solutions for traffic congestion:

<http://moderntransit.org/solution.html>

The U.S Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration has a well-detailed report called "Operational Solutions to Traffic Congestion" that has myriad facts about causes of traffic congestion:

<http://www.tfhrc.gov/pubrds/04nov/01.htm>

Books:

The Road More Traveled: Why the Congestion Crisis Matters More Than You Think, and What We Can Do About It by Ted Balaker and Sam Staley

21st Century Highways: Innovative Solutions to America's Transportation Needs by Wendell Cox, Alan Pisarski, and Ronald D. Utt

Desire to Be Famous

Segment Length: 7:57 minutes

Lesson Description:

What's so important about being famous? Why not wealthy or intelligent? Why not cure cancer? This segment looks at the desire of American youth to be famous and what it says about our values.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Primates - any of various omnivorous mammals, characterized especially by advanced development of binocular vision, specialization of the appendages for grasping, and enlargement of the cerebral hemispheres and by complex flexible behavior involving a high level of social interaction and cultural adaptability. Primates include humans, apes, monkeys, and as well as lemurs and tarsiers.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss the desire of people to be famous.
- explain an anthropological view of people's desire to be famous or associated with those who are famous.
- theorize about the implications of the desire for fame, without regard for leading productive lives.

Preview Activity and Questions:

- Have students make a list of 10 famous people. Then, have them compile their lists into one comprehensive list.
- Who's on it? From what fields? Are any scientists on the list? Inventors? Entrepreneurs? Why are the people on the list *on the list*?

Viewing Guide:

Print out Viewing Guide worksheet on next page to use as an accompaniment to the video with your student(s). Viewing Guide worksheet answer key follows.

Student Name _____
Class/Section _____
Date _____

Stossel in the Classroom: 2010 Edition
DESIRE TO BE FAMOUS
Viewing Guide

1. You're here to cover us though, obviously we're _____.
2. I would love to be _____; I would love the _____.
3. Leigh Hallisey teaches a course on _____ and _____.
4. You know, in some ways, she [Paris Hilton] should be applauded because she's completely mastered the art of having the media focus all their attention on her without ever having to have done _____.
5. Americans are _____ than they have been in the past.
6. Scientists see something similar in _____.
7. So this is just built into us from thousands of years of _____. I would even say millions of years.
8. Which helps explain why one survey for *Fame Junkies* found that many kids said they'd rather be an assistant to a celebrity than a _____ or a _____.
9. And years ago, when Charles Lindbergh's baby was _____, within months, 200 people had confessed to the crime.
10. The average person on the street, if you ask them who cured _____, very likely you're going to get a lot of blank stares.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. important
2. famous, attention
3. TV, Popular Culture
4. anything
5. lonelier
6. monkeys
7. evolution
8. senator, CEO
9. kidnapped
10. polio

Discussion and Analysis:

1. When the man who is the yellow M&M says to John Stossel, “Me, I just wanna be me,” John replies, “You’re not you, you’re an M&M.” What did the guy dressed as a yellow M&M really mean by “I just wanna be me”?
2. Why would people want to participate in reality shows such as “The Real World: Denver”?
3. Students get college credit for taking the course on TV and Popular Culture at Boston University. Why? Should they? Does it say anything about our view of “education”?
4. Americans are lonelier than they have been in the past, said Jake Halpern. How is that, when there are more ways to communicate than ever?
5. Helen Fisher, the anthropologist, said that in hunting and gathering societies there are always “big men,” who are more charismatic, better hunters, and they’ve got more power. The people around them want to be near them because they figure they will get some of that power too. Are we like that still today? In What ways are we like that? In what ways aren’t we like that?
6. Would you rather be an assistant to a celebrity than a senator or a CEO? Why / Why not?
7. Who was Charles Lindbergh? What did he do to become famous?
8. What is polio? And who cured it? Why don’t most of you know?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. Everybody wants to show who they are.
2. It used to be enough that you got attention from your parents. You got attention from your teachers, your peers and that sort of thing, but that is no longer enough.
3. The drive for fame is so strong it even drives some people to confess to crimes they did not commit.

4. The average person on the street, if you ask them who cured polio, very likely you're gonna get a lot of blank stares. If you ask somebody who Nicole Richie's best friend was, I think that you'll get an answer from a lot more people, and I think that tells us a lot about who we are as a culture, and what we value.
5. If you're famous, people listen to you.

Quotes for Discussion:

- "The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, and doing well whatever you do without thought of fame. If it comes at all it will come because it is deserved, not because it is sought after." – *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*
- "What is fame? The advantage of being known by people of whom you yourself know nothing, and for whom you care as little." – *Lord Byron*
- "Looking at the proliferation of personal web pages on the net, it looks like very soon everyone on earth will have 15 Megabytes of fame." – *M. G. Siriam*
- "Fame and riches are fleeting. Stupidity is eternal." – *Don Williams, Jr.*
- "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures and that is character." – *Horace Greeley*
- "Fame is the thirst of youth." – *Lord Byron*
- "It is strange to be known so universally and yet to be so lonely." – *Albert Einstein*
- "Don't confuse fame with success. Madonna is one; Helen Keller is the other." – *Erma Bombeck*
- "The cool thing about being famous is traveling. I have always wanted to travel across seas, like to Canada and stuff." – *Britney Spears*
- "When I started out, I didn't have any desire to be an actress or to learn how to act. I just wanted to be famous." – *Katharine Hepburn*

Activities:

1. Research the study by the Center for Cognitive Science at Duke University, that found that primates also had a celebrity-status link, forgoing food rewards to view videos of others. What were the conditions of the experiment? What were the findings?
2. Saul Kassin, a criminologist at John Jay College, said that "some people have a pathological need for fame or attention or recognition. In some cases, the level of mental illness is such that these people might actually believe they may have committed this crime." Research this issue. What causes it? What can be done? Are there any famous cases of individuals who, because of this problem, confessed to a crime they didn't commit?
3. Research polio. What was it? How did it affect people? How many people got it? How did Jonas Salk develop the cure for polio?

4. Look at Josh Halpern's Web site: <http://www.jakehalpern.com/book.php> Develop your own questions about students' desire to be famous and survey the students in your school. What were the questions? What were the results?
5. Write and perform a rap (or other type of) song, either live or on camera, about what it would be like to be famous.
6. Write a poem about fame in general, about others' desire for fame, or how your life would be different if you were famous.
7. Write a biographical report on Charles Lindbergh.

Resources:

Josh Halpern's Web site has some startling information from his survey of teenagers. Click on "A survey on fame among teens"

<http://www.jakehalpern.com/book.php>

A great Web site on primates, including an overview, detailed information, a web expedition, and even crossword puzzles, has been produced by Dr. Dennis O'Neil, Behavioral Sciences Department, Palomar College, San Marcos, California

<http://anthro.palomar.edu/primate/>

Books:

Fame Junkies: The Hidden Truths Behind America's Favorite Addiction by Jake Halpern

Additional Resources

- The Center for Civic Education posts the national standards for civics and government, as well as programs for teachers and students, such as “We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution”
<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=stds>
- EconEdLink and Thinkfinity provide online lessons for all social studies and economics standards and concepts.
http://www.marcopolosearch.org/MPSearch/Advanced_Search.asp?orgn_id=3
- Common Sense Economics website includes instructor resources, student resources, including links to some economics activities and comics
<http://www.commonseconomics.com>
- EconomicsAmerica® offers a list and description of each national voluntary standard in economics. Online lessons for each standard and all concepts are offered.
<http://www.ncee.net/ea/standards/>
- High School Economics Topics, with definitions and articles
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Topics/HighSchool/HighSchoolTopics.html>
- Education World® posts various links to national standards in social studies, U.S. history, and civics. The site offers various activities that integrate current events into the study of these subjects.
http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/soc_sci/index.shtml
- Federal Resources for Educational Excellences provides links to teaching and learning resources in U.S. history and government, created by various federal government agencies. All resources are electronic or available to teachers at no cost.
http://www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=178
- Smithsonian Education offers various resources linked to U.S. history, culture and other subjects.
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/index.html>
- Produced by Annenberg Media, Learner.org provides free professional development and teacher resources in many subjects.
<http://www.learner.org>
- Free and easy to use resources, including lesson plans, worksheets, rubrics, and more, for teachers.
- A simple guide to Bloom's taxonomy
<http://www.techweb.org/eddevel/edtech/blooms.html>
- Discovery Education provides lesson plans and resources in many subject areas.
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/>
- For rubrics, graphic organizers, and portfolio ideas
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html>

- The Library of Economics and Liberty offers resources for students, teachers, researchers, and aficionados of economic thought.
<http://www.econlib.org/>
- The Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom of the World Project
<http://www.freetheworld.com/>
- Gapminder is a non-profit venture promoting sustainable global development...by increased use and understanding of statistics and other information about social, economic and environmental development at local, national and global levels. Videos, charts, visually friendly
<http://www.gapminder.org>
- National Council on Economic Education – EconomicsAmerica® includes economics lessons that relate directly to state standards
<http://www.ncee.net/ea/index.php>
- The website of the Foundation for Economic Education has an online library, a searchable index of past articles from its monthly journal, and information on seminars for students and teachers
<http://www.fee.org/>
- A global organization working to fight corruption
<http://www.transparency.org>
- Character Education resources, lessons, character building experiences, and more
<http://www.goodcharacter.com/>
- Free educational resources for everyone, from the Verizon Foundation
<http://thinkfinity.org/>
- For a daily current events service and classroom videos by television producers who create and distribute programs that spark curiosity and lively classroom discussions
<http://www.izzit.org>
- ReadWriteThink is a partnership between the International Reading Association (IRA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the Verizon Foundation. It provides lessons, standards, and student materials
<http://www.readwritethink.org/about.html>
- For a wealth of resources for K-12 science educators, and standards-based Internet experiences for students
<http://www.sciencenetlinks.com>
- Teaching resources for English teachers, includes resources, lessons, and activities
<http://www.webenglishteacher.com>
- How to create a wiki - video
<http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english>

- How to create a wiki – slide show
<http://www.slideshare.net/suesbent/how-to-create-a-wiki/>

Teachers who would like to recommend websites as additional resources for future inclusion by “Stossel in the Classroom” may submit their suggestions by email to custsvc@stosselintheclassroom.org, subject: resource to add.

**Visit us on the web at
<http://stosselintheclassroom.org/>**