
The Department of Government Efficiency

Videos:

“The REAL Waste That Elon's DOGE Should Cut”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hVMghqarHY> (3:27 minutes)

“Will Trump and Musk Make Real Cuts?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKl7cghPXHw> (6:21 minutes)

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Robert Reich said: “[W]hat’s often considered waste and fraud depends on whether one is looking downward or upward.” What did he mean by this?
3. John Stossel gave examples of expensive government studies that were seemingly frivolous. Why do you think the government funds studies like these? Should they fund these studies? Why/Why not?
4. Robert Reich said that the government lost “over \$1.8 trillion in tax revenue in 2023 alone” due to tax loopholes. Should tax loopholes be closed? Why/Why not?
5. John Stossel said that the federal government owns "most of the land in the west," which Chris Edwards said is worth trillions of dollars. Should the government own that much land? Why/Why not?
6. Robert Reich said that the United States’ military budget is bigger than the next nine countries’ military budgets combined. Were you surprised that the U.S. military budget is that large? Why/Why not?
7. In the Stossel video, Chris Edwards said it's very difficult to fire federal workers. Is this fair? Why/Why not?
8. Robert Reich mentioned that some of Elon Musk’s companies have government contracts. Does this create a conflict of interest for Elon Musk? Why/Why not?
9. John Stossel said that firing federal workers won't eliminate the deficit, because politicians won't cut programs for "old people." What programs was he referring to?

10. Robert Reich said Elon Musk wants to cut government agencies that protect average citizens.
What were some examples he gave of these protections?
11. John Stossel said: "We don't have to balance the budget today, just change the trajectory."
What did he mean by this?
12. Robert Reich said: "The fundamental issue that Musk and DOGE are failing to address isn't the size of the government or how efficient it is, but who our government is for." What did he mean by this? Who is our government for? Who should it be for? Why?
13. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
14. Robert Reich and John Stossel seemed to agree that the U.S. government's defense spending is too high. Do you agree with them? Why/Why not?
15. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
16. Robert Reich expressed fear that DOGE would eventually cut Social Security and Medicare, while John Stossel expressed frustration that DOGE would never cut those programs. Who do you think is right? Why?
17. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
18. What else would you like to learn about this topic?