

Mission: Impossible?—Opinion Interventions

Directions: After students have been discussing their governmental ideas for about 10 minutes, give *one* of the following opinion cards to each group to stimulate further conversation. As an option, have the students use the internet to research basic biographical information about the author.

Abigail Adams

“I long to hear that you have declared an independancy—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.”

Abigail Adams letter to John Adams, 31 Mar. 1776. Available at Founders Online: <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0241>

John Adams

“...[T]he form of government which communicates ease, comfort, security, or, in one word, happiness, to the greatest number of persons, and in the greatest degree, is the best.”

John Adams. “Thoughts on Government.” Apr. 1776. Available at the Massachusetts Historical Society:

<http://www.masshist.org/publications/apde/portia.php?&id=PJA04dg2>

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James Madison

“A just Government...[is] best supported by protecting every Citizen in the enjoyment of his Religion with the same equal hand which protects his person and his property....”

James Madison. “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments.” 1785. Available at the Religious Freedom Page at the University of Virginia Library:
http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/madison_m&r_1785.html

The Continental Congress’ 1777 promise to the Oneida tribe (allies in Revolution)

“We have experienced your love, strong as the oak, and your fidelity, unchangeable as truth. You have kept fast hold of the ancient covenant-chain, and preserved it free from rust and decay, and bright as silver. Like brave men, for glory you despised danger; you stood forth, in the cause of your friends, and ventured your lives in our battles. While the sun and moon continue to give light to the world, we shall love and respect you. As our trusty friends, we shall protect you; and shall at all times consider your welfare as our own.”

Two Continental Congress Addresses to the Six Nations, 1776-1777.
Available at the Library of Congress:
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/amrev/homefrnt/nations.html>