

Critical Challenge: Exploring Understandings of Liberalism

so2.4 2.5 2.6

Students will examine the dynamic nature of liberalism and determine which liberal principles and values have remained constant over time. Students will explore the initial expressions of liberalism and the impacts of liberalism on the 19th century.

Task One: Students will create a Venn Diagram to identify principles of liberalism that have remained constant over time

Task Two: Students will create and rank three statements that reflect the principles and values of liberalism

Student Name:

Date:

A. Identify principles of liberalism that have remained constant over time.

Introduction: Explore the evolution of language

The concept of *liberalism* has a changing nature – what are some other common words that have changed or shifted in meaning over time? Are there any words which your parents would use or define differently? How do the values of a time influence the use and meaning of a word like liberalism? How does this increase our understanding of the use of the term *liberalism*?

Review: Classical Liberalism Embraces the following Principles of Individualism:

- individual rights and freedoms
- self-interest
- competition
- economic freedom
- rule of law
- private property

Background: Read – Read **Perspectives on Ideology Chapter 3** p. 102-124

Step One: Classical Liberal Philosopher Overview

Students will work in small groups (1-3 ... NOT more than 3) to complete the **Step One Critical Challenge Tool: Classical Philosopher Overview** handout. Each student must complete their own booklet.

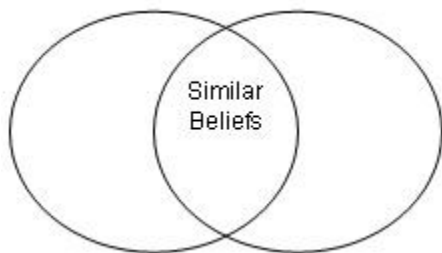
Step Two: Contemporary Liberal OR Illiberal Philosopher Research

Students will work in small groups (same group from Step One) and research and choose three contemporary liberal or illiberal philosophers (thinkers, political opinion makers, comedians, politicians, musicians, poets, political ideologues, religious leaders, economists etc.) in order to determine their beliefs about human nature and the role of government in a civilized society. Students will complete the **Step Two Critical Challenge Tool: Contemporary Liberal Philosopher Research** handout.

Students who are concerned about their choice of “philosopher” should confirm the appropriateness of the choice with Mr. O before presentations!

Step Three: Compare Liberal Thought

- a. Students will form small groups of not more than three. The groups will compare and contrast a historical figure and contemporary figures
- b. Students should do additional research in order to find historical quotes and contemporary quotes in order to support their assertions. Proof may be in the form of historical or contemporary quotes, historical reenactment in video, or contemporary video, music, propaganda posters, the youtube, or other kinds of media.
- c. Students will compare and contrast (using their own choice of media - a venn diagram, video, quotes, posters, webpage, dramatic reenactment, musical performance, class discussion, etc) to SPECIFICALLY demonstrate to the class the similarities and differences between a historical liberal and a contemporary liberal with regards to:
 - 1) Their view on human nature
 - 2) Their views on the role of government
 - 3) The principles of individualism they embrace (or reject)
 - 4) The events (historical or contemporary) which may have shaped their views
- d. Students will complete **Step Three Critical Challenge Tool: Comparing Classical and Contemporary Liberal Thinkers** overlapping Venn diagram to organize key ideas from the two thinkers (see diagram below). In the centre, students are to place similarities in beliefs about government and human nature.



Activity: Written Response

Write summary statements on liberalism

Students to create three statements that reflect the principles of individualism and values of classical liberalism. Students should include combining principles of liberalism to reflect key aspects such as beliefs about human nature and the role of government.

Step One Critical Challenge Tool: Classical Philosopher Overview

Fill in the chart below:

Thinkers	Beliefs	How their ideas were radical for that time	How their ideas are related to Classical Liberalism	Rank according to agreement with your own viewpoints
Hobbes				
Locke				
Montesquieu				
Smith				
Mill				
Ricardo				
Dickens				

Step Two Critical Challenge Tool: Contemporary Liberal or Illiberal Philosopher Research

Fill in the chart below:

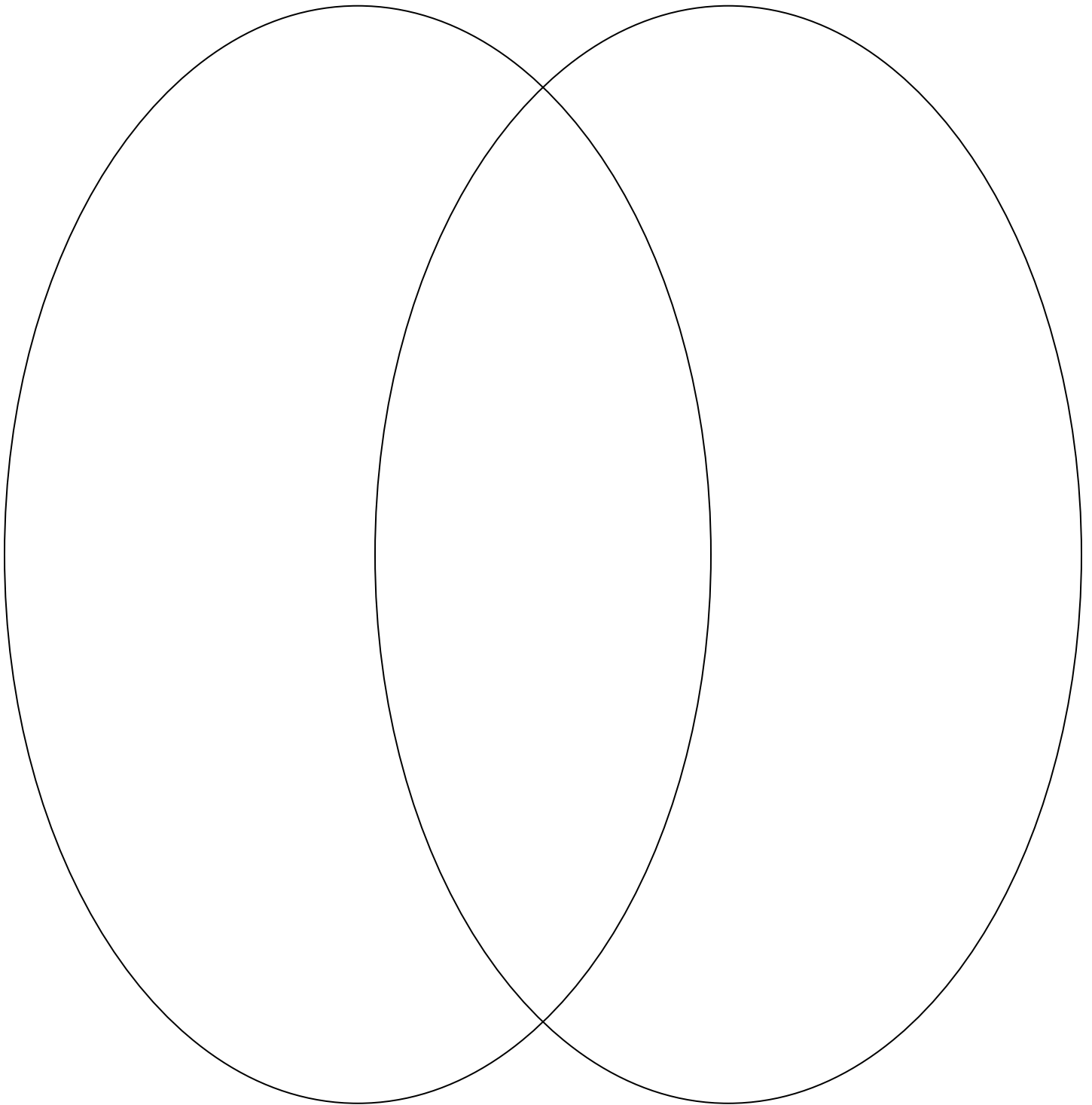
Thinker	Beliefs about human nature Include specific quotes	Beliefs about government in contemporary world Include specific quotes	How their ideas are related to (agree or disagree with) Classical Liberalism	Rank according to agreement with your own viewpoints

Step Three Critical Challenge Tool: Comparing Classical and Contemporary Liberal Thinkers

Venn Diagram

Historical Thinker:

Contemporary Thinker:



Activity One: Written Response

Write summary statements on liberalism

Students to create three statements that reflect the principles and values of liberalism. Students should include key aspects such as beliefs about human nature and the role of government.

Students should rank their statements in terms of the importance of the principal in maintaining liberalism and provide a rationale for their ranking (why has this enduring principal lasted and why will it likely be with us tomorrow?).

Statement Number One:

[illegible]

Rationale:

[illegible]

Statement Number Two:

Rationale:

Statement Number Three:

Rationale:
