

NAME _____

Political Issues & Philosophy, PER. _____

DATE _____

Labels serve as shorthand to quickly summarize where we stand on the issue. There are no hard definitions of what they mean, but there are general indicators. Because people are complex, their views don't always conform to a straight liberal or conservative view. We use other words to describe the degree of a person's political views. Read the statements that follow each issue and write the number (1, 2, or 3) in the blank that best describes your view on the topic. Add them up when you are done.

Immigration - In recent years, the U.S. has made it harder for foreign nationals to live and work in this country. What do you think?

1. Keep the immigration laws tough. Immigrants take jobs away from Americans.
2. Allow limited immigration, so long as immigrants don't burden the nation's resources.
3. Ease immigration controls. We are a nation of immigrants, and their contributions make us stronger.

Social Welfare - What is the best way to help the nation's poor?

1. Get rid of welfare programs. Give poor people no choice but to find jobs.
2. Invest in job-training programs to get people off welfare and into paying jobs.
3. Provide health care, housing, and food money for those people unable to work

Abortion - On the issue of abortion, there is little middle ground. Where do you stand?

1. Abortion is morally wrong and should not be allowed under any circumstances.
2. Abortion should be allowed only in the first trimester, and thereafter only in cases of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
3. The decision to have an abortion is up to a woman and her doctor, period.

Gun Control - What do you think should be the nation's gun policy?

1. Guns don't kill people, people do. Anyone who wants to buy a gun should be able to do so immediately, without restrictions.
2. Only those who pass a background check, apply for a license, get training, and undergo a waiting period should be allowed to own a gun.
3. Handguns and semiautomatic weapons have no purpose other than to kill people; they should be banned and the right to own guns should be extremely restricted.

Federal Budget - For the first time in decades, the U.S. government is running a surplus, meaning the amount of taxes it collects is higher than what it spends. How should the extra money be used?

1. Drastically cut taxes, especially on capital gains-profits earned from selling stocks and other property.
2. Save the Social Security system. Any money leftover after that should go to cut taxes for the middle class.
3. Bolster social programs and education.

Defense Spending - How much should government spend on national defense?

1. More. It's the only way to maintain our military superiority to protect our people.
2. The same. We are strong enough to handle any threat in the foreseeable future.
3. Less. With no serious rival to the U.S., our money is better spent on education and social programs.

Environment vs. Business - This summer, two rare species of birds chose to nest along a New York beach heavily trafficked by restaurant diners. What should be done?

1. Keep business open and let conservationists relocate the birds to another spot.
2. Fence off some areas of the strip for birds and other for human traffic.
3. Block off the area to people and compensate the restaurants for there lost business.

Trade vs. Human Rights - The U.S. trades heavily with China, despite that country's poor record on human rights. What do you think?

1. Human-rights violations are regrettable, but trade and economic growth are more important.
2. Use our trade relationship to try to convince China to improve its human-rights record.
3. Force China to change by banning all trade with China until it ends its human-rights abuses.

Foreign Aid - Turmoil around the globe often prompts the U.S. to dispatch money and/or military troops for assistant. What do you think?

1. Don't get involved. Use American money to solve America's problems.
2. Send money and troops overseas only to protect our business and security interests there.
3. As the world's most powerful nation, we have obligation to help countries in need.

School Vouchers - A government voucher, or coupon, is use to help pay for tuition at any school parents choose, including private or religious schools. What do you think?

1. Schools should operate under a free-market system- survival of the fittest. Let parents use vouchers.
2. Parents should be able to use vouchers, but religious schools should be excluded. Using government money for religious schools violates the separation of church and state.
3. Vouchers are a bad idea. They undermine public schools and promote inequality between rich and poor.

TOTAL (+1, +2, +3 = _____)

CIRCLE where you are:

30--29--28--27--26--25--24--23--22--21-- (20) --19--18--17--16--15--14--13--12--11--10

GENERALLY SPEAKING.....

Liberal

Conservative

CONSERVATIVES favor smaller government, lower taxes, less regulation of business, and fewer government programs-except in the area of defense, where they support strong military spending. On social issues, they tend to identify with traditional ideas of family and religious values. Usually vote Republican.

LIBERALS believe government had a responsibility to care for its citizens and should actively regulate businesses and the economy. In economic matters, they tend to side with poor and working people, and in social matters, they emphasize the benefits of tolerance and diversity. Usually vote Democratic.

COMMENT: Is this where you thought you would be? Why? Why not? Does the "label" fit you? EXPLAIN.

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Where are you philosophically: LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE?

DO YOU.....(Check ONLY those statements you agree with)

1. believe government must play a major role in improving the lives of the nation's citizens? C / L
2. believe the best thing the government can do to promote the health of the economic environment is to stay out of the economic affairs of the citizenry as much as possible, starting by reducing both taxes and government regulation of business? C / L
3. believe welfare programs, in general, only make things worse in the long run? C / L
4. believe the federal government should require major American corporations to employ a certain numbers of Black, Hispanic, women and other member of previously under-employed groups? C / L
5. believe people with alternative sexual preferences should be protected from discrimination? C / L
6. believe stricter laws and harsher sentencing would deter criminals and help prevent crime. C / L
7. believe capital punishment (death penalty) is necessary in our society? C / L
8. believe the government should provide a national health-care system for all citizens? C / L
9. believe American citizens have the right to bear and keep arms, including hand guns? C / L
10. believe government should provide a wide variety of programs to assist the poor, unemployed, and the otherwise disadvantaged members of society? C / L
11. believe "gov't is best which governs the least"? T. Jefferson C / L

- _____ 12. believe taxes should be lowered even if certain government programs will be cut. C / L
- _____ 13. believe free speech extends to all forms of entertainment and art. C / L
- _____ 14. believe a Constitutional Amendment should be passed that forbids the burning of the American flag? C / L
- _____ 15. believe all industrial practices which do lasting damage to the environment should be strictly regulated even though many jobs may be lost? C / L
- _____ 16. believe free syringes and needles should not be distributed (at a cost to the government) to intravenous drug users in order to prevent the spread of AIDS? C / L
- _____ 17. believe cable TV should not be allowed to use profane language and sexual references? C / L
- _____ 18. believe openly gay couples should be allowed the same benefits (tax break, medical insurance, adoption, etc.) as heterosexual married couples? C / L
- _____ 19. believe those ^{who} earn a high income should be taxed at a higher rate than those who earn less. C / L
- _____ 20. believe too much money is spent on the military. C / L

STOP. After we go over each statement and identify each as Con or Lib, do the following:

Are you leaning **LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE?** Count the # for each C / L

of **LIBERAL** AGREE _____ # of **CONSERVATIVE** AGREE _____

SUMMARY OF YOUR RESULTS: How many "Conservative" / "Liberal" statements did you (circle) agree with? Do you feel you are "leaning" toward one or the other? Explain your answer in three to four sentences and hand this assignment in.