

# The Political Spectrum

# Instructions

- Fill in the bar across the top of the spectrum with the terms seen in the next slide.
- From then on, you will see each topic row by row, left to right. The left page will show first; then the right page.
- To study for the quiz, look at the information under each topic and think about which term it goes with. See instructions at the end of the slide show.

# *Political*

# *Spectrum*

Left wing

Moderate

Right wing

Radical

Liberal

Conservative

Reactionary



Change

Tradition/  
Reform

Human Nature

Change			
Tradition/ Reform			
Human Nature			

Background:

Views about:

**Change:**

# Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Change

- “rad” = root;  
change at the root  
level
- System is corrupt;  
must create new one

Example: weeds –  
must pull them out  
by the roots; plant  
something new

*Saying: “Start over from scratch”*



“liber” = free (seeks liberties, rights)

- Change things; solve problems
- find new ways of doing things
- change within the system
- Change is good – the future can be  
even better

*Saying: “Don’t get stuck in a rut”*

*Buzz words: Reform; Progressive;  
Change = Progress*

# Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Change

- Conserve = protect, preserve
- Maintain the status quo; keep things the way they are (the present is good)
- Need good reasons to change

*Saying: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"*

- "React" – respond to change
- Regress (go back) to the way things used to be (the past was good)
- Hostile to change

*Saying: "Back in the good ol' days..."*



# Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Views about  
tradition  
and  
reform

Different traditions &  
heritages are divisive  
& dangerous

Therefore, include  
all peoples by doing  
away with  
differences,  
by force, if necessary

*Saying: "Religion is the  
opiate of the people."*

Support diversity of all  
groups

Therefore, willing to  
question traditions and  
heritage -- may see  
some in need of change

Accept multiple cultures,  
holidays, and/or lifestyles

*Saying: "Can't we all get along?"*



Become more inclusive

# Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary →

Views  
about  
tradition  
and  
reform

- Confidence in & love of tradition and heritage (in USA = WASP)
- Certain amount of conformity - “should do this”

*Buzz words: “Family values;”  
“the American Way”*

- **Must** be part of the accepted “traditional” group
- If not, you are excluded, by force, if necessary

Deport, enslave, imprison, or eliminate excluded groups  
ex.: the Holocaust,  
“Ethnic cleansing,” genocide

→  
Become more exclusive

# Left wing

Radical

Liberal



Views  
about  
human  
nature

Work to make all  
people equal --  
people will become  
happy and not need  
gov't

Until then, full  
government control  
to institute reform

Communes;  
Communism

Optimistic – people are  
basically good: controlled  
by how they are *nurtured*

-Based on Enlightenment  
ideals: “tabula rasa” or  
“blank slate”

-People can be trusted and  
can change – gov't should  
make reform, education,  
and social programs

# Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Views  
about  
human  
nature

Pessimistic – people are basically bad in their ***nature: born bad*** - can't reform a person's nature

*Based on Biblical concept of "original sin"*

-Favors fewer government programs -- fears people will abuse them

- Government's role should be to rein in human nature

*More and more social control*



Police state  
Dictatorship:  
Fascism

- Rule by the elite few; hierarchy of privilege
- Persecution of excluded groups

# Left wing

Radical

Liberal

Views  
about  
Author-ity  
& person-  
al freedom  
(Role of  
Gov't)

Ultimate goal:  
everyone  
is equal and  
content --  
No need for  
gov't

For now, make  
everyone equal (the  
same) through force

No individuality –  
you can't be different

*More and  
more  
eco-  
nomic  
control*

Favors personal  
freedoms for the  
masses – especially  
in the areas of social  
issues and First  
Amendment rights

More social equality;  
workers' rights;  
regulate business for  
the sake of society



# Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Views about  
authority  
and personal  
freedom

Favors more  
authority over the  
masses

Fewer individual  
freedoms, aside  
from in business

Control social behavior  
(protects tradition)

*More and  
more  
social  
control*



Authoritarian  
dictatorship;

Fascism -- complete  
control

Remove  
opposition  
with force

(imprison, deport,  
eliminate  
opposition)

# Left wing

Radical

Liberal



Gov't and

the Economy: Nationalize  
industries

“Collectivism” -  
everyone works for  
the common good  
enslave, imprison or  
eliminate those  
who will not conform  
(gulags -- work camps,  
“purges”)

Gov't should regulate  
business (labor laws,  
environmental safety,  
consumer standards, etc. )

Create gov't programs to help  
the masses; taxes required  
(price of doing business)

Capitalism accepted, with  
restrictions

# Right Wing

Conservative

Reactionary

Gov't and  
Economy

Laissez-Faire capitalism:  
Gov't leaves business alone

Decrease social welfare  
& other gov't programs –  
Small gov't is best:

- lighten regulations
- reduce taxes
- tax breaks for business

Exception: gov't  
programs to help business  
(tariffs, subsidies, recent  
bailouts)

Symbiotic relationship  
with big business

Big business and  
fascist dictators can work  
together -- very efficient  
and mutually beneficial

Discriminatory laws  
against social groups

ex.: Jews restricted from  
certain jobs in Nazi  
Germany; later made into  
slaves

# *Political Spectrum*

Left wing

Moderate

Right wing

Radical

Liberal

Conservative

Reactionary

Political  
Parties:

SOCIALIST  
WORKERS  
PARTY

CPUSA

DEMOCRATS

GREEN  
PARTY

REPUBLICANS

NEO-NAZI

AMERICAN  
INDEPENDENT

← LIBERTARIAN →

LIBERTARIAN

# Political Spectrum

Left wing      Moderate      Right wing

← Radical      Liberal      Conservative      Reactionary →

People who fit the description: (historical and current)

**Lenin**  
**Stalin**  
**Mao**  
**Fidel Castro**  
**Sandinistas**  
  
**FARC and ELN**

Young, urban, educated,  
 Mainline Christians,  
 Catholics, Jews  
  
 Unions,  
 civil rights groups,  
 environmentalists  
 Gandhi, Cesar Chavez,  
 M.L. King  
 FDR, JFK, LBJ  
 Gov. Brown  
 Boxer and Feinstein

Obama

Hillary Clinton

Bernie Sanders

Older, rural, blue collar  
 evangelical Christians  
 (traditional religious)  
  
 big business  
 Tea Party  
 Movement  
 (anti-tax group)  
 Hoover (1920s Pres.)  
 Reagan  
 Bush

Trump

Ted Cruz

John Kasich

**KKK**  
**Hitler**  
  
 Ayatollah (Iran)  
  
**Al Qaeda**  
**Taliban**  
  
**ISIS**  
  
**Neo-Nazis**

# Instructions for quiz

- Memorize the positions of the 4 terms (Radical, Liberal, Conservative, Reactionary)
- The quiz will ask you to place those terms on a blank line (spectrum, continuum)
- Then study the information in the chart so you can identify which position might be taken by each
  - Example: you'll see “has an optimistic view of human nature; believes that people are basically good” – you would choose the letter for “liberal”