**The Common Good**

The concept of the **“common good”** means that citizens and governments should **behave in ways that are to the benefit of all of society**, not just in ways that would benefit themselves, their family, friends, political party or social group.

**Directions**

Read the situations listed below and **complete the sentence fragments with a prediction** about what might happen. Then place a **check mark** next to the statement you believe addresses the idea of the **common good**.

**Situation 1: War**

A foreign country has just invaded the United States.

* If you volunteer for service in the U.S. military…
* If you refuse service in the U.S. military…

**Situation 2: Environmental Pollution**

A nuclear power plant is located on a river upstream from a major city. Disposing of radioactive waste legally and properly costs the nuclear power company millions of dollars a year.

* If the nuclear power plant disposes of the waste properly…
* If the nuclear power plant dumps the waste in the river…

**Situation 3: National Debt**

The United States’ national debt has risen to $16 trillion. Both the Democrats and Republicans agree that reducing the debt in the long run is vital to the economic health of the country. However, reducing the debt may require reducing spending on social programs, which Democrats oppose. It may also require raising taxes and reducing military spending, which Republicans oppose. If one party abandons its beliefs, that party’s voters may become very angry.

* If Republicans agree to military cuts and tax increases…
* If Democrats agree to reduced social spending…

**Situation 4: Airport Security**

After 9/11, U.S. airports required new security measures at airports. Passengers had to arrive at the airport up to 2 hours before flight time, put their baggage through x-ray machines, remove shoes and belts as they walk through metal detectors, and were banned from carrying liquids on planes. Passengers are also subject to “random” body searches.

* With new airport security measures…
* Without new airport security measures…

**Situation 5: Public Pond**

Anyone can go fishing at the pond, but the town proposes to put a limit on the number of fish that can be caught by a single individual.

* With limits…
* Without limits…

**Situation 6: Slavery & the Southern Economy**

Thomas Jefferson said that owning slaves was a “necessary evil.” He compared it to “holding a wolf by the ears. You don’t like doing it, but you don’t dare let it go.”

* Necessary evil…
* Emancipation…

**Situation 7: Women’s Rights**

Abigail Adams, the wife of president John Adams urged the authors of the Constitution to “remember the Ladies” when creating the new government. But most of the founding fathers did not believe in the equality of men and women. They banned women from voting, holding office, and serving on juries, and severely limited their property rights.

* Give women political rights and social equality…
* Deny women political rights and social equality…

**Situation 8: Native Americans**

By the time of the American Revolution, white Americans vastly outnumbered Native Americans.

* Allow white American westward expansion & settlement…
* Stop white American westward expansion & settlement…

**Situation 9: Federalists vs. Democratic-Republicans**

The two political parties disagreed over which was more important: individual freedom or the stability of the national government.

* Federalists…
* Democratic-Republicans…

**Classify the terms below under the heading “Common Good” or “Personal Good.”**

Unlimited Freedom

Government Stability

Order

Liberty

Equality

Community

Obedience

State’s rights

National supremacy

Nullification

Group

Individual

Security

Authority

Power

Factionalism

Sectionalism

Nationalism

**List here:**

**Common Good Personal Good**