



#8970

FALL FROM GRACE I & II

Grade Levels: 8-13+

60 minutes

VIDEO RESOURCES SOFTWARE 1999

DESCRIPTION

Flagrant managerial abuses in an apartment building lead to charges against a councilwoman who has invested in it. As further facts about her involvement become public, some citizens begin a move to remove her from office. After the drama, a short documentary reviews the history of representative government, its purpose, and the process used to oust one who abuses the elected position.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Civics

- ◆ Standard: Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good
 - Benchmark: Knows alternative ideas about the purposes and functions of law (e.g., regulating relationships among people and between people and their government; providing order, predictability, security, and established procedures for the management of conflict; regulating social and economic relationships in civil society)
- ◆ Standard: Understands the central ideas of American constitutional government and how this form of government has shaped the character of American society
 - Benchmark: Knows the major ideas about republican government that influenced the development of the United States Constitution (e.g., the concept of representative government, the importance of civic virtue or concern for the common good)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

PART I

1. To explore the concept of natural/basic rights.
2. To learn how major historical models of government contributed to the political system of the United States.

PART II

1. To illustrate how citizens can exercise their authority over government in the American political system.
2. To identify the options citizens have when elected officials break the terms of the contract.
3. To explore the rights and responsibilities of people who live in the United States.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

“Fall from Grace I and II” are two of 15 thirty-minute episodes found in the *On Common Ground* series. *On Common Ground* is a different and exciting way to learn about U.S. history and government. Each episode includes an action-filled story and a short documentary segment. The stories show the “common ground”—the common values that people in the United States share.

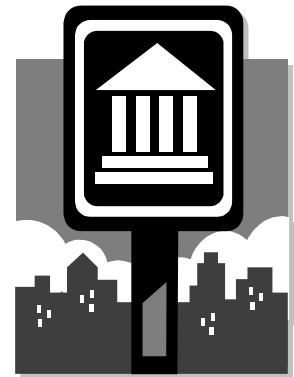
VOCABULARY

PART I

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. allegation | 5. Magna Carta |
| 2. constituents | 6. Model Parliament |
| 3. direct democracy | 7. negligent |
| 4. district | 8. tyranny |

PART II

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. initiative | 4. recall |
| 2. petition | 5. referendum |
| 3. popular sovereignty | 6. registered |



BEFORE SHOWING

PART I

1. Discuss the following:
 - a. What are the roots of American democracy?
 - b. Who was John Locke? Briefly explain his concept of natural rights.
 - 1) Ask students to brainstorm rights that fall under the headings of right to life, liberty and property.
 - 2) Are natural rights absolute or are there limits on these rights? Discuss as a class.
 - c. What is meant by limited government?
 - d. In a democracy, how can citizens insure that government reflects their natural rights to life, liberty and property?
2. Think about the series title, *On Common Ground*, and the video title, “Fall from Grace.” What feelings and ideas do the titles provoke? Share these with the class.
3. Discuss the vocabulary words used in the video.

PART II

1. Review the events that took place in “Fall from Grace,” Part I.
2. Ask students to consider the following while viewing the video:
 - a. What duties and responsibilities do citizens have to insure that elected representatives serve their interests?
 - b. How do citizens exercise their authority over government in the American political system?
 - c. What options do citizens have when elected officials break the terms of their contract?
3. Think about ways in which citizens can exercise their authority over government.
 - a. How difficult is it for the public to exercise these rights?
 - b. Discuss how the guarantees of the First Amendment limit government and provide citizens with the power to exert influence over governmental authority.
4. Review the options citizens can take when their elected officials fail to uphold the law or refuse to follow the wishes of the majority of their constituents.
 - a. Explain the impeachment process.
 - b. Why did the Founders believe it was necessary to include in the Constitution?
 - c. What are the constitutional requirements regarding the impeachment of the President of the United States?
 - d. What alternatives do citizens have short of impeaching public officials?
5. Discuss the vocabulary words utilized in the video.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

PART I

1. Discuss how the dramatization reflects the concept of limited government. It has been said that a representative democracy is based on the belief that government exists to serve the needs of the people—not the other way around.
 - a. In this dramatization is government serving the needs of the people?
 - b. Is Councilwoman Hathaway representing the interests of the constituents in her district?
 - c. To what extent is there a conflict of interest in Ms. Hathaway's recommendation to the mayor that the city should purchase the Evergreen Apartments and construct a low-rent apartment complex in its place?
2. Discuss the following:
 - a. Was the city negligent in enforcing health and safety standards?
 - b. Why was it difficult for government officials to do something about the problems at the Evergreen Apartments?
 - c. What responsibility does the city government have to protect the rights of tenants?
 - d. What options do tenants have when apartment owners fail to make needed repairs?

- e. What are the property rights of the owners of the apartment complex?
- f. Are the rights of property owners and tenants in conflict?

PART II

1. Review the events as they unfolded in the dramatization.
 - a. How important was investigative reporting in exposing the ownership of the apartment complex?
 - b. What political pressures were evident in the episode?
 - c. How did angry citizens organize to redress their grievances?
2. Discuss the impeachments of President Andrew Johnson, President Bill Clinton and the resignation of President Richard Nixon. Explain how the selected case demonstrated the rule of law.

Applications and Activities

PART I

1. Research and discuss the influences of the following governments on the foundation of the U.S. political system:
 - a. Ancient Athens
 - b. Ancient Rome
 - c. England
2. Contact your city council representative and inquire about city codes pertaining to rentals.
 - a. Do large apartment complexes have to provide a list of names of owners or shareholders in the enterprise?
 - b. Who is held responsible for proper management of the facility?
 - c. What recourse does the city have if there are violations of health and safety codes?
3. Collect at least three articles about how people have improved their communities by working with the government to create change. Look for factors that contributed to their success. Share findings with the class.
4. At the close of this episode of the two-part drama, "Fall from Grace," Councilwoman Hathaway assures the press that she will be exonerated as soon as the facts in the case are made known.
 - a. What arguments might she present in order to exonerate herself?
 - b. Predict the outcome of the episode.

PART II

1. Debate the proposition that elected public officials are to vote according to the wishes of the majority of their constituents rather than the dictates of their conscience.
2. Investigate the issue of term limits and prepare a short persuasive speech to demonstrate your support for or opposition to term limits on the local, state or national level. Discuss the issue as a class.
3. Research the most recent case involving the recall of a city or state official.

- What were the issues involved?
- What groups supported recall?
- How successful was the effort to remove the person from office?

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program



- Amendment 1: Freedom of Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly, and Petition #3562
- Forms of Government: What's the Score? #3467

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- IMPEACHMENT: THE PROCESS AND HISTORY**

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/impeachment/>

Thorough site includes a step-by-step guide to the impeachment process. Also included is a history of impeachments in the United States.

- THE INTERNET ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY: JOHN LOCKE**

<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/l/locke.htm>

Includes biography, letters and writings on topics such as education, theology and economy.

- HUMAN RIGHTS WEB**

<http://www.hrweb.org/>

Includes an introduction and history of the human rights movement, United Nations documents pertaining to human rights, the Magna Carta and more.

- BEN'S GUIDE TO U.S. GOVERNMENT: GRADES 9-12**

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/index.html>

Government site includes topics such as historical documents, how laws are made, national versus state government, branches of government and more.