

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Mr. Jessup

Federalist No. 51 (Guided Reading)

Publius

(James Madison) February 6, 1788

“But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department, the necessary constitutional means, and personal motives, to resist encroachments of the others. The provision for defence [sic] must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack. Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.”

Why does Madison fear a gradual concentration of power? _____

Interpretative Questions:

1. How can government, as Madison claims, be “the greatest of all reflections on human nature”?
2. How does “the multiplicity of interests” in American society protect the rights of its citizens?
3. Is the author arguing that the federal government should be as accountable to any given minority as to the majority?
4. Since Madison argues the Constitution would protect the rights of the minority, is he justified in believing that “a coalition of a majority of the whole society could seldom take place on any other principles than those of justice and the general good”?

Evaluative Questions:

1. Is Madison's opinion of the role of self-interest in the conduct of one's life realistic?
2. Do you believe the controls against the abuse of power by a single government department have been effective?
3. Does the federal government equally serve majority and minority interests today?
4. Is there a role for states anymore?

Write a response to the following quotes and be ready to discuss them during the Socratic Seminar –

Quote #1 -- “In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.”

Quote #2 -- “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government.”

Quote #3 -- “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”

Quote #4 -- “But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others.”

Quote #5 -- “A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.”

Quote #6 -- “In the compound republic of America, the power surrendered by the people is first divided between two distinct governments, and then the portion allotted to each subdivided among distinct and separate departments. Hence a double security arises to the rights of the people. The different governments will control each other, at the same time that each will be controlled by itself.”

Quote #7 -- “This policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives, might be traced through the whole system of human affairs, private as well as public.”

Quote #8 -- “In a free government the security for civil rights must be the same as that for religious rights. It consists in the one case in the multiplicity of interests, and in the other in the multiplicity of sects. The degree of security in both cases will depend on the number of interests and sects; and this may be presumed to depend on the extent of country and number of people comprehended under the same government.”

