

## Presidential Actions: Appropriate Use of Power or Abuse of Power?

You have been assigned two presidential actions. You are to use reliable Internet sources and a copy of the Constitution to decide whether each action was an appropriate use of presidential power or an abuse of power.

■ Consider the following in each case:

- historical context.
- immediacy of action needed
- which groups might oppose him.
- which branch should have checked this power and why they perhaps didn't.

■ ***Complete the preparation sheet on the other side of this paper and turn it in on the day of your group's presentation.***

On \_\_\_\_\_, your group will present the following for the president you were assigned:

- First, clearly explain to the class the historical background and context of the situation and the presidential action taken. Be sure to provide enough detail so the class will understand the situation clearly. Also, be sure to state what specific grant of presidential power in the Constitution is at the center of the controversy.
- Next, provide a mini-debate on that presidential action, with one (or more) person(s) defending the action as an appropriate use of presidential power and one (or more) person(s) arguing the action was an abuse of power. You are expected to put passion, feeling, and energy into this debate—powerfully and convincingly assert your side of the argument so class members have a basis from which to decide for themselves whether this was an appropriate use or abuse of power
- Repeat this for the second presidential action assigned.

- a) Abraham Lincoln--Suspended Writ of Habeus Corpus; made over 13,000 arbitrary arrests during Civil War
  - b) Abraham Lincoln--Despite Constitutional protection of slavery, he abolished it (Emancipation Proclamation) citing his power as Commander-in-Chief
- a) Woodrow Wilson—Supported, Signed, and Vigorously Enforced the Sedition Act of 1918
  - b) Woodrow Wilson--Appointed Creel Commission to conduct propaganda and conduct censorship during WWI
- a) Franklin D. Roosevelt--Interned those of Japanese ancestry during W.W.II (1942)
  - b) Harry S Truman—Took over the nation's steel mills during the Korean War (1952)
- a) Richard Nixon—Invaded Cambodia during the Vietnam War (1970)
  - b) Barack Obama—Ordered the U.S. military to intervene in the Libyan civil war (2011)
- a) George W. Bush—authorized warrantless surveillance by the National Security Agency as part of the "war on terror"
  - b) George W. Bush--Detainment of enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba without trial in federal court; coercive interrogation of captured persons to extract information as part of the "war on terror" (2002-2008)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

President \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Details about the context of the presidential action taken:

Through what specific grant of power in the Constitution could the president justify the action taken—provide the specific wording from the Constitution and the specific section of the Constitution where it is found:

Arguments in support of the presidential action taken

Arguments against the presidential action taken

Name \_\_\_\_\_

President \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Details about the context of the presidential action taken:

Through what specific grant of power in the Constitution could the president justify the action taken—provide the specific wording from the Constitution and the specific section of the Constitution where it is found:

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