Who Should Rule?

Compare two answers to a question about political power.

SS24.8.15a "Compare and contrast the political philosophies of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one idea Hobbes and Locke share, circle a phrase showing each thinker's view of government power, and number their different reasons for forming a government 1 and 2.

Order, Rights, and Rulers

1 In seventeenth-century England, civil war and struggles over royal power raised a hard question: What makes a government legitimate? Thomas Hobbes published *Leviathan* in 1651, after years of civil war. He imagined people living without a common government, a condition he called the state of nature. They might want peace, but fear and competition could turn daily life dangerous. To escape that danger, people agree to give a ruler or assembly strong authority. Hobbes thought a government that could enforce rules offered better protection than a society without one.

2 John Locke wrote *Two Treatises of Government*, published in 1689, after another conflict over the English crown. He also imagined a state of nature, but he did not treat it as constant warfare. People already have natural rights to life, liberty, and property, he argued. Yet without an agreed judge, disputes over those rights can be hard to settle. People therefore form governments by consent to protect rights. For Locke, political power belongs to the people first, and rulers hold it only for a limited purpose.

3 Imagine a town where neighbors argue about who may use a shared well. Both thinkers would favor rules over leaving every dispute to individuals. Hobbes would stress a strong authority able to stop fights and keep order. Locke would ask whether the rules protect people's rights and whether those governed agreed to the authority making them. Their views also split when leaders fail: Hobbes generally warned against resisting a ruler, since revolt could bring disorder, while Locke argued that people may replace a government that repeatedly violates their rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Hobbes and Locke differ in their views of life without a common government?

2. What reason for forming a government did the two thinkers share, and what did each most want it to protect?

3. Compare the power people give a government in Hobbes's and Locke's views.

4. How would Hobbes and Locke differ about replacing a ruler who repeatedly violates people's rights?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A city council elected by residents sets a curfew after repeated nighttime fights. In four or five sentences, explain how Hobbes and Locke might each judge the curfew, then state whether you support it and why.

ANSWER KEY

Who Should Rule?

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.15a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one idea Hobbes and Locke share, circle a phrase showing each thinker's view of government power, and number their different reasons for forming a government 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Hobbes and Locke differ in their views of life without a common government?	**Hobbes saw fear and competition making life dangerous. Locke believed people had rights, but disputes were hard to settle without an agreed judge.**
2	What reason for forming a government did the two thinkers share, and what did each most want it to protect?	**Both wanted a government to protect people. Hobbes emphasized safety and order; Locke emphasized natural rights to life, liberty, and property.**
3	Compare the power people give a government in Hobbes's and Locke's views.	**For Hobbes, people agree to give a ruler or assembly strong authority to enforce rules. For Locke, government receives power by consent and holds it for the limited purpose of protecting rights.**
4	How would Hobbes and Locke differ about replacing a ruler who repeatedly violates people's rights?	**Hobbes generally warned against resistance because revolt could cause disorder. Locke argued that people may replace a government that repeatedly violates their rights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Hobbes would likely support the curfew because a strong authority can stop fights and keep order. Locke might support it if the elected council uses the rule to protect residents' rights. He might object if the curfew lasts longer than needed and unfairly limits people's liberty. I would support a short curfew that residents can review through their elected council. It would address danger without giving leaders unlimited power.

Accept reasoned judgments that connect Hobbes to order and strong authority, and Locke to consent and the protection of rights. Students may support or oppose the curfew if they explain their decision.