Who Fixes the Pipes?

Compare political approaches to a public problem.

9-12.GOV.14 "Compare and contrast major American political ideologies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle goals that two ideologies share, then underline a proposed action for each of the four ideologies. Use your marks to compare where their approaches agree and differ.

A Town's Water Problem

1 After a town finds lead in its drinking water, residents ask who should replace old pipes and who should pay. Political ideologies offer different starting points, not automatic answers for every person. Modern American liberals often argue that government should protect public health and reduce unequal risks. In this case, a liberal might support federal money for pipe replacement and rules requiring water testing. Modern American conservatives also value safe water but often favor decisions made closer to home. A conservative might prefer state and local plans, with federal help limited so communities can choose how to repair their own systems.

2 Progressives share many liberal goals, including public investment and protection from pollution, but often press for faster, broader changes to unfair systems. A progressive might demand that the oldest pipes in low-income neighborhoods be replaced first, with firm deadlines and strong public oversight. A liberal might support the same priority while accepting a slower plan negotiated with state officials. Libertarians usually place greater weight on individual choice and limited government than either group. A libertarian might oppose a new federal mandate and favor private contractors chosen by property owners to replace pipes on private property, while still wanting accurate water test results made public.

3 These positions can overlap. A conservative and a libertarian may both oppose a nationwide replacement rule, but the conservative may still support state funding while the libertarian may object to taxes for that program. A liberal and a progressive may both support federal funding, yet disagree about how quickly work must begin and how firmly officials should prioritize neighborhoods with older pipes. None of these labels tells us what every voter thinks. Comparing ideologies means asking which goals they share, where their preferred government actions differ, and what tradeoffs each approach makes when a real community faces a problem.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What goal might liberals and conservatives share in this town, and how might their plans for government action differ?

2. How might a liberal and a progressive agree about which pipes to replace first but differ about the pace of the work?

3. Conservatives and libertarians may both oppose a nationwide replacement rule. How might they disagree about paying for repairs?

4. How might a progressive and a libertarian differ on government rules and individual choice in this case?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A city is considering a rule requiring restaurants to use reusable takeout containers. In five sentences, compare how two ideologies from the passage might respond, identify one possible shared goal and one difference, then recommend a policy and explain a tradeoff.

ANSWER KEY

Who Fixes the Pipes?

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.GOV.14

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle goals that two ideologies share, then underline a proposed action for each of the four ideologies. Use your marks to compare where their approaches agree and differ. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What goal might liberals and conservatives share in this town, and how might their plans for government action differ?	**Both want safe water. A liberal might support federal funding and testing rules, while a conservative might prefer state and local plans with limited federal help.**
2	How might a liberal and a progressive agree about which pipes to replace first but differ about the pace of the work?	**Both might prioritize older pipes in low-income neighborhoods. A progressive might demand firm deadlines, while a liberal might accept a slower plan negotiated with state officials.**
3	Conservatives and libertarians may both oppose a nationwide replacement rule. How might they disagree about paying for repairs?	**A conservative may support state funding, while a libertarian may object to taxes for that program.**
4	How might a progressive and a libertarian differ on government rules and individual choice in this case?	**A progressive might demand firm deadlines and public oversight to replace pipes in low-income neighborhoods first. A libertarian might oppose a federal mandate and favor property owners choosing contractors for pipes on private property.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A progressive might support the rule because it could reduce waste across the city. A libertarian might oppose it because it limits restaurant owners' choices. Both could want less litter in public spaces, even if they disagree about the city's role. I would require restaurants to offer reusable containers but let customers choose other options. This policy leaves room for individual choice, but it might reduce waste more slowly than a rule requiring reusable containers for every takeout order.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons that distinguish shared goals from preferred government actions. For Your Turn, accept plausible applications of two ideologies rather than treating any position as a belief held by every member of a group.