

College Guild
PO Box 6448, Brunswick ME 04011

CAPTIVITIES

Unit 1 of 5

Welcome to the College Guild course, Captivities.

Overview: Captivity can take many forms including disability, ignorance, and poverty. In this course, you will explore various forms of captivity, people who experience them, the effects they can have, and methods some people use to cope with their limitations.

Guidelines for all College Guild courses:

1. **Answer all the questions that are in bold print, using black or blue ink or dark pencil if possible.** After we receive and review your completed Unit, we will send you feedback from your reader along with your original work and the next Unit. You don't need to return the questions – it saves us both postage.
2. There is no **specific deadline** to complete any Unit, but we would get concerned if we hadn't heard back from you after two months.
3. Remember how often the mail service loses things. **If you don't hear back from us after a month, please write to make sure we received your Unit** and sent out the next one.

Let us know if you need a dictionary, free to students who complete the first unit.

PART 1: LADY JUSTICE

The figure "Blind Justice" represents the United States legal system at its best. Her eyes are covered to show that she has not seen anything to prejudice her before entering the courtroom. That way, she weighs the evidence on her scales to reach a fair, objective decision.

However, justice isn't always handed down with objectivity and fairness. Here are two quotations written in the 1800's that have something to say about that:

The law is a ass. (Charles Dickens)

Justice is blind. Blind she is, an' deaf an' dumb, and has a wooden leg.
F.P. Dunne (1867-1936,)

1. **It's clear what Dickens meant when it comes to justice, but what does Dunne mean?**
2. **Give an example of when justice has been "blind" in the good way – objective and fair. Give an example of when she was blind and deaf, turning her back on fairness.**

3. In the history of the United States, what is one law that could be considered unjust?
How would you change that law?

4. Instead of a blindfolded woman, what would be a good symbol for justice at its best. Sketch a picture of it next to Lady Justice.



Ideally, the members of the Supreme Court (called “Justices”) approach each case with open minds, but of course each Justice has political views. The reason this is so important is that Presidents nominate Justices for the Supreme Court, and they are appointed for life! Therefore, if a seat on the Supreme Court becomes empty during his term in office, the President's political views influence American laws for years to come.

5. What is the advantage of having a Supreme Court Justice appointed for life?

Here are some of the issues Americans are debating: sale of automatic weapons, right to life, right to die, reinstating the draft, and legalizing medical marijuana.

6. Pick one of these issues – how do you think the Supreme Court would rule on it?
How would that affect the country?

When the Supreme Court makes a decision on a law, it requires that every state comply with that decision.

7. Pick another one of those issues. Would you prefer to have your state or the Federal courts rule on it? Why?

8. Would you rather be a lawyer arguing a case before the Supreme Court or before a small town judge? Why?

PART 2: PREJUDICE

The most common kind of captives are the men, women, societies, cultures and countries that are prisoners of their own ignorance. Injustice thrives on prejudice. Despite the power and wisdom of Dr. Martin Luther King's plea that his children be judged "*not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character*," prejudice is still very much with us. It is based on race, religion, culture, sex, sexual preference, disabilities, etc.

9. List 3 ways in which prejudice hurts the target.

10. List 3 ways in which it hurts the bigot.

11. Pick any group of people who face discrimination and stereotyping.

How and when did the stereotype begin, and why has it lasted?

What are the results of that prejudice? Has that changed over time?

Books, movies and TV can reinforce a stereotype. For example, it was common in the movies of the 1950's for the Indians to attack cowboys and pioneer settlements; the "redskins" were the bad guys, the white man the hero. Some sports teams have changed their names (such as Red Skins) to avoid being accused of perpetuating a stereotype.

12. Does it make a difference to change team names? Why or why not?

13. How did society view Native-Americans 100 years ago? What is that view now?

14. Give an example of a book, movie or show that encourages stereotyping.

Name one that shows stereotyping is wrong.

PART 3: INTERNATIONAL PREJUDICE

Stereotypes and prejudice can apply to whole countries. Following World War II, the United Nations was formed. Its goal is to foster international understanding, cooperation, and peace. These goals are shared by many programs and organizations. Doctors Without Borders consists of volunteer medical professionals who travel to other countries to help improve the quality of medical services and reach more people in need of doctors. There are summer camps that bring together Israeli and Palestinian children who form friendships and learn to respect each other's cultures.

15. Select 2 countries and explain the differences between them that led to conflict.

16. Design a program to improve cooperation and understanding between 2 countries. Who would participate in the peace-making?

Before this country invaded Iraq, we brought our case to the United Nations which did not agree with invasion. We went ahead without UN approval or support.

17. What would have been different in Iraq if the UN's member countries had acted together?

18. Should the United Nations help the U.S. now? If so, in what way?

19. How much control should the United Nations have in decisions involving two countries?

PART 4: PRISONER PREJUDICE

This section is not about prejudice toward prisoners, but stereotyping by prisoners. Three inmate groups who face discrimination to the point of being actively persecuted are:

informants

those convicted of child molesting

former police officers

The quick response here is that these groups are harassed for their actions. "Pigs," "rats" and "skinner" are beneath contempt and deserve what they get, right?

20. Select one of these three groups and explain why they should be treated with the same respect due other prisoners.

Also unpopular, of course, are police, prison administration, and correctional officers. Common thinking is that these people have only one view of how prisoners should be treated – with cruelty or indifference.

**21. What is the job of the police in today's society?
Has this changed in the past 20 years?**

**22. What should police be doing at public schools?
What should they be doing on New Year's eve?**

In some states, there is a problem finding corrections officers to fill vacant positions. It's bad for everyone involved if a prison's staff is poorly trained and not suitable for the job.

23. What kind of training should good correctional officers have? Design a specific program.

You take the training, are hired, and then find out you are assigned to death row.

**24. How do you feel about your job working on death row?
Do you relate to the death row inmates differently than those in general population?**

PART 5: THE DREAM OF EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

Some of the most stirring words among the documents and on the monuments of the United States are quoted below. Government as it exists today is certainly flawed. Voters have to want to make changes, then support candidates who promise to work for those changes. Ideally, that's how democracy should work.

25. Name 3 ways that politicians convince people to vote for them.

**26. Pick one issue you feel strongly about (at either the national, state, or town level).
How would you get people to support it?**

Despite greedy politicians, manipulation of the voting system, and influence of money, the United States is a democracy – a system of government that allows all Americans to vote (including prisoners in some states.) It's a magnificent dream to want equality and justice for all. The Americans who wrote the following words believed it could happen. These quotations represent our country at its best.

The Liberty Bell, made in 1752, was first rung in 1776 for the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. On it are the words:

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

The Statue of Liberty sits on an island in New York Harbor. It was a gift to the United States from France in 1886. The figure of a woman holding up a torch faces the ocean; for immigrants, she was their first sight of the new country. A poem is engraved on the Statue of Liberty's base. It portrays the U.S. as a country that welcomes those who had to leave their own countries to find better, safer lives....

*“... Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest tost, to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

From The Declaration of Independence, the document declaring the United States a country separate from England, comes this excerpt:

“... We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness – that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”

The Bill of Rights [Amendments 1 through 10 to the Constitution] were ratified by Congress in 1791. Article 1 says:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

The Emancipation Proclamation

“...That on the 1st day of January, 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State... the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.”

These quotations demonstrate the desire of the county to:
proclaim liberty
welcome immigrants
recognize that all men are created equal
protect the rights of religion, speech, the press and assembly
free the slaves

27. Pick one of these quotations and write an essay about the dream it represents.

28. Pick another and write a story or poem about the dream it represents.

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes