

Adapted from <http://primohistory.com/Conservative%20vs%20Liberals.pdf>

## Conservative vs. Liberal Beliefs

“We all want...the same things in life. We want freedom; we want the chance for prosperity; we want to be the best we can be; we want as few people suffering as possible, economically; we want healthy children; we want to have crime-free streets; all these things, they’re pretty common...The argument is how to achieve them.”

<p>CONSERVATIVES – believe in personal responsibility, limited government, free markets, individual liberty, traditional American values and a strong national defense. Believe the role of government should be to provide people the freedom necessary to pursue their own goals.</p> <p>Conservative policies generally emphasize empowerment of the individual to solve problems.</p>	<p>LIBERALS – believe in governmental action to achieve equal opportunity and equality for all, and that it is the duty of the State to alleviate social ills and to protect civil liberties and individual and human rights. Believe the role of the government should be to guarantee that no one is in need. Believe that people are basically good.</p> <p>Liberal policies generally emphasize the need for the government to solve people’s problems.</p>
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Issue	A. Conservative	B. Liberal
Abortion	<p>Human life begins at conception. Abortion is the murder of a human being. Nobody has the right to murder a human being.</p> <p>Object to <i>Roe v. Wade</i> and the idea that the Constitution protects a right to privacy</p> <p>Support legislation to prohibit partial birth abortions, called the “Partial Birth Abortion Ban” (partial birth abortion - the killing of an unborn baby of at least 20 weeks by pulling it out of the birth canal with forceps, but leaving the head inside).</p>	<p>A fetus is not a human life.</p> <p>The decision to have an abortion is a personal choice of a woman regarding her own body and the government should stay out of it. Women should be guaranteed the right to a safe and legal abortion, including partial birth abortion.</p>
Affirmative action	<p>People should be admitted to schools and hired for jobs based on their ability. It is unfair to use race as a factor in the selection process. Reverse- discrimination is not a solution for racism.</p>	<p>Due to prevalent racism in the past, minorities were deprived of the same education and employment opportunities as whites. We need to make up for that.</p> <p>Support affirmative action based on the belief that America is still a racist society. Minorities still lag behind whites in all statistical measurements of success. Also, the presence of minorities creates diversity.</p>
Death penalty	<p>The death penalty is a punishment that fits the crime; it is neither ‘cruel’ nor ‘unusual’. Executing a murderer is the appropriate punishment for taking an innocent life.</p>	<p>We should abolish the death penalty. The death penalty is inhumane and is ‘cruel and unusual’ punishment. It does not deter crime. Imprisonment is the appropriate punishment. Every execution risks killing an innocent person.</p>
Economy	<p>The free market system, competitive capitalism, and private enterprise afford the widest opportunity and the highest standard of living for all. Free markets produce more economic growth, more jobs and higher standards of living than those systems burdened by excessive government regulation.</p>	<p>Favor a market system in which government regulates the economy. We need government to protect us against big businesses. Unlike the private sector, the government is motivated by public interest. We need government regulation to level the playing field.</p>

Education - school vouchers	<p>School vouchers will give all parents the right to choose good schools for their children, not just those who can afford private schools. Parents (who pay the taxes that fund the schools) should decide how and where to educate their child, including religious schools and other private schools.</p> <p>Favor charter schools and school choice.</p>	<p>School vouchers are untested experiments. We need to focus on more funding for existing public schools to raise teacher salaries and reduce class size.</p> <p>Favor traditional district schools over charter schools.</p>
Environment	<p>Desire clean water, clean air and a clean planet, just like everyone else. However, extreme environmental policies destroy jobs and damage the economy. Believe that regulations should undergo a cost/benefit analysis before imposing new restrictions.</p> <p>Although global warming may be real, the situation is not as dire as predicted. The United States should not unilaterally cut fossil fuel usage when developing nations like India and China need to do far more first.</p> <p>Believe that investment in clean energy should be done as the market demands it, not by government order.</p>	<p>Industrial growth harms the environment.</p> <p>Global warming is caused by an increased production of carbon dioxide. The U.S. is a major contributor to global warming because it produces 25% of the world's carbon dioxide. The U.S. should enact laws to significantly reduce that amount.</p> <p>Investment in renewable energy is critical to future success and government incentives should push the market toward developing them.</p>
Gun control	<p>The Second Amendment gives the individual the right to keep and bear arms. You have a right to defend yourself against criminals. More guns mean less crime.</p> <p>Oppose most gun control legislation.</p>	<p>Some liberals believe that the Second Amendment gives no individual the right to own a gun, but allows the state to keep a militia (National Guard). Others support the right to own firearms but believe strong gun control laws such as background checks and bans on assault-style weapons are necessary.</p>
Health care	<p>Free healthcare provided by the government (socialized medicine) means that everyone will get the same poor-quality healthcare. The rich will continue to pay for superior healthcare, while all others will receive poor-quality free healthcare from the government. Health care should remain privatized.</p> <p>Support Healthcare Spending Accounts.</p>	<p>Support universal government-supervised health care. There are millions of Americans who can't afford health insurance. They are being deprived of a basic right to healthcare.</p>

Immigration	<p>Support legal immigration at current numbers, but do not support illegal immigration. Government should enforce immigration laws. Oppose Dreamers Act for illegal immigrants. Those who break the law by entering the U.S. illegally should not have the same rights as those who obey the law by entering legally.</p> <p>If there were a decrease in cheap, illegal immigrant labor, employers would have to substitute higher-priced domestic employees, legal immigrants, or perhaps increase mechanization.</p>	<p>Support legal immigration and increasing the number of legal immigrants permitted to enter the U.S. each year. Support blanket amnesty for current illegal immigrants (Dreamer's Act).</p> <p>Believe that regardless of how they came to the U.S., illegal immigrants deserve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- U.S. government financial aid for college tuition.</li> <li>- visas for spouse/children to come to</li> </ul>
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		<p>the U.S. Families shouldn't be separated.</p> <p>Illegal immigrants do the jobs that Americans do not want to do.</p>
Religion	<p>The phrase "separation of church and state" is not in the Constitution. The First Amendment to the Constitution states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." This prevents the government from establishing a national church. However, it does not prevent God from being acknowledged in schools and government buildings.</p> <p>Oppose the removal of symbols of Christian heritage from public and government spaces.</p> <p>Government should not interfere with religion and religious freedom and support business owners who choose not to serve certain customers like same-sex wedding couples.</p>	<p>Support the separation of church and state. Religious expression has no place in government.</p> <p>Support the removal of all references to God in public and government spaces.</p> <p>Religion should not interfere with government.</p> <p>Support gays and lesbians to be free from discrimination and believe all businesses should serve those individuals</p>
Same-sex marriage	<p>Marriage is between one man and one woman.</p> <p>Believe that requiring citizens to sanction same-sex relationships violates moral and religious beliefs of millions of Christians, Jews, Muslims and others who believe marriage is the union of a man and a woman.</p>	<p>Marriage should be legal for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples to ensure equal rights for all.</p> <p>All individuals, regardless of their sex, have the right to marry.</p> <p>Believe that prohibiting same-sex citizens from marrying denies them of their civil rights.</p>
Social Security	<p>The current Social Security system is in serious financial trouble. Changes are necessary because the U.S. will be unable to maintain the current system in the future. Support proposal to allow a portion of Social Security dollars withheld to be put into an account chosen by the individual, not the government.</p>	<p>Generally oppose change to the current Social Security system. Opinions vary on whether the current system is in financial trouble. Changing the current system will cause people to lose their Social Security benefits.</p> <p>Support a cap on Social Security payments to the wealthy.</p>
Taxes	<p>Support lower taxes and a smaller government. Lower taxes create more incentive for people to work, save, invest, and engage in entrepreneurial endeavors. Money is best spent by those who earn it.</p>	<p>Support higher taxes and a larger government. High taxes enable the government to do good and create jobs. We need high taxes for social welfare programs, to provide for the poor. We can't afford to cut taxes.</p>
War on terror/terrorism	<p>The world toward which the Militant Islamists strive cannot peacefully co-exist with the Western world. In the last decade, Militant Islamists have repeatedly attacked Americans and American interests here and abroad. The terrorists must be stopped and destroyed.</p> <p>Support mass surveillance efforts to combat terrorism.</p>	<p>Believe that the response to 9/11 was discriminatory against Muslims. Do not support mass surveillance efforts to combat terrorism.</p>
Welfare	<p>Oppose long-term welfare. We need to provide opportunities to make it possible for poor and low-income workers to become self-reliant. It is far more compassionate and effective to encourage a person to become self-reliant, rather than keeping them dependent on the government for money.</p>	<p>Support welfare. We need welfare to provide for the poor. Conservatives oppose welfare because they are not compassionate toward the poor.</p>

		We have welfare to bring fairness to American economic life. Without welfare, life below the poverty line would be intolerable.
Race/racism	<p>Believe that past racism does not contribute in a meaningful way to modern-day disparities between Blacks and Whites</p> <p>The ideals of equality and meritocracy help to provide an equal playing field for racial minorities today</p> <p>Institutions are not irredeemably racist and reject the concept of systemic racism</p>	<p>Believe in systemic racism, the concept that past racism has so infected social and political institutions that those institutions must be recreated without the influence of such prejudice</p> <p>The ideal of equality has not been realized for Blacks and other minorities</p> <p>Think that equity between races and classes is more important than the concept of meritocracy</p>
National Defense	<p>A strong national defense is key to maintaining domestic security</p> <p>Negotiation should always proceed from a position of strength</p>	<p>Believe that the size of the military should be scaled back</p> <p>Negotiation and diplomacy are as much a part of national defense as military strength</p>
Criminal Justice	<p>Criminals should be punished for misdeeds and desire lengthy sentences to punish offenders and to give victims justice</p> <p>Believe criminal laws are not designed or used in a discriminatory fashion</p> <p>The disparity in incarceration rates between Blacks and Whites are due to differences in offending rates between the races, not racial discrimination</p>	<p>Criminals should be sentenced to incarceration only for violent crimes and the focus should be on rehabilitating behavior</p> <p>Sentences should be proportionate to the crime and limited in time frame</p> <p>The disparity in incarceration rates between Blacks and Whites is due to systemic racism and laws that have disproportionate impact on minority communities</p>

Give yourself 1 pt for every item you agree with in column A and 0 pts for every item you agree with in column B. If you score 12-18 pts, you are conservative politically. If you score 0-6 pts, you are liberal politically. If you score 7-11 pts, you are a moderate.