

Name _____

Politics & Intellect

U3, Binder Item 05

Literacy Skills: Examining Documents INTELLECTUALLY

TARGET To examine documents from an intellectual perspective.

Directions Read each case study; then answer the questions that follow.

Case Study #1: Legalism in the pre-modern civilizations

Excerpts from *HAMMURABI'S CODE*, the legalist code of laws that governed the ancient Babylonian Empire:

- If a son strikes his father, his hands shall be cut off.
- If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.
- If a man breaks another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.
- If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out.
- If anyone strikes a man whose rank is higher than his, the man shall be whipped 60 times in public.
- If a wife has a relationship with another man, both shall be tied and thrown into water, but the wife can be pardoned by her husband and given to the king as a slave.
- If a builder builds a house that falls and kills the owner, then the builder shall be killed. If the son of the owner is killed, then the builder's son shall be killed.
- If one accuses another with a capital offense [a crime punishable by death] but cannot prove the charges, then the accuser will be killed.

1. **PREDICTIVE INFERENCE:** The legalist rulers of Hammurabi's time believed that a strict government was necessary, or society would fall apart. Their *knowledge* about human beings caused many ancient rulers to believe that laws must be very, very harsh. Make a predictive inference: If you asked King Hammurabi, "What are human beings like, and why do they need strict laws," what do you predict he would say?

2. **INFERENCE/EVIDENCE:** Imagine this **perspective**: You are a poor female in ancient Babylon and have to live under the Hammurabi Code. This perspective affects your **worldview** (your opinions about life, the world, and your role).

As a woman in ancient Babylon, which of these worldviews might you hold?

- a. The world is a fair place where everyone can succeed; my role as a woman does not limit me – I am an equal.
- b. The world belongs to certain men, not to women; as a woman, my role is to do as I am told.
- c. The world is an unfair place where only rich men and women can be happy; as a woman, my role is to earn \$.

Answer: Letter _____. In the space below, cite the evidence from the text that supports your answer.

3. **CONCEPT REVIEW.** Review your definition of mindset. Do you think that *poor men* in ancient Babylon had growth mindsets or fixed mindsets? Explain your answer.

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Case Study #2: Colonial New England, the 1600s

Puritans in colonial New England enforced their law with *stocks*. Offenders of the law were put on display in the public square with head, arms, or legs locked between wooden blocks. Other citizens frequently passed by and humiliated the guilty offenders with insults or laughter. Some even spat upon the guilty.

Another form of punishment was branding. The Puritan community frequently branded criminals with hot iron rods, scarring them forever with tattooed evidence of their criminal conduct so that all would know of their crimes. If you were caught cheating on your husband or wife, for instance, your face might be branded with a large “A” for “adultery.” Everyone would plainly see that you were a cheater.

4. **INFERENCE:** Read the text above, and then complete the inference below.

Citizens of Colonial New England must have been taught that criminals will fix their behavior only if

5. **CONCEPTS & PERSONAL APPLICATION:** Puritan leaders obviously thought (*knowledge*) that adulterers needed to permanent tattoos on their faces so that everyone might be warned about their behaviors. These leaders clearly had *fixed-mindsets* about men and women who cheated on their spouses. What about you – do you share that same fixed mindset about men and women who cheat, or do you have a *growth-mindset*? Explain your answer.

Case Study #3: Singapore, 1994

In 1994, an American teenager living in Singapore was sentenced to a painful flogging (a severe beating by a whip) for acts of vandalism (graffiti). The United States lashed out against Singapore, saying the punishment was cruel and unusual. An official of Singapore’s government defended the harsh penalty and said: “Unlike some other societies which tolerate acts of vandalism, Singapore has its own standards of social order as reflected in our laws. We are able to keep Singapore relatively crime-free. We do not have a situation where acts of vandalism are commonplace, as in cities like New York, where even police cars are not spared.”

6. **INFERENCE:** What kind of mindset do the leaders of Singapore have about crime in America? Explain your answer.

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Case Study #4: United States, controversial laws

Many states in the US have “Three-Strikes Laws.” These laws require that someone guilty of three felony (serious) offenses be given a life-sentence in prison, regardless of when the previous crimes took place.

Another controversial law in the US has to do with drug-sentencing. Currently, individuals who are charged with possession of *crack-cocaine* are punished 18x more severely than individuals charged with possession of *powder-cocaine*. Powder is more powerful, more expensive, and harder to track down than crack. Crack offenders are typically minority citizens of the lower and middle classes living in the inner-cities, and they are dealing out on the streets where addicts can easily find them. Powder cocaine deals generally occur behind closed doors in private living rooms.

7. **JUSTIFY:** Do you think that states with “Three-Strikes Laws” are showing a growth-mindset or a fixed-mindset when it comes to people who commit crimes? Explain.
8. **INFERENCE:** Read the 2nd paragraph in the box. Which inference below is most likely to be true *based on the text*?
- The US Justice system must THINK that if we eliminate the powder cocaine trade first, then crack deals will stop.
 - The US Justice system must THINK that crack cocaine is more destructive than powder cocaine.
 - Drug addicts in the inner cities must NOT KNOW that cocaine is bad for them.
 - Drug addicts in the inner cities must NOT KNOW where crack is being sold or distributed.

Answer: Letter _____ **Underline or highlight the portion of the text that caused you to pick this answer.**

APPLICATION: Read the content of the box below, and then answer the question that follows.

John lives in a wealthy suburb of Nashville. He has never observed a drug deal near his home, and as far as he knows there are no drug dealers in his community. He is afraid to take his kids downtown, though, because he hears on the news about all of the downtown drug arrests. He has been taught by his folks that drug dealers and addicts are criminals with no morals.

Patrick lives downtown. His father is serving 10 years on a drug distribution charge. Patrick knows that his father never used drugs, and the only reason his dad started selling in the first place was to help the family pay its bills and buy groceries. Patrick looks forward to his father’s release, but he worries that his dad may start selling again because America makes it so hard for ex-cons to make a better life for themselves.

9. Place a ✓ beside every inference below that you think is true.
- ___ John and Patrick share similar perspectives.
 - ___ Patrick has a growth-mindset about his father but a fixed-mindset about America.
 - ___ John’s knowledge of drug dealers comes from the news and his parents, not from personal interactions.
 - ___ Both men hold a positive worldview, one that says success and happiness are easily achievable.
 - ___ John’s knowledge and perspective would likely cause him to have a fixed-mindset about Patrick’s dad.