

Interpreting, Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions... *Engel, Epperson, and Roe*

Skill 7: Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence

Historical thinking involves the ability to **describe and evaluate evidence about the past from diverse sources** (including written documents, works of art, archaeological artifacts, oral traditions, and other primary sources) and requires the students to pay attention to the content, authorship, purpose, format, and audience of such sources. It involves the capacity to **extract useful information, make supportable inferences, and draw appropriate conclusions** from historical evidence, while also noting the context in which the evidence was produced and used, recognizing its limitations and assessing the points of view it reflects.

Skill 8: Interpretation

Historical thinking involves the ability to **describe, analyze, evaluate, and construct diverse interpretations of the past**, and being aware of how particular circumstances and contexts in which individual historians work and write also shape their interpretation of past events. Historical interpretation requires analyzing evidence, reasoning, determining the context, and **evaluating points of view** found in both primary and secondary sources.

Skill 6: Historical Argumentation

Historical thinking involves the ability to define and frame a question about the past and to address that question through the construction of an argument. A plausible and persuasive argument requires a **clear, comprehensive, and analytical thesis**, supported by **relevant historical evidence** — not simply evidence that supports a preferred or preconceived position. In addition, argumentation involves the capacity to describe, analyze, and **evaluate the arguments of others** in light of available evidence.

From the Period 9 Content Outline:

Key Concept 9.1: A new conservatism grew to prominence in U.S. culture and politics, **defending traditional social values and rejecting liberal views about the role of government.**

- I. Reduced public faith in the government's ability to solve social and economic problems, the growth of **religious fundamentalism**, and the dissemination of **neoconservative** thought all combined to invigorate **conservatism**.
 - A. Public confidence and trust in government declined in the 1970s in the wake of economic challenges, political scandals, foreign policy "failures," and a sense of **social and moral decay**.
 - B. The rapid and substantial **growth of evangelical and fundamentalist Christian churches and organizations**, as well as increased political participation by some of those groups, **encouraged significant opposition to liberal social and political trends**.
- II. **Conservatives** achieved some of their political and policy goals, but their success was limited by the enduring popularity and institutional strength of some **government programs** and public support for **cultural trends** of recent decades.
 - A. Conservatives enjoyed significant victories related to **taxation and deregulation** of many industries, **but many conservative efforts to advance moral ideals through politics met inertia and opposition**.

Directions:

1. Examine each document and complete your basic analysis by explaining the historical context of each document along with one of the following: Author's intended audience, author's purpose, or author's point of view as indicated in the activity.
2. When you are finished analyzing the documents, address the prompt by writing a clear, comprehensive, and analytical thesis on a separate sheet of paper.

Interpreting Documents and Defending an Argument... *Engel, Epperson, and Roe*

Background: Republicans supported a return to family values and challenged recent changes such as the elimination of public school prayer, the teaching of evolution in public schools, and legalized and federally funded abortion. In 1962, the ruling in *Engel v. Vitale* ruled organized school prayer to be unconstitutional. In 1968, in *Epperson v. Arkansas*, the United States Supreme Court invalidated an Arkansas statute that prohibited the teaching of evolution. In the next decades, rulings increased support for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution and decreased inclusion of intelligent design, even when a teacher simply discussed it on his or her own (a school district is not limiting a teacher's 1st Amendment right to free speech if they prohibit the inclusion of intelligent design from classrooms). Abortion became legal in 1973 with *Roe v. Wade*. During the 1970s a new movement grew which supported a "right to life" in protest of Roe's "right to privacy" ruling. The "pro-life" concept is sometimes broadened to include positions on other issues, such as opposition to euthanasia, cloning, and embryonic stem-cell research.

Directions: Analyze the documents using your HIPP strategy and address the prompt below by writing a clear, comprehensive, and analytical thesis on a separate sheet of paper.

Explain the causes of the conservative resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s. To what extent have modern era conservatives from the 1980s to the present been successful in reversing liberal trends?

Document 1 1960 Photograph



Document 2 1980 Republican Platform

"...It has long been a fundamental conviction of the Republican Party that government should foster in our society a climate of maximum individual liberty and freedom of choice. Properly informed, our people as individuals or acting through instruments of popular consultation can make the right decisions affecting personal or general welfare, free of pervasive and heavy-handed intrusion by the central government into the decision-making process. This tenet is the genius of representative democracy. There can be no doubt that the question of abortion, despite the complex nature of its various issues, is ultimately concerned with equality of rights under the law. While we recognize differing views on this question among Americans in general—and in our own Party—we affirm our support of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children. We also support the Congressional efforts to restrict the use of taxpayers' dollars for abortion. We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into the family structure through its denial of the parent's obligation and right to guide their minor children..."

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Document 3 1962 New York Times Headline



Document 4 2009, Headline from Americans United for Separation of Church and State

A Texas law requiring public school students to observe a daily moment of silence following the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional, a federal appeals court has ruled. The Texas legislature amended its moment-of-silence statute in 2003 to include prayer as one of the practices that students could undertake, alongside reflection, meditation or “any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract another student.” David and Shannon Croft filed a lawsuit on behalf of their three children after an elementary school teacher told one of their children to remain quiet because the minute is a “time for prayer.” The lawsuit alleged the moment of silence was being used as a way for government to advance religion and was unconstitutional.

But the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed. A three-judge panel ruled March 16 in *Croft v. Perry* that “[t]he statute is facially neutral between religious and nonreligious activities that students can choose to engage in during the moment of silence.”

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Document 5 "The Anniversary of Epperson," 2014, NewHistorian.com

On the 12th November 1968 the verdict was announced in a landmark court case in the debate about whether creationism or evolution should be taught in American schools. The focus of the Epperson vs. Arkansas case was whether the Arkansas State Legislature had the right to ban the teaching of evolution in public and state funded schools. The Supreme Court ruled against the Arkansas legislature, striking a damaging blow against the creationist movement.

The case originated in 1928, after the Arkansas State Legislature had passed a law prohibiting schools from teaching evolution, or even using text books that referenced it. Any teacher found breaking this law would face a fine and possible dismissal. Such a law seems incredible now, but similar legislation had been passed in other US states in the 1920s.

For forty five years the law went unchallenged, until the biology department at a school in Little Rock adopted a new text book that included a chapter on Charles Darwin. Susan Epperson, a tenth grade biology teacher at the school in question, faced a dilemma – abandon the school biology curriculum, or teach the evolution content and risk dismissal.

Epperson sued the state legislature, claiming the ban on teaching evolution impeded her right to freedom of speech, as guaranteed by the First Amendment in the US Constitution. ... The court ruled unanimously in her favor.

...As far back as 1925, high school biology teacher John Scopes was put on trial for violating Tennessee's laws about teaching evolution. ... To this day, the debate about what balance of creationism and evolution should be taught rages on, in both the United States and further afield. Overall the 1960s seemed to witness evolution take increasing precedence in US curriculums, at least in the study of biology. The result of the Epperson vs. Arkansas trial can be seen as a very clear example of this overall trend in American culture. Since then however, court cases between creationists and supporters of evolution still continue, and pro-creationists are undoubtedly still hugely influential. Ultimately, it is a complex debate about the nature of pedagogy and knowledge. The Epperson and Scopes trials both seemed landmark events in their own time, but we can see this dispute shows no signs of stopping.

Document 6 Lifesitenews.com, 2008, "Bobby Jindal Signs Law Allowing Intelligent Design in Louisiana Schools," Peter J. Smith

BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, June 27, 2008 (LifeSiteNews.com) - Louisiana public school teachers can now educate their students about the theory of intelligent design and scientific criticisms of Darwinian evolutionary theory thanks to a new law signed this week by Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal. The Louisiana Science Education Act now allows teachers to supplement the state's curricula with additional scientific materials, but groups opposed to any debate over the "origin of the species" have warned that the new law will become the origin of the lawsuits if they believe it facilitates religion. Lawmakers, however, were enthusiastically in favor of the Act signed by Jindal. The state Senate had passed the bill (SB733) with a unanimous vote, and the state House had approved it by a vote of 93-4. The new law requires teachers to follow the standard curriculum, but allows a school district to permit a teacher to supplement his course with additional scientific evidence, analysis, and critiques regarding the scientific topics taught to his students.

One major goal of the law is to support an "open and objective discussion of scientific theories being studied including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning" in public elementary and secondary schools.

The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) will be required, at the request of local school boards, to "include support and guidance for teachers regarding effective ways to help students understand, analyze, critique, and objectively review scientific theories being studied." Supporters of the law have hailed it as a great step forward for academic freedom in the face of dogmatic proponents of evolution and man-made global warming, who have mischaracterized scientific/philosophical alternatives as "religion."

Jindal, a Catholic with a biology degree, indicated his own affirmation of the bill in a statement saying: "I will continue to consistently support the ability of school boards and BESE to make the best decisions to ensure a quality education for our children." Critics of the law have countered it opens a backdoor for putting religious views that they claim would sacrifice science into the classroom.