

How does bipartisanship bring us closer to our democratic values?

Bipartisanship and our Democratic Values



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How does bipartisanship bring us closer to our democratic values?	
Key Concepts	Bipartisanship, political parties, compromise, democratic values
Content Standards	<p>MI Civics – 3.3.1 Describe and analyze how groups and individuals influence public policy.</p> <p>MI Civics – 6.3.1 Explain the personal dispositions that contribute to knowledgeable and engaged participation in civic communities.</p> <p>MI Civics – 6.4.1 Explain and evaluate how people, individually or collectively, seek to bring the United States closer to its Democratic Values.</p>
Staging the Question	Share the “Democratic Values definitions” document with students without giving them any context for it. With a partner, ask students to develop a title for the document.
Assessment	Students will create a visual one-pager with partners to answer the compelling question.
Extension/Taking Informed Action	<p>Students choose one of the following:</p> <p>(1) Write a brief email to a state elected official about why bipartisanship strengthens public policy decisions.</p> <p>(2) Submit a 30-60 second audio clip to be played on your local radio station. Your goal should be to convince listeners about the importance of bipartisan cooperation in Congress.</p>
Reference and Additional Resources	<p>What are the values of democracy? from Learning for Justice</p> <p>The Continuing Necessity for Bipartisanship from the Miller Center</p>

Required Supplies/Materials:

- Democratic Values definitions handout
- Bipartisanship worksheet
- Bipartisanship lecture slides
- Bipartisanship case study summaries
- 11x14 white paper (one per group of four students)
- Markers/colored pencils

Suggested Pacing: Two 60-minute classes

Lesson Sequence

Period 1

1. Pass out the Democratic Values definitions handout without providing any context or explanation. Ask students to read the vocabulary and definitions with a partner. Then, have them come up with a title for the document. Ask a few students to share the document names they came up with. They should justify their decision. **(10 min)**
2. Using the slides, introduce students to the main concepts of bipartisanship in a legislative investigation. The purpose of these slides is to use congressional oversight as one lens for how we might see successful bipartisanship in our government. The slides describe congressional oversight, give a brief list of what to look for, and give instructions for the jigsaw activity. **(10 min)**
3. Number students in the class 1-3. Pass out the bipartisanship worksheet. All students who were assigned to 1 should receive the Titanic case study, those assigned 2 the Valachi case study, and those assigned 3 the 9-11 case

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study. Give students time to individually read their summary and complete the coordinating questions on the worksheet. **(20 min)**

- **Differentiation option:** Choose one case study to read as a class. After completing the chart on their worksheet, students can work with a partner to complete the two additional case studies.
- 4. Have students find a partner in the room who read the same summary. Students should compare answers and briefly discuss what they read. **(10 min)**
- 5. Create workgroups of three students, one from each case study group. In these groups, students should share their observations about the remaining case studies so that all group members have a completed worksheet. **(10 min)**

Period 2

1. Students should return to the small groups of three from the previous day. Students will work together to create a one-pager summary that answers the lesson's compelling question and connects the examples from the case study to a Democratic Value which they feel it most exemplifies. **(20 min)**

Each One-Pager should include:

- An answer to the compelling question (Claim)
- Two examples of bipartisanship from the case studies
- Connection to at least one Democratic Value
- Images, icons, or symbols to convey emphasis

If students need some additional support, these explanations of a one-pager and Sketchnotes are helpful to include as a resource:

- Sketchnotes Video - <https://youtu.be/gY9KdRfNN9w>
- Success with One Pagers - <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/one-pagers/>
- Art of the One Pager and free templates - <https://www.bespokeclassroom.com/blog/2018/4/9/the-art-of-the-one-pager>

2. Hang up the One-Pager summaries created by the workgroups around the classroom or down a hallway and give students time to view each other's work and answer the final question on their worksheet. **(20 min)**
3. **Taking Informed Action:** Have students choose one of the following activities:
 - Students should first identify their state representative or state senator. Send that person an email explaining the value of bipartisanship and its connection to democracy. Encourage students to give the elected official an example of something they would like to see investigated on a bipartisan basis or facts they would like to see shared with the public. **(15 min)**
 - Need help finding your elected officials? Use these links:
 - Michigan House of Representatives: <https://www.house.mi.gov/#findarepresentative>
 - Michigan Senate: <https://senate.michigan.gov/>
 - Submit a 30-60 second audio clip to be played on your local radio station. Your goal should be to convince listeners about the importance of bipartisan cooperation in the government.

Life: Each citizen has the right to the protection of his or her life.

Liberty: Liberty includes the freedom to believe what you want, freedom to choose your own friends, and to have your own ideas and opinions, to express your ideas in public, the right for people to meet in groups, the right to have any lawful job or business.

Pursuit of Happiness: Each citizen can find happiness in his or her own way, so long as he or she does not step on the rights of others.

Justice: All people should be treated fairly in getting the advantages and disadvantages of our country. No group or person should be favored.

Common Good: Citizens should work together for the good of all. The government should make laws that are good for everyone.

Equality: Everyone should get the same treatment regardless of where their parents or grandparents were born, their race, their religion or how much money they have. Citizens all have political, social and economic equality.

Truth: The government and citizens should not lie.

Diversity: Differences in language, dress, food, where parents or grandparents were born, race and religion are not only allowed but accepted as important.

Popular Sovereignty: The power of the government comes from the people.

Patriotism: This means having a devotion to our country and its values in what we say and what we do.

Source: Civitas: A Framework for Civic Education, a collaborative project of the Center for Civic Education and the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship, National Council for the Social Studies Bulletin No. 86, 1991.

Congress Investigates the Sinking of the Titanic

On April 15, 1912, the *RMS Titanic*, a luxurious, state-of-the-art British passenger ship on its inaugural voyage, sank after striking an iceberg en route across the Atlantic Ocean to New York City, causing the death of over 1,500 passengers and crew, including more than 100 Americans. The shocking loss of life and destruction of a ship once deemed “unsinkable” led the U.S. Senate to embark on an investigation that attracted worldwide attention and became an ongoing cultural fascination in the decades to follow.



Newspaper boy Ned Parfett sells copies of the Evening News telling of the Titanic maritime disaster outside the White Star Line offices in London

Source: Topical Press Agency/Hulton Archives/Getty Images

Though the ship was British-owned, disembarked from England, and sank in international waters, the loss of American life and its U.S. destination led the U.S. Senate, on April 17, 1912, to pass Senate Resolution 283 directing its Commerce Committee to investigate the tragedy. The Senate Commerce Committee quickly formed a special subcommittee chaired by Republican Sen. William Alden Smith of Michigan. It also included three Republicans and three Democrats to encourage the bipartisanship crucial to effective oversight.

Recognizing the need to act before survivors left the New York area, the subcommittee convened its first hearings at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on April 19, 1912, four days after the disaster. Subcommittee Chair Smith made clear that the immediate purpose of the inquiry was to secure the facts, explaining: “Mindful of the responsibility of our office, we desire the Senate to know that in the execution of its command we have been guided solely by the public interest and a desire to meet the expectations of our associates without bias, prejudice, sensationalism, or slander of the living or dead...Our course was simple and plain – to gather the facts relating to this disaster while they were still vivid realities.”

The subcommittee eventually held 18 days of hearings examining 82 witnesses about the disaster, including 53 British nationals and 29 U.S. citizens or residents. The subcommittee took testimony from Mr. Ismay (President of White Star Line, that owned the *Titanic*), ship officers, members of the crew, and passengers of all classes. The official transcripts, published later in 1912, totaled over 1,100 pages.

On May 28, 1912, the Senate Commerce Committee issued a final report, unanimously endorsed by its members, on the sinking of the *Titanic*. The bipartisan report detailed the key factors that contributed to the loss of the ship, including the lack of proper testing, insufficient preparation, and mismanagement. The failure to heed numerous ice warnings was also identified as a key contributor to the disaster.

Adapted from: <https://levin-center.org/what-is-oversight/portraits/congress-investigates-the-titanic-disaster/>



Scan for audio recording or visit bit.ly/LbHtitanic



Congress Investigates the Mafia

In 1962, Joseph Valachi, a “soldier” of the Genovese crime family, was serving a 15-year sentence for drug trafficking when he killed a fellow prisoner whom he mistook for a man sent by Vito Genovese, boss of the Genovese crime family, to kill him. He received a life sentence for the murder, but fearing he was still in danger, he decided to cooperate with law enforcement and later the U.S. Senate, providing extensive information about *Cosa Nostra* (“our thing”) in New York. In hearings held by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations – televised nationwide – Mr. Valachi became the first member of the American Mafia to publicly

acknowledge its existence and describe its inner workings to a captivated American audience. His disclosures educated the public about organized crime and motivated Congress to enact tough new anti-racketeering laws, strengthen drug addiction recovery efforts, and establish a new witness protection program.

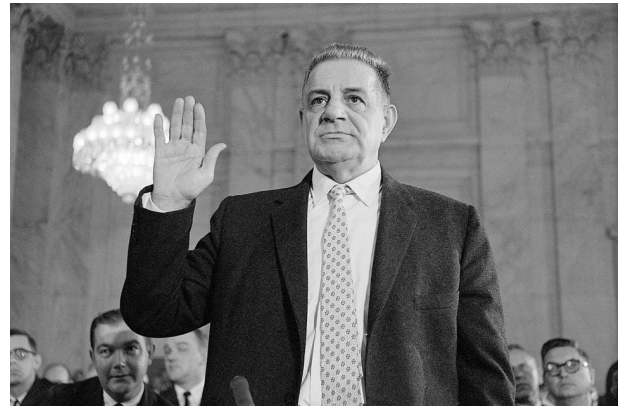
When the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI) learned of Mr. Valachi’s explosive revelations, the subcommittee interviewed him as part of an ongoing investigation into organized crime and illicit drugs led by subcommittee chair Sen. John L. McClellan, a Democrat from Arkansas, and vice-chair Sen. Karl E. Mundt, a Republican from South Dakota. Mr. Valachi eventually became the star witness of an 11-day series of PSI hearings, appearing on five occasions before television cameras that brought his testimony to millions of viewers.

Many high-profile witnesses testified, including US Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and the New York Chief of Police. Mr. Valachi arrived at the Capitol building on September 27, 1963, guarded by 200 U.S. Marshals. As rumors circulated that Vito Genovese was offering \$100,000 for his execution, Mr. Valachi became the first person in the United States to be offered government protection in exchange for testimony

The Valachi hearings, as they would come to be known, were part of a larger investigation by PSI into narcotics addiction, treatment, and rehabilitation problems afflicting the United States. Testimony was taken from the American Medical Association’s Committee on Alcoholism and Addiction; Wayne State University in Detroit; the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky; and more to present the facts. A later subcommittee report noted that the federal government maintained only two hospitals that provided treatment through withdrawal for drug addicts and that very few states had programs or resources to support addicts attempting recovery.

On March 4, 1965, PSI released a bipartisan, 135-page report summarizing the information it had collected on organized crime and the illicit narcotics trade. The report made several legislative recommendations, including advocating for laws that would authorize immunity for testimony, revise existing wiretap statutes, criminalize witness intimidation, allow civil commitment of narcotics addicts, establish a joint task force to stem the flow of illicit drugs from Mexico, and expand addiction research. Several of its recommendations were adopted by Congress. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the bipartisan Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act.

Adapted from: <https://levin-center.org/what-is-oversight/portraits/valachi-hearings/>



Joseph Valachi is sworn in before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, September 1963
Source: Betty Archives/Getty



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Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Issues Related to the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks

On September 11 (9/11), 2001, the Al-Qa'ida terrorist organization hijacked four commercial airplanes and flew two into the World Trade Center buildings in New York and one into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The final plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. The deadliest terrorist attack on American soil, resulting in the deaths of 3,025 people, led to the first ever bicameral investigation by the two standing intelligence committees in Congress. Members of both the House and the Senate quickly agreed that the best way forward was a joint investigation into what the intelligence community had missed leading to the tragedy.



View of lower Manhattan from the Manhattan Bridge on September 11, 2001

Source: Camilo J. Vergara, Library of Congress

Because the 107th Congress had a Democratic Senate and a Republican House, leadership was equally balanced. The Chairs and Vice Chairs agreed to have equivalent authority, make all decisions unanimously, and to hire a team of independent investigators to avoid pulling staff from other important committee work. Eleanor Hill, staff director of the Joint Inquiry, said of the process, "The Joint Inquiry leadership strove for consensus. It worked because they were respectful of each other, they were willing to work together to reach agreement even on difficult issues, and they understood, in the wake of the attacks, how important what they were doing was to the country."

This joint inquiry agreed on three main goals: (1) to conduct a factual review of what the Intelligence Community knew prior to 9/11/01, (2) identify and examine systematic problems that prevented the US from knowing about the attacks in advance, and (3) make recommendations to improve the Intelligence Community for the future. The hearings began on September 18, 2002 in the largest hearing room on Capitol Hill. Hearings were public and televised and always began with a summary of the facts from the previous hearing. Over six months, the staff reviewed 500,000 pages of documents, interviewed 300 people, and gathered input from over 600 members of the intelligence community.

Both standing committees voted separately and unanimously to release their 450-page report on December 20, 2002. The committee also quickly moved to declassify many of the sources that were used. Vice Chair Nancy Pelosi said, "[W]e must conduct our inquiry in the most open way possible, so that information that can be made available to the public, and especially to the families, is made available. Only in the case of protecting sources and methods should it be withheld, not in the case of protecting reputations or to avoid embarrassment to some."

Adapted from: <https://levin-center.org/what-is-oversight/portraits/joint-inquiry-into-intelligence-issues-related-to-the-9-11-terrorist-attack/>



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Name: _____

Compelling question: How does bipartisanship bring us closer to our democratic values?

Directions: As you read the case study, find an example in the text that answers each question. Write the line number in which it appears.

Conducting a Bipartisan Investigation	Titanic Hearings	Valachi Hearings	9/11 Hearings
	Write the line number of the example you found.		
Did the majority and minority participate in the investigation?			
Did the majority and minority meet with witnesses, counsel, and experts?			
Did the majority and minority release joint press releases and/or reports?			
Did the majority and minority agree on key facts and recommendations?			
Did the media and members of the public consider this a bipartisan investigation?			

Directions: In your own words, answer the questions below.

- 1) What was the outcome of the Titanic Hearings?
- 2) What was the outcome of the Valachi Hearings?
- 3) What was the outcome of the 9/11 Hearings?
- 4) Which Democratic Values were represented in the gallery walk? Which argument was the most convincing to you?

Name: _____

Compelling question: How does bipartisanship bring us closer to our democratic values?

ANSWER KEY

Directions: As you read the case study, find an example in the text that answers each question. Write the line number in which it appears.

Conducting a Bipartisan Investigation	Titanic Hearings	Valachi Hearings	9/11 Hearings
	Write the line number of the example you found.		
Did the majority and minority participate in the investigation?	<i>Lines 16-17</i>	<i>Lines 16-18</i>	<i>Lines 14-15</i>
Did the majority and minority meet with witnesses, counsel, and experts?	<i>Lines 25-28</i>	<i>Lines 24-30</i>	<i>Lines 15-16 and 25-27</i>
Did the majority and minority release joint press releases and/or reports?	<i>Lines 29-31</i>	<i>Line 31</i>	<i>Line 28</i>
Did the majority and minority agree on key facts and recommendations?	<i>Lines 29-32</i>	<i>Lines 31-36</i>	<i>Lines 18-20 and 24-27</i>
Did the media and members of the public consider this a bipartisan investigation?	<i>Lines 18-24</i>	<i>Lines 18-19 and 24-25</i>	<i>Lines 30-32</i>

Directions: In your own words, answer the questions below.

- 1) What was the outcome of the Titanic Hearings?

This investigation revealed that a lack of proper testing, insufficient preparation, mismanagement by the parent company of the Titanic, and a failure to listen to iceberg warnings all led to the sinking of the ship. The facts and transcript that were made public made the disaster more understandable to citizens.

- 2) What was the outcome of the Valachi Hearings?

The report made several legislative recommendations, including advocating for laws that would authorize immunity for testimony, revise existing wiretap statutes, criminalize witness intimidation, allow civil commitment of narcotics addicts, establish a joint task force to stem the flow of illicit drugs from Mexico, and expand addiction research. Several of its recommendations were adopted by Congress. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the bipartisan Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act.

- 3) What was the outcome of the 9/11 Hearings?

A unanimous and bipartisan report about intelligence failings was released in addition to a large number of sources that were declassified for the public. This investigation was dedicated to discovering facts, even at the risk of embarrassing departments in our government.

- 4) Which Democratic Values were represented in the gallery walk? Which argument was the most convincing to you?

Answers will vary – Democratic Values used in this lesson plan are Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness, Justice, Common Good, Equality, Truth, Diversity, Popular Sovereignty, and Patriotism.