



# Civic Leadership Academy 2004

## *Guide to Readings*

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### Introduction

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The readings below are designed to prepare cadets to make the most of their Washington experience. Additionally, they will provide a common intellectual framework, as Civic Leadership Academy cadets come from different educational and cultural backgrounds.

The reading illustrate civic virtue by profiling great moments in our nation's history. Most selections go beyond mere civic mechanics – the “how” part of government. Instead, the readings have been carefully chosen to illustrate timeless ideals about leadership in a democratic society.

#### Suggested Procedure

1. Read the introduction and discussion questions first (see below).
2. Read the assigned texts, keeping the discussion questions in mind.
3. After reading the text, share your replies to the discussion questions with your roommates.
4. Try to apply the readings during group discussions and tours throughout the Academy.

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### Reading Schedule

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Day	Reading	Day	Reading
Pre-Arrival	Foundations & Leadership (“Transforming” only)	Tuesday	The Free Press
Saturday	The Legislature & Leadership (“Trumpets” only)	Wednesday	The Executive (Coolidge only)
Sunday	The Judiciary	Thursday	None
Monday	The Executive (Truman only)	Friday	None

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## Foundations

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### *Lincoln at Gettysburg.* (A Revolution in Style) by Garry Wills

The Gettysburg Address is one of the world's great speeches, and according to author Garry Wills, it is the instrument Lincoln used to re-make the union. "No other words could have done it," he argues. In this excerpt, Wills focuses on Lincoln's rhetorical style. Listen for Lincoln's cadence. Read the speech closely with an eye toward the President's subtle persuasiveness.

1. Wills writes that Lincoln's speech "is of the highest art, which conceals itself." In what ways are elements of his speech "concealed"? Is Wills suggesting that Lincoln does not speak plainly and honestly?
2. Look at the speech as it is graphically presented on pages 172-173. Notice the recurring words and motifs (as shown by the typography). What do these repetitions help Lincoln achieve?
3. Wills writes that political leaders often build their arguments from the law and history. Does the Gettysburg Address follow this tradition? What does Lincoln appeal to in his audience?

### *Democracy in America.* (The Real Advantages of Democracy) by Alexis de Tocqueville

He came to America to study our prison system but departed with the most insightful, cogent observations about civic life in the United States. This reading is excerpted from Alexis de Tocqueville's classic work *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville compares the American democracy with the government of European aristocracies. Specifically, Tocqueville looks at respect for rights, law, and the spirit of patriotism in the nation.

1. Tocqueville believes that American government is ingenious because it can repair its own faults. Looking at American government in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or today, what can you point at to justify Tocqueville's claim?
2. According to Tocqueville, what is the root of patriotism in America? How does this compare to patriotism in aristocracies?
3. Why does Tocqueville believe that Americans have more respect for one another's rights than do the citizens of other nations?
4. Why do Americans, rich and poor, respect law, even if some laws are unworthy of respect?

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## Leadership

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### *Transforming Leadership.* (The Transformation of American Leadership) by James MacGregor Burns

This examination of leadership, seen through the lens of early-American politics, was written by the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James MacGregor Burns. First, MacGregor-Burns redefines

leadership and explains what he means by its “transforming” powers. Next he examines how James Madison changed from being an ardent opponent of a bill of rights to become the author of the Bill of Rights we celebrate today. Instead of merely looking at the political philosophy or sequence of factual events, MacGregor-Burns treats the story of the Constitution as a leadership laboratory.

1. The cadet leadership text defines leadership as: “*The art of influencing and directing people in a way that will win their obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation in achieving a common objective.*” In contrast, MacGregor-Burns gives a more descriptive definition of leadership (see “Prologue”). What is the difference between the CAP text’s definition and “transforming leadership”? Which is more compelling to you? Why?
2. What are some of the personal qualities necessary to being a transforming leader, or even participating in transforming leadership? Support your answer with examples from the text.
3. How did the Bill of Rights succeed when so many founding fathers opposed it? Describe the “transforming leadership” that built a consensus for the Bill of Rights.
4. What was the revolution in values that made the Constitution possible? How did the drafters persuade the public and the state legislatures to ratify it?
5. From a leadership perspective, what caused the election of 1800 to pass from a highly-contested political struggle into the new nation’s “first real succession test.” Would MacGregor-Burns describe that leadership as “transforming” or “transactional”? Why?

### *Certain Trumpets.* (Constitutional Leaders) by Garry Wills

In this short chapter from *Certain Trumpets*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Gary Wills helps us understand the greatness of George Washington. Wills also discusses the character and politics of Oliver Cromwell, leader of the English Civil War – someone who Wills believes is an antithesis to Washington. Most revolutions, until 1776 and 1787, yielded only temporary changes; ultimately the revolt would fail. Wills argues that America’s was different mostly because of Washington’s character and political sensibility.

1. What were some elements of Washington’s national vision? Do you think his vision was the right one for America? Why? (Note: This topic is discussed in the latter part of the essay too, not just at the beginning.)
2. Wills argues that Washington’s greatest legacy was that he refused to steal authority, even for unselfish purposes such as advancing republican government. What do you think would have resulted had Washington seized power politically or militarily?
3. For his role in establishing the republic, Washington has been called, “The Indispensable Man.” And yet he freely left the presidency, earning him yet another nickname, “Cincinnatus.” Give some examples to support each of these monikers.
4. The English civil wars of the 1600s had the potential to bring liberty, much like our own revolution did. Yet the English revolution ultimately failed under Cromwell. Compare Washington and Cromwell. How were they alike? How were they different? What was Washington’s “tremendous originality”?

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## The Legislature

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### “Gavel to Gavel” by C-SPAN and The Brookings Institute

Most CLA cadets are familiar with the basic procedures bills follow as they become laws. “Gavel to Gavel” adds to those well-known processes by explaining the function of the Committee of the Whole, conference committees, the *Congressional Record*, and symbols such as the House mace. Scan the glossary and familiarize yourself with the terms that are new to you. Also, pay close attention to the diagrams on pages 20-21

1. Why do the authors claim the “committee system is the backbone of Congress.” How many reasons can you think of to defend the use of committees?
2. What is the function of the Rules Committee? Is it mostly concerned with operational formalities or do you believe this committee could be “politicized”? Explain your answer.
3. What do conference committees add to the legislative process? Do they help produce good legislation or merely slow-down the process?

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## The Executive

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### *Coolidge: An American Enigma.* (The Inauguration) by Robert Sobel

President Harding’s administration had been embroiled in scandal. Americans had lost faith in his leadership. When Harding unexpectedly died, Vice President Coolidge succeeded to the presidency. While the Coolidge administration was at best only moderately successful, some historians still admire Coolidge for his character. This excerpt shows why.

1. Do you agree that Coolidge is a man of integrity? What evidence supports your belief?
2. What made Coolidge’s actions that early morning reassuring to the public?
3. It is a national tragedy when a sitting president dies. When Harding died, most Americans knew very little about their new president, Calvin Coolidge. Should our Constitution be faulted for allowing unknowns to rise to the presidency at a time of national crisis?
4. Why should our elected leaders care if CAP cadets have personal integrity?

### *Truman.* (The Decision to Fire MacArthur) by David McCullough

A panel of historians recently ranked Harry Truman as the fifth greatest president of all time. But when the man famous for proclaiming, “The buck stops here” left office, his public approval rating was abysmal. General Douglas MacArthur, by comparison, was greatly admired. In this excerpt, author David McCullough describes how MacArthur’s “insubordination” reached a boiling point, forcing Mr. Truman to fire the general as the Korean Conflict waged on.

1. Why should there be civilian control of the military? Use examples from the reading to defend your answer.
2. What political factors were involved with President Truman's decision to fire MacArthur? Upon what criteria did he base his judgment? Would you have done the same?
3. Civilian control of the military is a key principle in American government. But does it follow that a single individual, Harry Truman, should be able to fire a military officer popular with the Congress and the public?
4. During the Atomic Age and into our own post-September 11<sup>th</sup> era, warfare is a highly technical, specialized profession. Do democracies endanger themselves by allowing laymen to veto battle plans developed by career military officers?

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## The Judiciary

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### **“The Case that Made the Court”** by Michael J. Glennon

from *WQ: The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 2003.

In the early days of our republic, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government were feeling their way around the Constitution, attempting to find practical ways of fulfilling their duties and maximizing their powers. This article describes how an otherwise forgettable case about the commissioning of a justice of the peace led to the Supreme Court's bold assertion that it could declare that “acts of the legislature, repugnant to the Constitution, are void.”

1. Glennon argues that Marshall's strategic objective was to establish the “supremacy of the federal judiciary.” What was Marshall's rationale for this goal?
2. In *Marbury*, what was the court's reasoning in claiming the right of judicial review? Explain Marshall's argument in asserting that right, even though it was not enumerated in the Constitution.
3. Before *Marbury*, no court in the world was empowered to strike down laws. How did judicial review strengthen or weaken American government?
4. Is judicial review “undemocratic”?

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## The Free Press

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### **“Why Americans Hate the Media”** by James Fallows

from *The Atlantic*, February 1996

This 1996 article comes from James Fallows, who served as a speechwriter for President Carter and later edited *The Atlantic*, one of America's most respected magazines. Fallows turns populist

complaints about journalism into a commentary on the power of journalism to enhance public understanding and responsible citizenship.

1. Consider the story that Fallows uses to introduce his article – whether a journalist should film an enemy ambushing Americans. Do journalists have a duty to something higher than their profession?
2. Why does Fallows believe that “discussion shows that are supposed to enhance public understanding actually reduce it.” What’s your personal view, do you agree with Fallows?
3. What does Fallows mean when he argues that political journalists often concentrate on the “politics of the moment?” What types of questions would he like or not like to see journalists pose to our political leaders? Would you enjoy watching the types of political TV shows Fallows advocates?
4. What advice do you think Fallows might offer to young people who are contemplating a career in political journalism?