

A Case For Philosophical Chairs



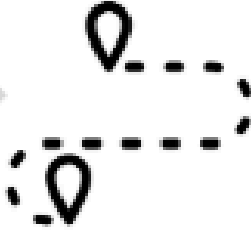

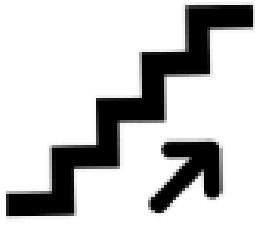
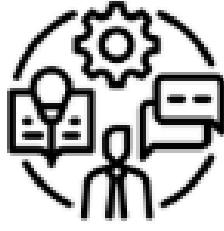
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Engage 2026**



**TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS SESSION,
MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE THE
SURVEY AT THE END**



Northwest ISD
Professional Learning Expectations
A Culture of Learning

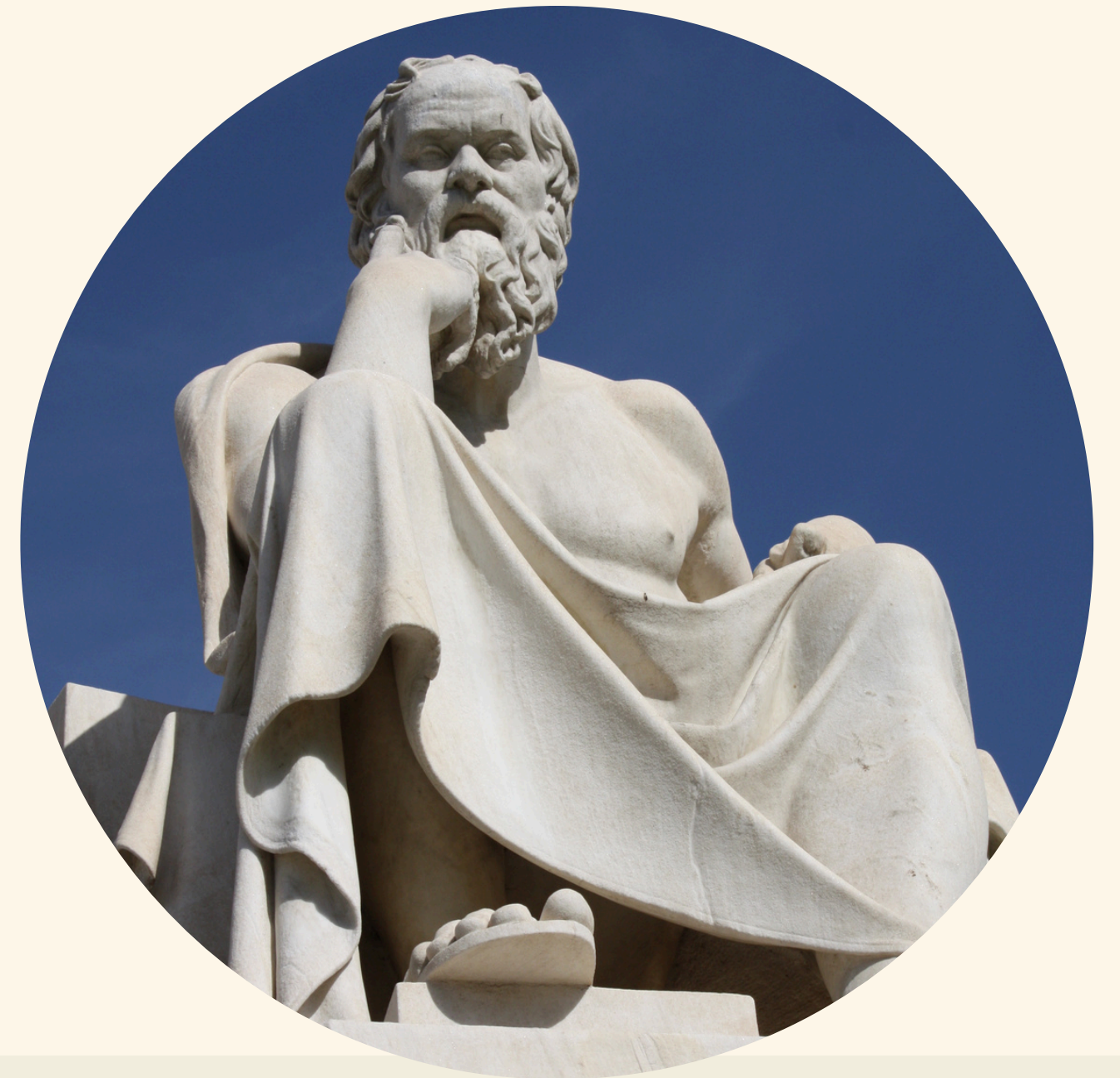
- P** PARTICIPATE POSITIVELY 
- L** LISTEN FOR AND SHARE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITH RESPECT 
- N** NAVIGATE LEARNING WITH A GROWTH MINDSET 
- I** IDENTIFY HOW YOU WILL APPLY THIS LEARNING TO YOUR WORK 
- S** SET GOALS AND PLAN NEXT STEPS 
- D** DEMONSTRATE PROFESSIONALISM 

Learning Target

Today I will understand the purpose and process of Philosophical Chairs

So I can create opportunities for my students to deepen their understanding of new concepts.

I'll know I have it when I have planned for at least three opportunities to integrate this strategy using my content's curriculum.



The Why: Comprehension Through Experience

“The twin goals of instruction are comprehension and retention. We want kids to get it and keep it.”

We do not create understanding directly. We create it indirectly. Understanding is a byproduct of experience. Our job as teachers is to create that experience. Without doing something with conceptual input quickly, it will simply dissipate—another example of “in one ear and out the other.”

In the humanities, the challenge is how to get kids to *do* a concept.
Talking ~ Writing ~ Performing



The What: Overview

“Through exploration, dialogue and constant questioning, students develop their critical thinking skills and their ability to acknowledge and consider viewpoints different from their own.”

1: Develop a controversial, divisive statement based on the objectives for the unit/text.

2: Provide students time to process the statement and organize their thoughts. Sentence stems and graphic organizers are excellent resources! The goal is to encourage informed debate. Use multiple sources, and individual experience is not a goal to reach a decision or take a side.

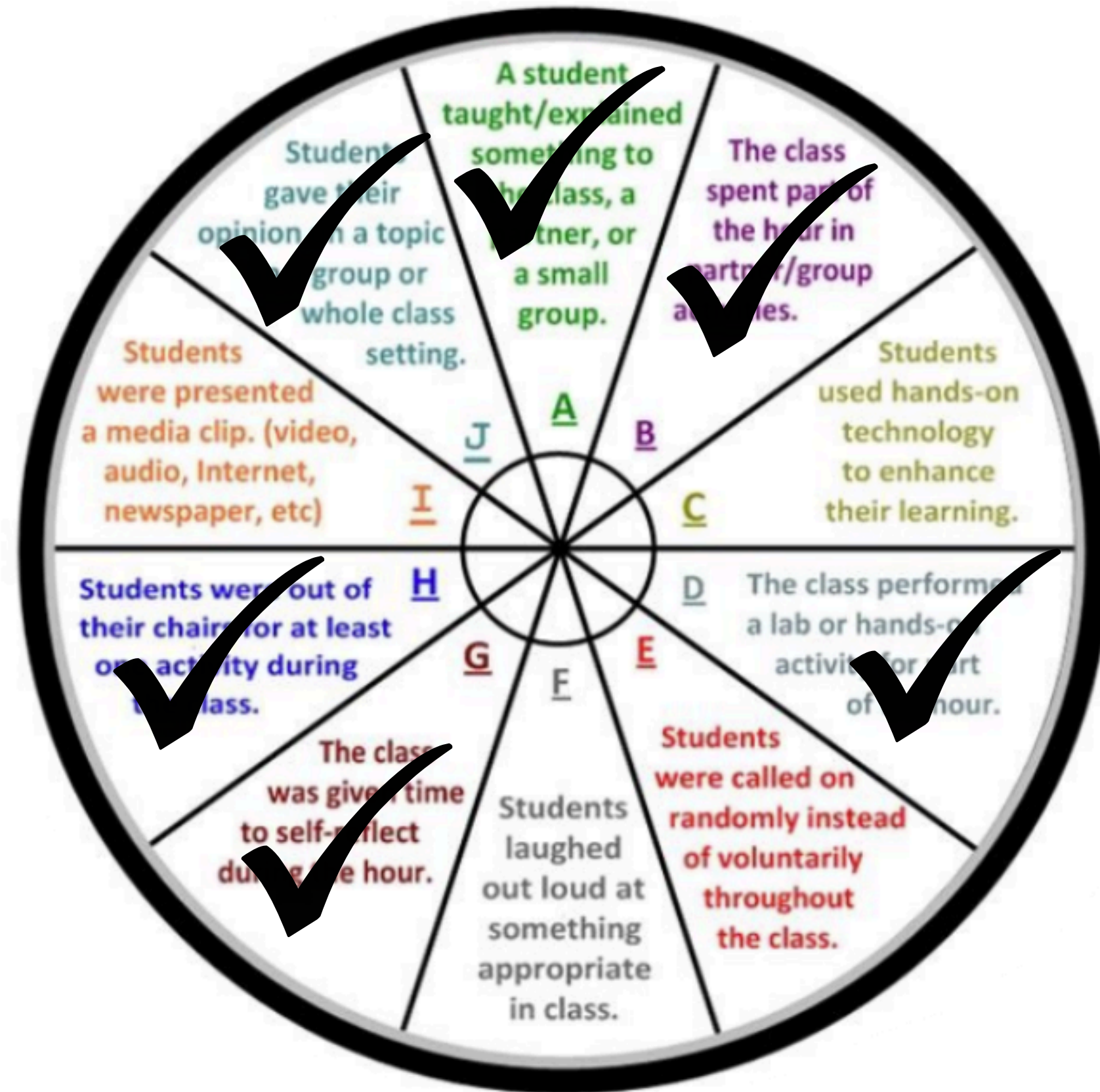
3: Students move to the side of the room designated for that position and stand to face the opposing side.

4: Students debate the statement and may change sides after hearing compelling arguments.

Sentence stems and graphic organizers are excellent resources! The goal is to encourage informed debate.



The So What: High-Leverage Learning



[Student Engagement Wheel](#)
[can be accessed here](#)

Philosophical Chairs In Action



The How: Rules of Engagement

- Maintain your understanding of the statements at hand throughout the activity.
- Actively listen to the person who is speaking.
- Only one person speaks at a time, and you must be holding the “talking stick” to speak.
- Seek to understand the opposing speaker’s point of view even if you do not agree with them. You must recap the speaker’s statement before you respond.
- Before speaking again, three other people must contribute before you.
- Contribute your own thoughts, offering your reasons as succinctly as possible.
- Respond to statements and ideas only, not to the person giving them.
- Change your mind about the central statement as new information or reasoning is presented.
- Move to the opposite side as your thinking grows and changes as a result of convincing arguments from the opposing side.



Support the discussion by maintaining order and contributing constructive comments.

The Who: All Kids, All Classes



Background Essay

The Boston Tea Party Mini-Q

Money or Power: What Was the Main Reason for the Boston Tea Party?

On December 16, 1773, hundreds of American colonists, many dressed as Mohawk Indians, boarded three British ships in Boston Harbor. For three hours, they smashed open 340 chests of tea and dumped the contents overboard. The amount of tea destroyed was sizable. Worth close to \$2 million in today's dollars, it could have brewed more than 18 million cups.

The colonists did not dislike tea. On the contrary, Americans loved tea and drank more of it than all of Britain combined. They destroyed the tea in protest.

How did this commonplace beverage cause such outrage? The trouble began in 1763, after Britain's victory in the French and Indian War. Britain's military was the greatest in the world, but the war had been costly and the British government needed money. To repay the debt and support its empire, Parliament passed several acts, or laws, which demanded that the colonies pay taxes. Without asking colonial leaders for their consent, the British started taxing everyday items like paper, sugar, and tea.

This sparked huge protests. Since colonists could not be members of **Parliament** and had no say in how they were governed, they argued that the British should not have the authority to tax them. "No taxation without representation!" became a rallying cry. A powerful group of colonists known as The Sons of Liberty organized **boycotts**. By refusing to buy popular taxed items like tea, the colonists hurt British trade.

Not surprisingly, the boycotts angered the British. Britain was wealthy and powerful because it ruled the two prized colonies - India and America. These colonies provided valuable natural resources used in trade. They were also inhabited by customers eager to buy manufactured goods made in Europe. It was a system that had worked for the British for years. They expected the colonists to

follow the laws of their homeland and to pay taxes, as all people in Britain did. Colonists should, they believed, be proud to live in a great empire.

The colonists were appreciative, but also took pride in their own accomplishments. Their ancestors left their homes in Europe to build new lives for themselves. Most colonists had never seen the king or met a member of Parliament. Most had never been to Europe. Living more than 3,000 miles away in North America, they built their own towns,

shops, and governments without much help. Colonists were used to solving their own problems and sometimes ignored British laws. For example, trade with countries other than Britain was technically illegal. Yet colonists regularly bought tea from



British Colonial Trade

but Britain

trouble and needed to find Parliament tried passing the **Tea Act of 1773** to let the British East India Company, which controlled the tea trade, to please the colonists by lowering the price of tea, but its **smuggling** of Dutch tea. The colonists were satisfied and believed that Boston Harbor was the only way to get tea on trade. This protest became the Boston Tea Party.

Your job is not to decide on the reasons the colonists did the right thing in Boston Harbor. Historians have argued that the Boston Tea Party occurred for both reasons. Your task is to determine which reasons to decide which reasons. In other words, *Money or Power?* *Reason for the Boston Tea Party*

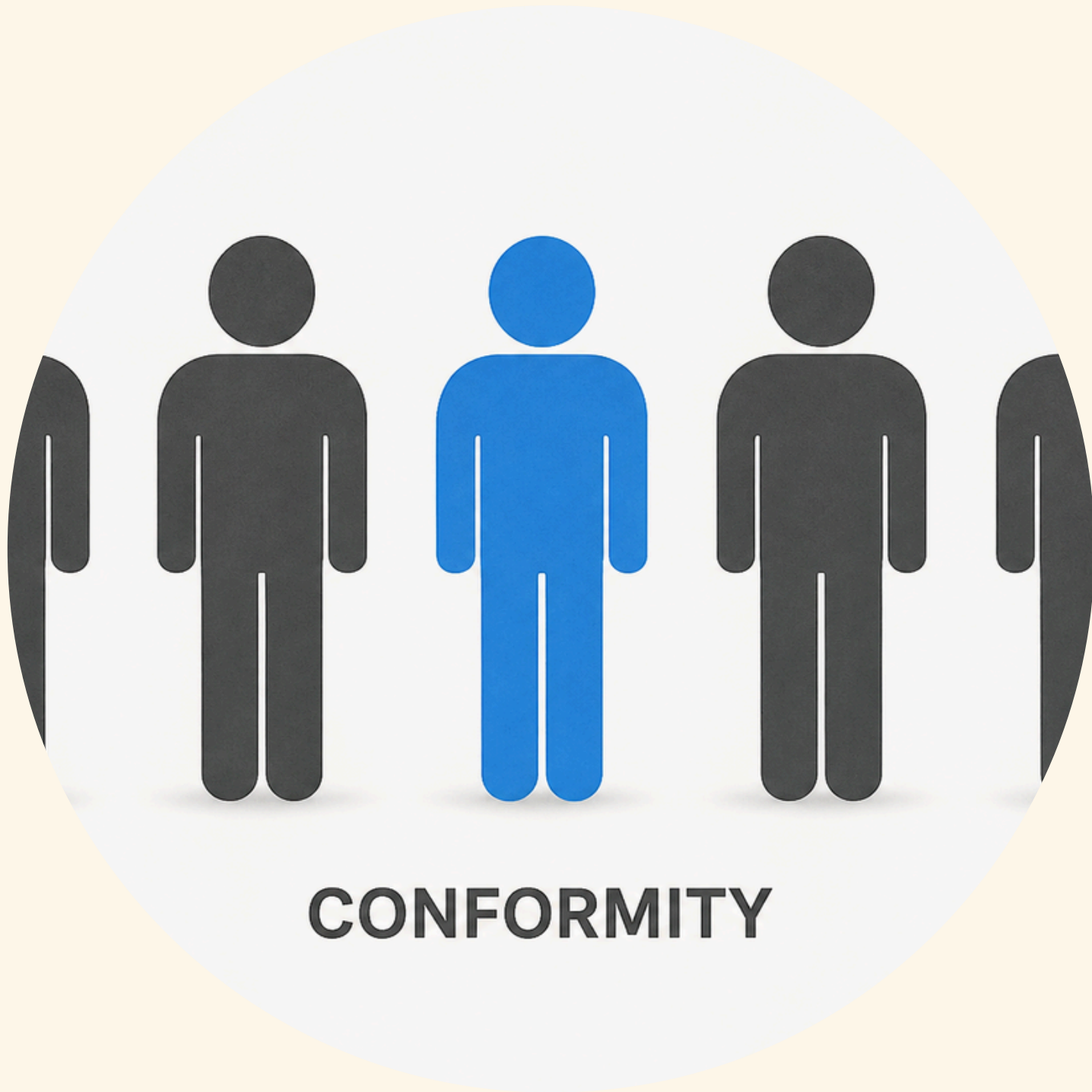
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What was the main reason for the Boston Tea Party?

Money

Power

The Who: All Kids, All Classes



Name: _____ Class: _____

Conformity

By Charlotte Harrison
2014

Sometimes people change to fit in with a group. In this text, the author describes this process and explains how it affects society. As you read, take notes on the different types of conformity and what motivates people to conform.

- [1] Conformity, or acting the way most other people in one's social group act, often grows out of a person's desire for security and belonging in a group — usually a group of similar age, culture, religion, or educational background. Being different from the group carries the risk of social rejection, a deep fear of many people. The drive to conform is often particularly powerful for adolescents, for whom acceptance by peers can be a primary goal, but it affects people of all ages. However, some studies suggest that conformity decreases with age.



"Untitled" by K...

Although the word often has a negative connotation, conformity helps society function smoothly in many ways. People's tendency to conform helps society function smoothly in many ways. When drivers follow the rules of the road, it enables safe transportation. When team members conform to the norms of interpersonal interaction, they enable collaboration and cooperation.¹

Psychologist² Herbert Kelman identified and labeled three major types of conformity. Compliance, occurs when a person conforms publicly but privately holds different beliefs. People comply because of a need for approval from others. Identification, is conforming to a particular person whom one admires or family member. Identification is usually motivated by the desire for approval or success. The third type of conformity, internalization, is when a person actually absorbed a group's belief system and sees it as truly their own.

1. **Collaboration** (*noun*) the act of working together
2. **Psychologist** (*noun*) a scientist who studies the mind and behavior
3. **Perceived** (*adjective*) believed, understood

The benefits of conformity outweigh its dangers in society.

Agree

Disagree

The When: Make a Plan

The Curriculum

01

What is your next writing opportunity for a controversial or argumentative topic to be explored? (DBQ, Anticipation Guide, SCR, ECR)

02

Is the current question or topic worded in such a way to create “sides” or disagreement? Reword if you need to.

03

Which documents will you use? Are there any other sources that should be considered?

04

Give yourself plenty of time for the full experience. Plan to take multiple grades over this high-leverage activity.



Thank You!

We would love to plan with you!

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