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Williams

American Government

Fall 2018

**Quotes on Government**

*Direction: Read each through the quotes. Choose one. Discuss with your neighbor. Write a brief paragraph Part 2. In groups choose one quote to share with the class. Explain why you chose it. Give a current example of how it holds true. Share with the class*

1. The danger is not that a particular class is unfit to govern. Every class is unfit to govern. Lord Acton
2. Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide. John Adams
3. It is always easier to fight for one’s principles than to live up to them. Alfred Adler
4. Totalitarianism is never content to rule by external means, namely, through the state and a machinery of violence; thanks to its peculiar ideology and the role assigned to it in this apparatus of coercion, totalitarianism has discovered a means of dominating and terrorizing human beings from within. Hannah Arendt
5. Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal. Aristotle
6. They should rule who are able to rule best. Aristotle
7. Words like ‘freedom,’ ‘justice,’ ‘democracy’ are not common concepts; on the contrary, they are rare. People are not born knowing what these are. It takes enormous and, above all, individual effort to arrive at the respect for other people that these words imply. James Baldwin
8. Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. G.K. Chesterton
9. Government is a trust and the officers of the government are trustees, and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people. Henry Clay
10. Men speak of natural rights, but I challenge any one to show where in nature any rights existed or were recognized until there was established for their declaration and protection a duly promulgated body of corresponding laws. Calvin Coolidge
11. Democracy don’t rule the world, You’d better get that in your head; This world is ruled by violence, But I guess that’s better left unsaid. Bob Dylan
12. History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. Dwight D. Eisenhower
13. Two cheers for Democracy: one because it admits variety and two because it permits criticism. E. M. Forster
14. Democracy is measured not by its leaders doing extraordinary things, but by its citizens doing things extraordinarily well. John Gardner
15. The security of our nation is not at the ramparts alone. Security also lies in the value of our free institutions. A cantankerous press, an obstinate press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know. Murray I. Gurfein
16. The complete independence of the courts of justice is peculiarly essential in a limited constitution. Alexander Hamilton
17. A state that denies its citizens their basic rights becomes a danger to its neighbors as well: internal arbitrary rule will be reflected in arbitrary external relations. The suppression of public opinion, the abolition of public competition for power and its public exercise opens the way for the state power to arm itself in any way it sees fit. . . . A state that does not hesitate to lie to its own people will not hesitate to lie to other states. Václav Havel
18. It is not enough to merely defend democracy. To defend it may be to lose it; to extend it is to strengthen it. Democracy is not property; it is an idea. Hubert H. Humphrey
19. So long as men worship the Caesars and Napoleons, Caesars and Napoleons will arise to make them miserable. Aldous Huxley
20. …though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful, must be reasonable, that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression. Thomas Jefferson
21. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich. John F. Kennedy
22. The ballot is stronger than the bullet. Abraham Lincoln
23. The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive and judiciary in the same hands, whether of one, a few or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny. James Madison
24. It is a strange fact that freedom and equality, the two basic ideas of democracy, are to some extent contradictory. Logically considered, freedom and equality are mutually exclusive, just as society and the individual are mutually exclusive. Thomas Mann
25. Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary. Reinhold Niebuhr
26. If we enquire wherein lies precisely the greatest good of all, which ought to be the good of every system of law, we shall find that it comes down to two main objects, freedom and equality. Jean Jacques Rousseau
27. Justice is conscience, not a personal conscience but the conscience of the whole of humanity. Those who clearly recognize the voice of their own conscience usually recognize also the voice of justice. Alexander Solzhenitsyn