**Excerpt from “Is it a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?**

**---Susan B. Anthony**

(1) Friends and Fellow-citizens: I stand before you tonight, under indictment for the alleged

crime of having voted at the last Presidential election, without having a lawful right to

vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only

committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's right, guaranteed to me

and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any

State to deny.

(2) Our democratic-republican government is based on the idea of the natural right of every

individual member thereof to a voice and a vote in making and executing the laws. We

assert the province of government to be to secure the people in the enjoyment of their

unalienable rights. We throw to the winds the old dogma that governments can give

rights. Before governments were organized, no one denies that each individual

possessed the right to protect his own life, liberty and property. And when 100 or

1,000,000 people enter into a free government, they do not barter away their natural

rights; they simply pledge themselves to protect each other in the enjoyment of them,

through prescribed judicial and legislative tribunals. They agree to abandon the

methods of brute force in the adjustment of their differences, and adopt those of

civilization.

(3) Nor can you find a word in any of the grand documents left us by the fathers that

assumes for government the power to create or to confer rights. The Declaration of

Independence, the United States Constitution, the constitutions of the several states

and the organic laws of the territories, all alike propose to protect the people in the

exercise of their God-given rights. Not one of them pretends to bestow rights.

(4) "All men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable

rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these,

governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of

the governed."

(5) Here is no shadow of government authority over rights, nor exclusion of any from their

full and equal enjoyment. Here is pronounced the right of all men, and "consequently,"

as the Quaker preacher said, "of all women," to a voice in the government. And here, in

this very first paragraph of the declaration, is the assertion of the natural right of all to

the ballot; for, how can "the consent of the governed" be given, if the right to vote be

denied. Again:

(6) "That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the

right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its

foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such forms as to them shall

seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness."

(7) Surely, the right of the whole people to vote is here clearly implied. For however

destructive in their happiness this government might become, a disfranchised class

could neither alter nor abolish it, nor institute a new one, except by the old brute force

method of insurrection and rebellion. One-half of the people of this nation to-day are

utterly powerless to blot from the statute books an unjust law, or to write there a new

and a just one. The women, dissatisfied as they are with this form of government, that

enforces taxation without representation, that compels them to obey laws to which

they have never given their consent that imprisons and hangs them without a trial by a

jury of their peers, that robs them, in marriage, of the custody of their own persons,

wages and children, are this half of the people left wholly at the mercy of the other half,

in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this

government, every one of which was based on the immutable principle of equal rights

to all. By those declarations, kings, priests, popes, aristocrats, were all alike dethroned,

and placed on a common level politically, with the lowliest born subject or serf. By

them, too, men, as such, were deprived of their divine right to rule, and placed on a

political level with women. By the practice of those declarations all class and caste

distinction will be abolished; and slave, serf, plebeian, wife, woman, all alike, bound

[leap] from their subject position to the proud platform of equality.

**Question 1**

Part A: What is the meaning of the word unalienable in the fourth paragraph of the speech?

A. cannot be defined

B. cannot be taken away

C. cannot be seen or touched

D. cannot be given to all

Part B: Which two phrases from the text best help the reader understand the meaning of unalienable?

A. “God-given

B. “Endowed by their Creator”

C. “deriving their just powers”

D. “the consent of the governed”

E. “the right of all men”

F. “as the Quaker preacher said”

G. “by those declarations”

**Question 2**

In the last paragraph of the excerpt, what is the meaning of the concept of a “platform” of equality in relation to the central idea of Anthony’s speech? Choose an option and then explain your answer.

A. A platform is flat; everyone stands at the same level which reflects Anthony’s argument that men and women have equal rights.

B. A platform is wide and deep; there is room for everyone which symbolizes Anthony’s argument that the Constitution addresses rights for all.

C. A platform is elevated; equality for everyone is an exalted ideal which illustrates Anthony’s argument that the right to vote is a privilege and should be held in high regard.

D. A platform is long-lasting; everyone should have permanent equality, which describes Anthony’s vision of how long unalienable rights have existed.

**Excerpt from Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Speech**

**March 4, 1801**

Friends and Fellow Citizens:

During the contest of opinion through which we have passed, the animation of discussions and of

exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely and to

speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced

according to the rules of the Constitution, all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the

law, and unite in common efforts for the common good. All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle,

that 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 law must protect, and to violate would be

oppression. Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social

intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things.

And let us reflect that, having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so

long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as

wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions. During the throes and convulsions of the

ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his

long-lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and

peaceful shore; that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others, and should divide

opinions as to measures of safety. But every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We

have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all

Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican

form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be

tolerated where reason is left free to combat it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a

republican government cannot be strong, that this Government is not strong enough; but would the

honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us

free and firm on the theoretic and visionary fear that this Government, the world's best hope, may by

possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest

Government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the 5

standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern.

Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be

trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him?

Let history answer this question.

Let us, then, with courage and confidence pursue our own Federal and Republican principles, our

attachment to union and representative government.

**Question 1**

PART A: The word “principle” recurs throughout Jefferson’s speech. In the context of the speech, what is the meaning of the word principle?

A. a tendency of human beings to respond to a situation in a similar way

B. a basic belief that gives rise to and supports other ideas

C. a concern shared by members of the same political group

D. a desire to treat all living things with equality

PART B: How does the repetition of the word principle in Jefferson’s speech help him achieve his purpose?

A. It shows his listeners that Jefferson plans to actively provide leadership.

B. It allows Jefferson to acknowledge that different people believe different things.

C. It stresses the significance of the strong foundations on which the government was formed.

D. It emphasizes the importance Jefferson places on behavior and manners.

E. It explains how America’s current government differs from governments of other countries.