# **Unit Six:**

**Question One:**

* What do you think is most admired about the United States around the world?
* How has our constitution influenced other nations’ constitutions?
* What do you think of the concept of being a “citizen of the world?” If you believe there is such a thing, what are some of the responsibilities of world citizens?
* What is meant by the term “tyranny of the majority”?
* What are the basic purposes of the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection and due process clause?
* How is procedural due process related to the principle of limited government (rule of law, constitutional government)?
* What do you think is the greatest threat to individual rights at the present time?
* Some say that during wartime, the government should be allowed to wield more power in the name of national security. To what extent should Americans be willing to sacrifice individual liberties in the quest for national security during a war?
* What is common law, and what role does it play in our constitutional system?
* According to the Declaration of Independence, when do people have the right to “abolish” their government?
* Why was the early United States sometimes referred to as an “empire of reason”? Do you think it is still an empire of reason?
* What responsibilities, if any, do Americans have to promote democracy and human rights in other nations? Explain your position.
* Do you believe that the United Nations could correctly be termed a confederation? Explain why?
* How important is it for Americans to be informed about what is happening in the rest of the world? Explain.
* What suggestions do you have for improving Americans’ understanding of other countries?

**Question 2:**

* In the United States, what rights does a citizen have that a resident alien does not have?
* How was citizenship defined in the United States before and after the Fourteenth Amendment?
* Explain how *jus soli*, *jus sanguines*, and residency differ as principles for defining citizenship.
* Do you believe that citizens possess a right “not to participate” in the political life of the nation?
* Should resident aliens have the same due process rights as regular citizens?
* Should resident aliens be able to hold public office?
* What potential problems does an open immigration policy have when you have to also consider national security concerns? What policies should be adopted to address this concern?
* What do you think are some of the most important legal rights and obligations of citizens?
* What do you think are some of the most important moral rights and obligations of citizens?
* Should the United States allow dual national citizenship or does it undermine American citizenship? Explain your answer.
* Should an ability to read and write English be required for citizenship?
* Do you think illegal aliens ought to be allowed to stay in the United States for a specified amount of time if they are working at jobs that pay less than American citizens are willing to work for? Or do you believe all illegal aliens should be deported immediately?
* How does federalism extend opportunities for citizen participation?

**Question 3:**

* Are the ideals of the Constitution still in practice today? Which ones, and how?
* In Article V of the Constitution, what process is spelled out for amending the Constitution?
* The amendment process has been criticized because it takes too long and is too complicated. Do you agree or disagree with criticism? Why?
* Some people argue that making the amendment process more difficult is a good thing, because it ensures widespread and serious deliberation among the public. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
* There has been more controversy involved with interpreting certain parts of the Constitution as opposed to others. What are some parts of the Constitution that have provided the Court with its greatest challenges?
* How have judicial interpretations brought about needed change? What examples can you cite?
* How can Congress bring about needed changes? What examples can you cite?
* How can citizen action bring about needed changes? What examples can you cite?
* How is civil disobedience different from non-violent direct action?
* Give examples from U.S. history of civil disobedience being used effectively.
* What types of political action do you believe should be taken before resorting to civil disobedience?
* What additional constitutional changes, if any, do you think are needed to help the United States become “a more perfect union”? Why?
* Are there any amendments you would like to see added to the Constitution?
* Do you believe the U.S. Constitution should be viewed as a “living document?” What implications would that have for the way in which it is interpreted?
* Explain what is meant by civil discourse. Why is it important?