



Unit 2 Overview



Guiding Questions: What is the balance between rights of the individual and the group?

 Modules			
No.	Title	 Ideas	 Task
1	Good and Bad Habits: “Of Custom and Education”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change • Custom • Society 	Informational/Explanatory/Synthesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Francis Bacon have to teach us about custom? • After reading Bacon’s “Of Custom,” write an essay in which you explain his view on custom. Support your discussion with evidence from the text.
2	<i>Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Equity • Language • Perspective 	Argumentation/Cause-effect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reading from “The Vindication of the Rights of Woman,” write a public statement in which you argue the causes of gender stereotyping and explain the effects on society. Support your position with evidence from the text.
3	What is Power? – “Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good and Evil • Man • Power 	Argumentation/Comparison: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to de Las Casas, who is responsible for the depopulation and devastation of the West Indies in the 16th Century? • After reading an excerpt from Bartoleme de Las Casas’ “Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies,” write an essay in which you compare the behavior of the Spanish invaders and the Indian natives and argue that one or the other or both are responsible for the devastation of the Indies. Support your conclusion with evidence from the text.
4	Your Preference: “Mutability” and “Perhaps the World Ends Here”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry • Change • Consistency 	Argumentation/Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What poem do you like best? • After reading “Perhaps the World Ends Here” and “Mutability,” write a blog post (for a Poetry Review Page) in which you discuss the poets’ styles and evaluate the appeal of the poems’ ideas. Support your position with evidence from the text(s).



Unit 2 Assessment



Assessment Task: After reading an excerpt from John Stewart Mill's "On Liberty," write a letter to a fellow citizen that describes Mill's points about how one arrives at the truth. Use at least one quote from the text.



On the Liberty of Thought and Discussion

BY JOHN STUART MILL

But when we turn to subjects infinitely more complicated, to morals, religion, politics, social relations, and the business of life, three-fourths of the arguments for every disputed opinion consist in dispelling the appearances which favour some opinion different from it. The greatest orator, save one, of antiquity, has left it on record that he always studied his adversary's case with as great, if not with still greater, intensity than even his own. What Cicero practised as the means of forensic success, requires to be imitated by all who study any subject in order to arrive at the truth. He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment, and unless he contents himself with that, he is either led by authority, or adopts, like the generality of the world, the side to which he feels most inclination. Nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. That is not the way to do justice to the arguments, or bring them into real contact

with his own mind. He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of; else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty.

Ninety-nine in a hundred of what are called educated men are in this condition; even of those who can argue fluently for their opinions. Their conclusion may be true, but it might be false for anything they know: they have never thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them, and considered what such persons may have to say; and consequently they do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess. They do not know those parts of it which explain and justify the remainder; the considerations which show that a fact which seemingly conflicts with another is reconcilable with it, or that, of two apparently strong reasons, one and not the other ought to be preferred. All that part of the truth which turns the scale, and decides the judgment of a completely informed mind, they are strangers



Unit 2 Assessment (continued)



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to; nor is it ever really known, but to those who have attended equally and impartially to both sides, and endeavoured to see the reasons of both in the strongest light. So essential is this discipline to a real understanding of moral and human subjects, that if opponents of all important truths do not exist, it is indispensable to imagine them, and supply them with the strongest arguments which the most skilful devil's advocate can conjure up. To abate the force of these considerations, an enemy of free discussion may be supposed to say, that there is no necessity for mankind in general to know and understand all that can be said against or for their opinions by philosophers and theolo-

gians. That it is not needful for common men to be able to expose all the misstatements or fallacies of an ingenious opponent. That it is enough if there is always somebody capable of answering them, so that nothing likely to mislead uninstructed persons remains unrefuted. That simple minds, having been taught the obvious grounds of the truths inculcated on them, may trust to authority for the rest, and being aware that they have neither knowledge nor talent to resolve every difficulty which can be raised, may repose in the assurance that all those which have been raised have been or can be answered, by those who are specially trained to the task.