

Founding Civics

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Federalist 51 Excerpts

James Madison, February 8, 1788

Say, Mean, Matter: Close Reading Strategy

Name _____

Say Specific information or quote from the text	Mean Analyze the meaning of the excerpt	Matter Connection to broader context, ideas, concepts, etc.
[1] In order to lay a due foundation for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent is admitted on all hands to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own; and consequently should be so constituted that the members of each should have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others. ...	<i>(This means...)</i> <i>Madison argues that each branch of government must be independent from the others to protect liberty. He suggests that members of one branch should not have too much influence over who serves in another branch.</i>	<i>(It matters because...)</i> <i>Madison is detailing the concept of separation of powers, which is still an important constitutional principle today. By having separation among the branches, corruption and abuse of power are less likely.</i>
[2] But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others. The provision for defense must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack.		

<p>[3] Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government.</p>		
<p>[4] It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.</p>		
<p>[5] A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary* precautions ...</p> <p>*providing supplementary or additional help and support</p>		



<p>[6] In republican government, the legislative authority necessarily predominates. The remedy for this inconveniency is to divide the legislature into different branches; and to render them, by different modes of election and different principles of action, as little connected with each other as the nature of their common functions and their common dependence on the society will admit.</p>		
<p>[7] It may even be necessary to guard against dangerous encroachments by still further precautions. As the weight of the legislative authority requires that it should be thus divided, the weakness of the executive may require, on the other hand, that it should be fortified.</p>		

1) **Identify** Madison's thesis or claim in *Federalist 51*.

2) **Describe** two pieces of evidence Madison uses to support his claim.

a.

b.