Section 1.
Government and the State

For much of history, and in many parts of the world, leadership was passed from one person to another on the basis of a "divine right" to rule. That is, people believed God gave certain individuals the right to rule. Study the cartoon and answer the questions that follow.

"Of course, it helped that my father was also a king."

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. Those with the divine right were generally of royal birth. These individuals would then be succeeded by their children. Which part of the cartoon demonstrates this concept?

2. Those under royal rule believed that they must obey the king as they would obey God. How does the position of the king in this cartoon give him a God-like presence?

3. Is the cartoonist in favor of or opposed to the theory of divine right? How do you know?

4. Making Comparisons What do you think is the difference between a king and a dictator? Explain how the cartoon illustrates this distinction.
Dictatorship has been described as the opposite of a democracy, both in the structure of the government and in the principles upon which it is based. The cartoon below, from 1933, deals with Nazi Germany's dictator Adolf Hitler, who took power in that year. Study it and answer the questions that follow.

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. Describe what is happening in the cartoon.

2. Hitler had absolute authority in Nazi Germany. Does that fact explain why the cartoon blames Hitler personally for the treatment of German minorities? Explain.

3. Why might a minority group in the situation shown by the cartoon go along with a dictator's demand?

4. Drawing Conclusions Why do you think Hitler wanted German minorities to tell the world they were doing well?
The concept of democracy lies at the heart of the American way of life. One important ingredient needed to maintain a successful democracy is compromise. Sometimes referred to as "an art," compromise is not always easily achieved. Study the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.

"We can't come to an agreement about how to fix your car, Mr. Simons. Sometimes that's the way things happen in a democracy."

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. Describe what is happening in the cartoon.
2. Which of the five basic concepts of democracy is being ignored by the mechanics?
3. What other concept of democracy, if applied here, would have allowed the mechanics to come to a conclusion on how to fix the car?
4. Identifying Assumptions Does the cartoon appear to be arguing that businesses should be governed as democracies? Explain.