

CIVIC MINDED

What Everyone Should
Know about the
US Government

JEFF FLEISCHER

Study Guide for *Civic Minded* created by Jeff Fleischer

About *Civic Minded*

How do student loans work? What do sanctions do? Where does federal spending go, and who decides on the budget? Author and journalist Jeff Fleischer digs into these and other relevant civics topics to explain the history behind different processes and programs, what they look like today, and why it's important to understand them. Through engaging, well-researched text and related sidebars, this book will help readers understand and join many ongoing political conversations in the United States, from spending to citizenship to international relations and more.

About This Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help teachers, educators, and parents explore the book's content with students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, though the material can also be adapted for younger students. "Reading Response" provides questions that test reading comprehension. "Group Discussion" offers prompts for discussion that applies concepts from the reading. "Additional Projects" suggests ideas for papers or projects related to the reading.

Reading Response

- The book explains how the federal budget breaks down and discusses the concept of the federal deficit. Based on the reading, what steps would you take to try to reduce the deficit?
- The chapters on debt explain that whether debt is good or bad depends on where the money goes. What are three examples of things you think are worth spending more to fix?
- The chapter on the future of Social Security describes three ways the government could fund the program in the future. Which option (or a combination of them) do you think would be best?

Group Discussion

Of all the topics discussed in the book, which did you find most interesting and why? What did you know about that topic before reading the chapter and what was new to you? What topics would you like to learn more about?

Additional Projects

Tax Calculator

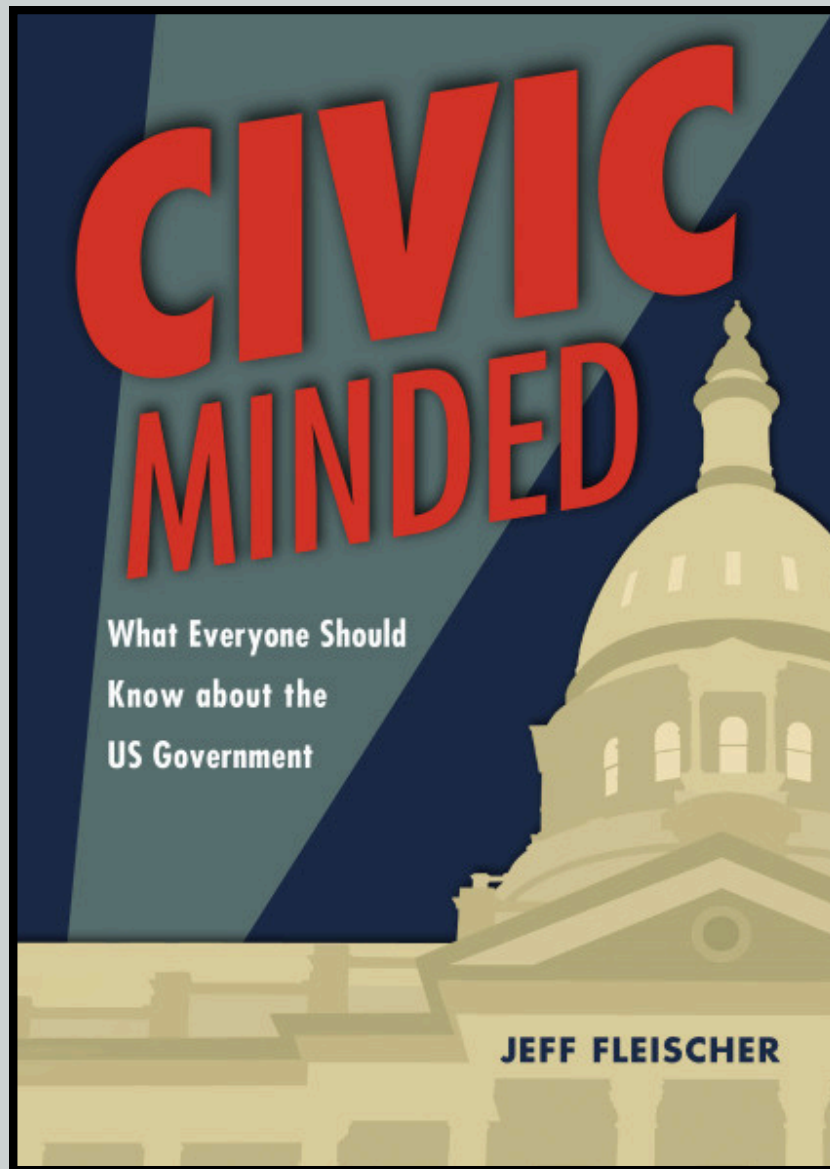
Assign students different salary figures. Ask them to look up current tax rates and, using the explanation of marginal taxes from the book, calculate how much a person earning that salary would pay in federal taxes. They can also calculate how that rate would change if the person were single or married, or if they made that income on long-term capital gains.

Inflation Calculator

Ask students to pick a specific product that has been available to consumers for at least 50 years. They can look up what that item cost fifty years ago, twenty-five years ago, and today, and use that information to calculate the rate of inflation for that product.

Write Your Congressperson

Ask students to individually research their congressperson's track record on one of the issues covered in the book. Depending on how the student feels about their representative's views, they can write a letter of support for that position or a letter urging the representative to change their mind on that issue.



Civic Minded:

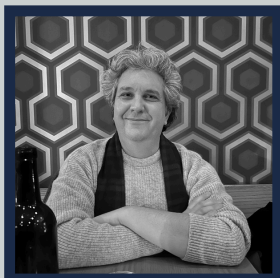
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Ages: 11 - 18

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Jeff Fleischer is a Chicago-based author, editor, and journalist. He is the author of several young adult nonfiction titles including *A Hot Mess: How the Climate Crisis Is Changing Our World* and *Civic Minded: What Everyone Should Know about the US Government*. He has written for numerous publications including the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *National Geographic Traveler*, and *Chicago Magazine*.