

Exploring Individualism

Key Skill:

Determining validity of sources by examining the main ideas underlying points of view

Key Terms and Concepts:

- competition
- democracy
- economic freedom
- individual rights and freedoms
- individualism
- liberalism
- private property
- rule of law
- self-interest
- social contract

Key Issue:

To what extent should we embrace an ideology?

Related Issue:

Should ideology be the foundation of identity?

Chapter Issue:

Should the values of individualism shape an ideology?

Question for Inquiry #1:

How does individualism shape liberalism?

Question for Inquiry #2:

How are the values of individualism expressed politically in liberal societies?

Question for Inquiry #3:

How are the values of individualism expressed economically in liberal societies?

Question for Inquiry #4:

How are the values of individualism expressed socially in liberal societies?



◀ **Figure 2-1** What individual choices do you make regarding your health? Is health or convenience a more important factor in your decision making? To what extent are your choices influenced by others?

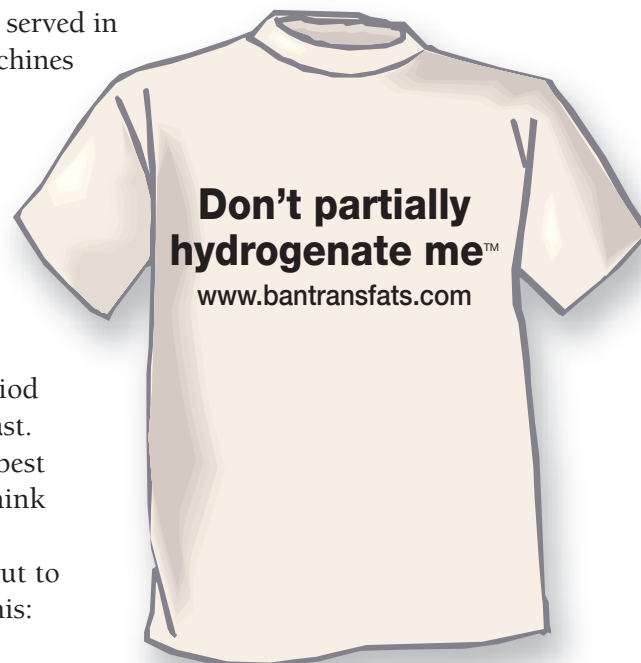
In 2004, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver examined school lunches served in Britain and was shocked by the high levels of saturated fats, salt, and sugar being eaten by kids. Because of this and the rising rate of obesity among children, Oliver launched a campaign to improve school lunches.

For the past couple of years I've been campaigning to ban the junk in schools and get kids eating fresh, tasty nutritious food instead. I can't do it without your help though—so start a revolution in your school and help us prove that school meals can be better.

—Source: **Jamie Oliver, "School Dinners."** [JamieOliver.com, http://www.jamieoliver.com/schooldinners/.](http://www.jamieoliver.com/schooldinners/)

Campaigns to control what is served in school cafeterias and vending machines have also spread across North America. Many provinces and school boards have banned trans fats and removed sugary drinks from schools.

Imagine this. It is late Monday morning and the lunch bell rings. Your stomach has been growling since first-period class because you missed breakfast. Your school cafeteria makes the best gravy for french fries, and you think there might even be a special on cheeseburgers today. You are about to order your meal when you see this:



◀ **Figure 2-2** A T-shirt pleads for a trans-fat-free world. Trans fats are partially hydrogenated oils often found in fast and prepared foods to increase shelf life. Eating trans fats has been found to increase your risk of heart disease. By 2010, California will be the first state in the United States to ban trans fats from all restaurants and eating establishments.

You wonder what trans fats are all about, and then you notice the new menu: vegetables and dip, whole-wheat pitas with turkey, cheese and crackers, a fruit tray...

Now you remember, there was some talk about the type of food available in the cafeteria and the availability of healthy food choices, but the issue did not seem to matter to you. You figured that you make good choices about your own eating and physical activity overall, so what everyone else did should not matter to you. But now someone has made a decision, and you cannot make the choice you had wanted to make. The decision to change the cafeteria's menu was made for the good of the whole school, but what about your choice as an individual?

Chapter Issue:

Should the values of individualism shape an ideology?

Being an individual means that you are a unique person. You have your own values, beliefs, likes, dislikes, and anything else that makes up who you are. Some ideologies have developed with a focus on the individual. These ideologies emphasize individual values, such as independence, self-reliance, individual achievement, competition, and freedom. Other ideologies emphasize collective values, such as co-operation, security, and collective interests. **Individualism** focuses on the role of the individual in relation to society.

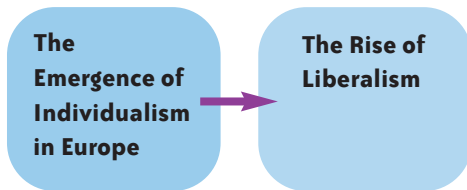
In this chapter, you will explore how values of individualism can shape ideologies. Specifically, you will examine how these values are expressed politically, economically, and socially in Western liberal societies such as those of Canada, the United States, and countries of Western Europe. In doing so, you will address the Chapter Issue: *Should the values of individualism shape an ideology?* Would you like to live in a society whose values focus more on individualism?

Individualism and Liberalism

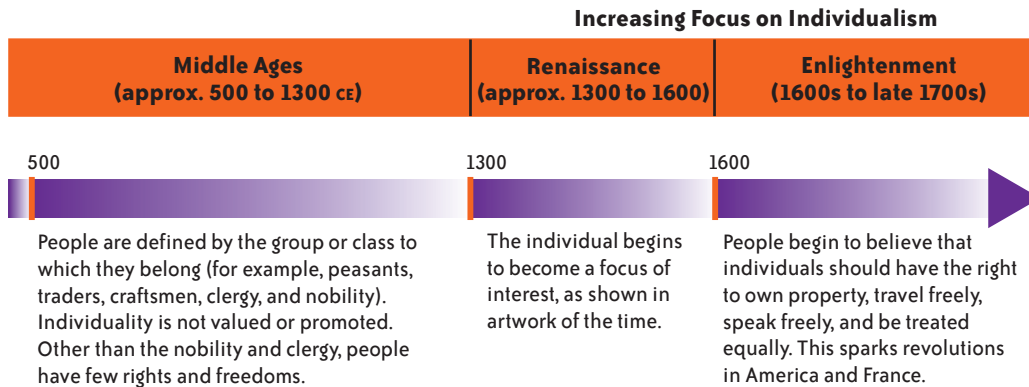
Question for Inquiry

1. How does individualism shape liberalism?

In this section ...



The Emergence of Individualism in Europe



◀ Figure 2-3

During the Middle Ages, individualism was essentially unheard of. Most people in Europe at this time fit into distinct categories: peasants, traders, craftsmen, clergy (Roman Catholic priests, monks, and so on), and nobles. How you fit into your group mattered, but your individual identity did not. For example, during the Middle Ages, if you were lucky, your family might know a stonemason whom they could pay to take you on as an apprentice. You would work for this master without pay while you learned the craft, then become a journeyman (who could work for pay for any master stonemason), and finally become a craftsman, if you were accepted by the guild of stonemasons. Further evidence of the lack of individualism in Europe during the Middle Ages can be seen in the artwork of the time. Human images in art were often very stylized, and most artwork focused on religious themes. Individuals, besides religious figures, were rarely glorified.

Values and beliefs began to change as Europe entered the age of the Renaissance. With the Renaissance came an interest in the individual. For example, Leonardo da Vinci created artworks such as the *Vitruvian Man*, illustrating his fascination with human anatomy and the relation of man to geometric proportions. Other works of art showed individuals, not religious



▲ **Figure 2-4** Icons, or religious works of art, were the most common form of art during the Middle Ages. This icon was painted circa 500–600 CE.

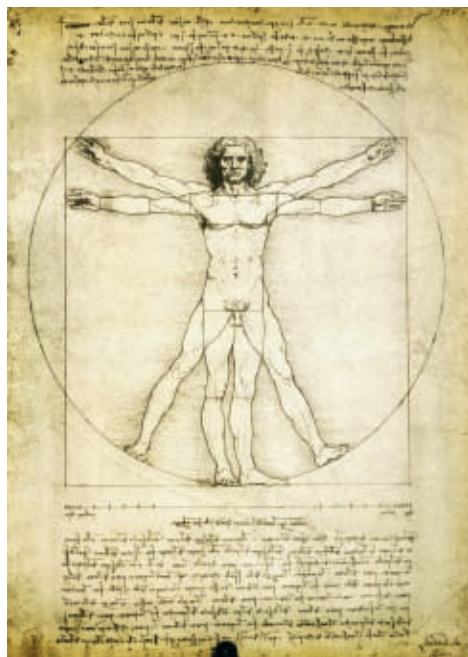


Figure 2-5 ▲ Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, circa 1487. His drawing of man in his simplest form focused attention on the dignity and worth of the individual. Compare the different artistic styles and reasons for creating artwork that were important with those of the Renaissance with those of the Middle Ages (Figures 2-4 and 2-5). What differences do you notice? What would the reasons be for these differences?

subjects, and showed the growing importance of books, education, and the increasing numbers of wealthy nobles, merchants, and craftsmen. At this time, many people were still largely ruled by kings and queens who claimed to have the divine right to rule, which means that people were designated by God to rule.

During the Age of Enlightenment, philosophers began writing about the importance of the individual, and European society began to change. People began to believe that each individual person mattered, that reason (not religion) should be the source of knowledge, and that each individual (if the individual was a landowning man) was reasonable and capable of governing himself. At this time, Europe also experienced a Scientific Revolution, which produced many scientists and mathematicians who dared to challenge what was considered common knowledge. For example, scientists such as Isaac Newton (1642–1727) were known as radicals for forwarding the belief of astronomer Nicholaus Copernicus (1473–1543) regarding the movement of the earth and the sun.

The Rise of Liberalism

The growing popularity of individualism gave rise to a new political ideology called **liberalism**. A central idea of liberalism is the importance of individual liberty. For example, in the late 1700s, during the American and French revolutions, people fought for liberal ideas such as **individual rights and freedoms**. In Britain and its colonies, such as Canada, liberalism also became popular and the government began to guarantee the rights of the individual.

During the 1900s, liberal democracies began to develop in many countries around the world. A **liberal democracy** is a form of government in which the rights and freedoms of the individual are guaranteed. In a liberal democracy, individuals are allowed to vote for the leaders of their country. Today, the values of individualism still influence many liberal democratic governments. For example, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the individual rights and freedoms of Canadian citizens, and, in the United States, citizens are guaranteed individual rights in the US Constitution, such as the right to bear arms and the right to freedom of speech.

Over time, the values of individualism came to be expressed in different ways: political, economic, and social aspects of liberalism.

Although liberalism started with the beliefs and values of individualism, in some cases these beliefs and values have changed to include some ideas related to collectivism. *Collectivism* refers to when the needs of the collective, or whole group, are valued over those of any individual member of the group. For example, in political expressions of collectivism, people have agreed as a group to abide by a set of laws, and in social collectivism, people support education for all members of society through the taxes that they all pay. The term *liberalism* can, therefore, be used to describe a variety of different ideas about how we should live together as individuals.

Political Aspects of Liberalism	Focuses on the idea that all members of society have the same legal rights and freedoms, regardless of their gender, race, or economic status
Economic Aspects of Liberalism	Focuses on the individual's right to property and the removal of government control in economic markets, so that the value of goods and services is decided by individuals (or individual companies), not the government
Social Aspects of Liberalism	Focuses on the idea that individuals are the basis of society, and, as such, all individuals in society should be treated as equals and have access to the rights, the freedoms, and a quality of life

Figure 2-6 ▲ Examples of what the political, economic, and social aspects of liberalism include and emphasize.



▲ **Figure 2-7** Before the Scientific Revolution, it was widely believed that the world was flat. This idea was challenged by explorers and scientists before and during the Scientific Revolution. What worldview is depicted in this visual?

Summary

Individualism has evolved to become a very important influence on how we live together as a society. During the Middle Ages in Europe, before the emergence of individualism, individual achievement and success were not valued and were often looked down upon. During the Renaissance, the early beginnings of individualistic values emerged. During the Enlightenment period, scientists and philosophers challenged commonly held values and beliefs about human nature and science, and people began to value the individual.

Later, individualism led to the development of a new political ideology, **liberalism**, which focuses on the importance of individual liberty or freedoms. Over time, liberalism was applied to various political, economic, and social areas. These different areas and how they relate to individualism will be explored in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 Create a two-column chart with the headings “Before the Renaissance” and “After the Renaissance.” Describe the rights of the individual in each of these columns.
- 2 Describe the relationship between individualism and liberalism. Explain to what extent your own beliefs and

values reflect the values of individualism or liberalism. To help you organize your answer, create a mind map or diagram that best illustrates your beliefs and values.

- 3 Brainstorm as many examples as you can of values of individualism that you believe are most present in Canadian society today.

Political Expressions of Individualism

Question for Inquiry

2. How are the values of individualism expressed politically in liberal societies?

In this section ...



Political Roots of Liberalism

In 1776, when the American colonies declared independence from Britain, they founded their new country according to the Declaration of Independence, which legally recognized the rights of individuals. It states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” These new individualistic ideas had a profound impact on the founding of the USA and on other countries around the world.

During the French Revolution (1789–1799), the middle and peasant classes proclaimed their desire for more rights and freedoms. “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité, ou la mort!*” (“Freedom, equality, brotherhood, or death!”) was the motto of the revolution. A shortened version of this motto (“*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*”) later became the French national motto. In 1789, another important development in Western democracy was *La Déclaration des droits*

Figure 2-8 *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*, the French national motto, is shown here on the front of the Faculty of Law building of the Université de Paris.





◀ **Figure 2-9** On October 5, 1789, several thousand people led by Parisian women marched to the luxurious palace of the king and his court to protest the high price of bread. Driven by hunger and desperation and carrying weapons such as pitchforks, swords, and scythes, they broke down the palace doors and demanded bread. This event was an expression of individualism, as the protestors were motivated by their own self-interests and were demanding fairness and equality.

de l'Homme et du Citoyen (Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen). The Declaration of Rights of Man (as it is known) symbolized the transition of France from an absolute monarchy in which the king had all the power to a constitutional monarchy in which individual citizens of all classes had legal rights and freedoms.

The concepts found in the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen were based on the ideas from Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu. These concepts became the basis of many of the legal rights found in Western democracies today, such as equality of citizens under the law and freedom of expression. The revolutions in the United States and France contributed to the development of political expressions of liberalism, which promote the idea that all members of society have the same legal rights and freedoms.

Rule of Law and the Social Contract

During the Enlightenment period in Europe, when many people began to believe that each individual mattered and was able to make his own decisions, philosophers were also questioning why some people ruled over others. Over time, an idea called the rule of law developed. The **rule of law** is the idea that the law itself, and not an individual, has the greatest power and that *all* individuals are subject to the law.

The Magna Carta (or Great Charter) of 1215 is an early example of the rule of law. The Magna Carta is a document that was created to limit the powers of the ruler of England, who was at that time King John. After a dispute with English barons and the Roman Catholic pope, King John was forced to limit the taxes paid to him and to sign the Magna Carta, by which he agreed that he was subject to the law. In addition to respecting the laws of England, the king had to give up some of his powers.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

To what extent should a government or a monarch (e.g., a king or queen) have control of its citizens' access to rights and freedoms? Explain your answer.

Figure 2-10 King John is shown here signing the Magna Carta in 1215, while the barons and clergy looked on. The barons and others wanted the original Magna Carta to force the king to follow common law and tradition, making him and the nobility accountable to the law rather than the other way around. King John did not really support this position. Thus, the original Magna Carta lasted only a short time before King John went back on his word and had it removed from law in 1215. This decision provoked the barons to declare war on him, causing a civil war in England and a struggle for power. Over time, however, the revised versions of the Magna Carta have led to important legal democratic rights and freedoms for individuals that are still present today.



PAUSE AND REFLECT

Social contracts are not usually written on paper and signed by the citizens of a country. If you were, however, to write a social contract between Canadians and our government, what might it say?

Despite the signing of the Magna Carta, many English rulers after King John still tried to rule England without regard for the law; however, as the centuries passed and people demanded greater political rights, the Magna Carta became a document on which Western democracies based many of their own legal documents. British prime minister Winston Churchill had this to say about the importance of the Magna Carta in 1956:

“[H]ere is a law which is above the King and which even he must not break. This reaffirmation of a supreme law and its expression in a general charter is the great work of Magna Carta; and this alone justifies the respect in which men have held it.”

—Winston Churchill, 1956.

Along with the idea that all individuals are subject to the law, and no one is above it, many people began to believe that each individual is reasonable and capable of governing himself. These ideas brought up the following question: Why should individuals consent or agree to be part of society and be governed by others? One answer to this question came about from the writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau during the Enlightenment; they all contributed to the idea of a social contract. In a **social contract**, each individual of a society agrees to be governed so that he or she may gain the benefits of living in that society (by having access, for example, to defence against enemies and to trade opportunities).

Individual Rights and Freedoms

With the rise of political liberalism, many countries created charters or declarations that ensured that all members of society had the same legal rights and freedoms. At the same time, there are also some limits to these rights and freedoms. American supreme court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously said that one must not *falsely* shout “Fire!” in a crowded theatre; this was a reasonable limitation on one’s freedom of speech. Canadian courts and governments also make decisions about what individual rights entail and what the reasonable limits to these rights and freedoms are.

Individual rights and freedoms are a key value of individualism and an important feature of liberal democracies. Examples of such rights and freedoms include freedom of religion, freedom of association, and the right to life, liberty, and security.

One important individual right in liberal democracies is the right to vote. Most early liberal democracies did not extend this right to all citizens. For example, after the American and French revolutions, the right to vote was granted only to men, mainly property owners. Here are some other examples of restrictions on the right to vote:

- In Britain, the vote was extended to middle-class men in 1832. Working-class men waited until 1885. British women were first able to vote in 1919, if they were over the age of 30.
- Countries such as South Africa restricted voting based on race.
- The Canadian government restricted First Nations and Inuit peoples’ and certain immigrants’ rights to vote.

Now, however, the right to vote has been extended in most democratic countries to include all individuals of a certain age, usually 18 or 21 and older.

An Example of Freedom of Expression

People often attribute the following saying to Voltaire (1694–1778), a French writer and philosopher from the 1700s: “I may disagree with what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” Voltaire, whose writings were sometimes condemned by the Church, was an outspoken supporter of social reform in France, despite strict censorship laws and penalties. Voltaire’s belief about censorship, reflected in the above quotation, highlights a basic democratic right around the world: freedom of speech.

Freedom of expression is considered a **fundamental right** in Canada; however, there are times when this freedom might justifiably be limited. For example, freedom of speech promotes the “free flow of ideas essential to political democracy and democratic institutions,” but what if a person says or writes something that is untrue, unfair, and harmful? (Source: *R. v. Keegstra*, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697. Judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada, <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1990/1990rcs3-697/1990rcs3-697.html>.)

Figure 2-11 Should freedoms of expression have limits? How do the examples of graffiti and affixing posters to poles differ from the banning of books that are deemed controversial?



Defamation, as this is called, is a crime, but a tricky one to prove. With a rising number of people making their opinions public on the Internet, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported a rise in court cases about defamation. For example, in January 2006, the British Columbia Supreme Court ordered Susan Halstead to pay \$676 000 for making unfounded allegations, such as drug and alcohol abuse, incompetent teaching, and misconduct, on her website titled “Least Wanted Educators.”

What might happen if freely expressing a thought could jeopardize the safety of others? In a 1993 case, a man putting up posters announcing performances of his band was told he could not because of a Peterborough, Ontario, bylaw. According to the city, fixing posters on power poles “can constitute a safety hazard to workers climbing them, a traffic hazard if placed facing traffic, and visual and aesthetic blight contributing to litter if left too long.” (Source: *Ramsden v. Peterborough (City)* [1993] 2 S.C.R. 1084. Human Constitutional Rights, http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/expression/ramsden_peterborough.html.)

The musician argued that the bylaw unreasonably limited his freedom of expression. What do you think?

What would happen if freely expressing a thought could promote hatred toward a particular group? In Canada, as in all liberal democracies, the right of one individual to free speech has to be balanced against the rights of other individuals, the rights of groups, and the needs and goals of the society.

In one extreme case, an Alberta high school teacher named James Keegstra used derogatory language to describe Jewish people and taught his students that the Jewish people “created the Holocaust to gain sympathy.” (Source: *R. v. Keegstra*, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697. Judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada, <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1990/1990rcs3-697/1990rcs3-697.html>.) He also taught that the Holocaust did not happen.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

In what ways do you make your voice heard? If your school banned access to certain blogs and websites in the library and on all school computers, how would you respond to this issue? How would you express your beliefs and values?

After numerous complaints and warnings from parents and administrators, he was finally dismissed from his teaching position in 1982. In 1984, he was charged with unlawfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group under section 319(2) of the Criminal Code. Keegstra argued that his freedom of expression was being denied. As an individual living in Canada, he is a citizen of a democracy that encourages people to speak their minds. However, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does state that our rights and freedoms can be limited “as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” In the end, Keegstra was found guilty.

Canada and other liberal democracies have a long tradition of the right to free speech; however, what about other countries? Article 35 of China’s constitution states that Chinese citizens have the freedom of speech and the press. However, China has a powerful monitoring body called the Communist Party’s Central Propaganda Department that ensures that all media content promotes and is consistent with party beliefs. In 2005 alone, China jailed 32 journalists. In 2006, the government announced strict new rules about television news coverage, television dramas, and certain Internet sites. To what extent do these laws and rules in China reflect freedom of speech? What individual rights could be in question?



PAUSE AND REFLECT

What is your initial response to the Keegstra example? How did Keegstra’s individual right to free expression conflict with the rights of others?

Summary

Based on their belief that both individuals and governments have certain rights, freedoms, and responsibilities, people have stood up against governments that have chosen not to listen to their citizens or respect their rights. Resistance has occurred and sometimes revolutions have been fought; the values of individualism and liberalism have been expressed politically in many different ways.

For example, the **rule of law**, which states that no one individual is above the law, demonstrates the equality of individuals in society. The **social contract** between individuals and society means that people give up some of their freedom in order to live together in society and enjoy its benefits. Also, legal documents such as charters and declarations have been written to protect **individual rights and freedoms**.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 Choose an example of a political expression of liberalism (for example, rule of law and rights and freedoms as expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the US Declaration of Independence, or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Describe how the example best reflects the values of individualism. Identify at least one related point of view or source from Chapter 2 thus far that best supports your answer.

Economic Expressions of Individualism

Question for Inquiry

3. How are the values of individualism expressed economically in liberal societies?

In this section ...



At the beginning of this chapter, you considered a scenario in which the school cafeteria changed its menu. How much does it matter to you to be able to choose what you buy to eat, listen to, or wear? Throughout history, government has influenced what people can buy and how much they pay for what they buy. At times, government has had complete control over

the economy. At other times, the government has removed its control over the economy, as in the case of economic liberalism. Economic liberalism focuses on allowing individuals (or privately owned companies) to decide the price of goods and services and the freedom to make choices as consumers.



Figure 2-12 In a December 2007 article, Wency Leung reported “Ask teenagers what they want for Christmas these days and chances are it will be one of two things: a gift card or cold, hard cash.” In her article titled “All I want for Christmas is a wad of cash,” teens stated they wanted to make their own economic choices and ensure they could get things they like from their parents. To what extent do you believe these statements accurately reflect the perspectives of teenagers today?

Source: Wency Leung, “All I want for Christmas is a wad of cash.” *The Globe and Mail*, December 11, 2007, p. L1.

its economy by taxing and setting quotas on imports. Mercantilists also believed that the health of the economy depended on the oppression of the working class—that the working class produced more when they had no extra money, free time, or education. In a mercantile system, merchants and the government benefited greatly.

During the late 1700s, a group of economists called the physiocrats emerged. The physiocrats were trying to describe what the natural laws of an economy might be if there were no government controls or intervention. Some of the more notable physiocrats were Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, Francis Quesnay, and Adam Smith. In 1776, Smith published a book called *The Wealth of Nations*, which had a great influence on economies around the world.

Economic Roots of Liberalism

From the 1500s to the 1700s, many European countries operated under mercantilist economic systems. The key ideas of **mercantilism** are that a country should export more goods than it imports, accumulate wealth in gold and silver, and protect

In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith rejects mercantilism. Instead, he proposes that a **free-market economy** is more productive and beneficial to society. A free-market economy is one in which the price of goods and services is set by the demand for them. For example, if there becomes a great need for or a shortage of a product, people will pay more for it. This principle is called supply and demand. In a free-market economy, the government does not set the prices; instead prices go up and down depending on supply and demand.

Smith believed that people generally act out of **self-interest**, and in doing so can help others and contribute to the common good through their efforts. For example, he felt that people should be allowed to better themselves through hard work without the interference of government, and that this would ultimately lead to a healthier economy. Smith used the French expression *laissez-faire*, or “leave alone,” to describe this approach. To that end, Smith advocated a system where individuals worked for their own self-interests, thus benefiting society as a whole (rather than just the small percentage that got rich under mercantilism). Economic changes inspired by Smith’s ideas contributed to the Industrial Revolution and played a large part in establishing the principles applied in modern liberal economies.



▲ **Figure 2-13** With the government protecting merchants’ businesses and supporting the export of their goods, many merchants got rich under the mercantile system. Ports such as this one in Marseille, France, were busy keeping up with the flow of products out of the country.

Economic Freedom, Self-Interest, and Competition

Freedom to buy what you want and to sell your labour at a part-time job are key **economic freedoms** for many Canadian high school students. In 2005, over half of all Canadian students had summer jobs and about 30 per cent worked during the school year. Most students have a choice among various jobs; they might choose the job with the highest pay, the job closest to school or home, the job that has good hours, the job where a friend works, or the job that provides experience for a future career. You choose a job based on your self-interests.

Employers, too, are concerned with their own interests—hiring dependable, hard-working employees whose skills



PAUSE AND REFLECT

How does Smith feel that individualism contributes to the common good? What do you think motivates people to buy and sell? Should individuals and companies be trusted to act freely in the economy? Can you think of a reason why the government should have a role in the economy?

◀ **Figure 2-14** How does **competition** between individual vendors in the marketplace benefit consumers? What might happen if all vendors were told how much their products should cost and how much product they could sell?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

How many of your classmates either have part-time jobs or had summer jobs last year? What are common reasons for working these jobs? Are any of these reasons best supported by values of individualism? Please explain.

and experience match the employers' needs. Of course, they also want to pay those employees in such a way that they can still make a profit and continue to compete in the market. Buyers' self-interests usually include paying the lowest price for the best quality product or service.

Markets in which consumers and businesses have free choice are called free markets.

Join our team! Competitive pay, flexible schedule, and great benefits. Motivated, responsible young people needed who are willing and able to learn on the job.

Figure 2-15 Would you be interested in a job like this one? Why or why not?



Competition and Self-Interest

Are competition and self-interest in the economy a good thing? The following quotations illustrate two points of view on this question.

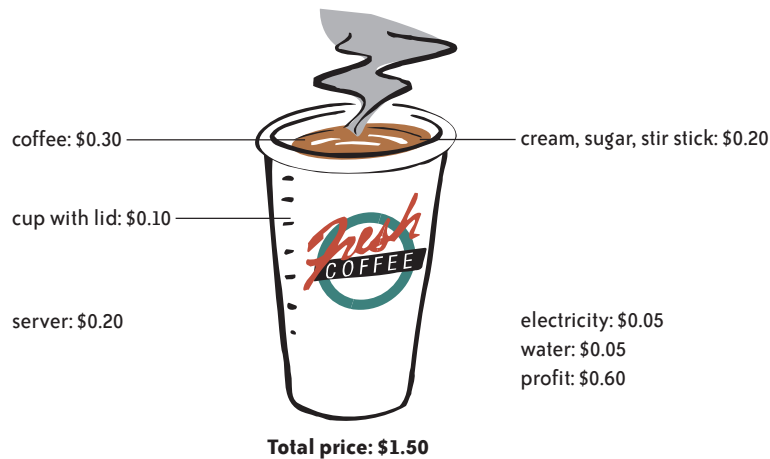
“Economists generally accept the notion that competition in supplying virtually any good or service will lead to superior results in terms of improved quality and lower prices.”

—**Catherine England (chair of the Accounting, Economics, and Finance Department, George Mason University in Virginia), “Cyberbanking and Currency Competition” (paper for Cato Institute’s 14th Annual Monetary Conference, May 23, 1996). Cato Institute, <http://www.cato.org/moneyconf/14mc-3.html>.**

... I do not believe capitalism works... Not in its democratic form, not in its authoritarian form... It seems ... likely to me that we will share our talents and resources not when we are rich enough to afford to do so, but when we learn to share... Instead of trying to make ourselves internationally competitive, we could learn to enjoy our relative poverty. We could ride bicycles and eat lentil soup. We could plant more trees; it hardly costs anything to plant a tree. You can dance and play basketball for nothing, if you have a few friends. If we could learn to use properly the small amount of wealth remaining to our nation, it would be fun... Deceptively simple phrases like “learn to share,” imply developing new institutions and new thinking.

—**Howard Richards (professor at Earlham College in Indiana), Letter 62: Concerning My Relationship to Ross Perot, XXVI, XXVII, XXIII, XXIX, 1992. Howard Richards’s website, <http://howardrichards.org/peace/content/view/50/65/>.**

- 1 What values does each speaker emphasize most about competition and self-interest?
- 2 How do these two points of view about competition and self-interest differ? Is there a grey area that you can identify between the two points of view? Explain your answer and include carefully selected evidence from each of the quotations that you feel most strongly supports your main idea.
- 3 Of the two points of view, which one is most similar to your own values regarding competition and individualism? Why?



◀ **Figure 2-16** What is in a cup of coffee? If the coffee shop owner wanted to compete by reducing the price of a cup of coffee, what might be affected? If the government required that each coffee shop worker was paid \$2 more per hour, what might be impacted? How?

Private Property

Should individuals have the right to own property or should property be owned by the government? Perhaps the land should be owned by no one at all. From a historical perspective, many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Canada did not claim ownership over the land. They felt that no one owned the land because the land was intended to be shared by all living things. Some people feel that **private property** is a key reason for people to live as part of a society. Others feel that the ability to privately own property is an important right in society. Still other communities have had a tradition of common property that is shared, worked, and enjoyed by all.

At first, property law was understood to mean only land (real estate), but it came to mean three types of property: real estate, other forms of physical possessions, and intellectual property (for example, artistic works and inventions).

PAUSE AND REFLECT

What experience do you have with private property? For example, does your family or someone you know own or rent their home? What private property do you own?



Ownership of Land

The following speakers offer two very different opinions on the ownership of land.

“The Great Spirit, and not the Great Mother [the Queen of England], gave us this land.”

—**Medicine Calf (prominent Kainai chief during the Treaty 7 negotiations in Alberta), quoted in Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-west Territories* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., 1880), p. 270.**

The reason why men enter into society is the preservation of their property.

—**John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*, Section 222, 1690.**

- 1 What is the main idea that each speaker suggests about property rights? What does each individual’s point of view suggest about the interests of individuals and the common good?
- 2 Which quotation more closely expresses your own beliefs?

Summary

Values of individualism are expressed economically in almost every aspect of your life. When you make decisions about what jobs you want, what things you want to own, or how you will spend your money, you are expressing a form of economic individualism.

Before the Industrial Revolution, many societies had mercantilist economies, which involved a great deal of government and merchant control over the economy in order to create wealth for the country itself. The working people were left without the opportunity to save money, have free time, or educate themselves. During the late 1700s, Adam Smith wrote the influential book, *The Wealth of Nations*, about the benefits of a free-market economy without government regulation.

Today, values of individualism such as **economic freedom**, **self-interest**, **competition**, and **private property** are important parts of our society. These values are key concepts of economic expressions of liberalism. People who believe in economic expressions of liberalism think that individuals and companies should be free to buy and sell as they wish, and that government does not need to regulate the economy.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 Adam Smith has been an instrumental figure in the development of economic understandings and expressions of liberalism. Which of Adam Smith's ideas or economic expressions of liberalism is most similar to your own values? Why?
- 2 Create a mind map based on the phrase "Economic Expressions of Individualism." Draw four small bubbles

extending from this mind map, and title each bubble with the following headings: "Economic Freedom," "Self-Interest," "Competition," and "Private Property." For each bubble, complete the following tasks:

- a) Write your own definition of the term.
- b) Provide an example of it from today's society.
- c) Explain why this concept is important.

Social Expressions of Individualism

Question for Inquiry

4. How are the values of individualism expressed socially in liberal societies?

In this section ...



Modern society places a great deal of importance on the rights and freedoms of the individual, but not every individual has the same advantages and disadvantages. For example, some people face physical and mental challenges that can make it harder for them to earn a living. Some people are challenged by unfair treatment because of the colour of their skin, their sexual orientation, or their gender. Modern liberals believe that these challenges can threaten an individual's freedom and that these challenges, therefore, must be addressed through government intervention.

Social Roots of Liberalism

As liberalism developed in the late 1800s and into the 1900s, some thinkers made a case in favour of a stronger government role to protect and support those living in poverty. Indeed, many governments did introduce laws and programs to improve conditions for the working class. After the devastation of the Great Depression during the 1930s, many liberals pushed for governments to be more active in helping those in need. How could someone living in poverty be free in the same way as someone who can afford education and health care? These new ideas modified the beliefs of classical liberals, who believe that less government intervention means greater freedom for all individuals.

Some liberals pushed the need for government intervention further than others. For example, some felt that the government should make health care free to those living in poverty. Others felt that health care should be free to everyone. Controversy erupted surrounding the role of government in protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals. How much is enough? How much is too much? At what point does the focus shift from the individual to the group? These questions are still at the centre of many political debates today.

The Right to Education and Individualism

The government's role in ensuring everyone has access to education is complex. For example, many Canadians feel that the government must



▲ **Figure 2-17** During the Depression, economies around the world crashed. This left many people jobless and homeless, and was especially devastating to lower-income families. What role do you think the government should play to protect its citizens from the effects of such events?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you think that people living in poverty have the same opportunities as other members of society? Why or why not?



▲ **Figure 2-18** From left to right: home education, Francophone school, First Nations Education Authority school (Ermineskin Junior-Senior High School in Hobbema, Alberta [Ermineskin Cree First Nation]), and public school. Why did you choose to go to your school? To what extent were your values or the values of individualism a part of your decision making?

Public and Separate Schools	In Canada, provinces are required to provide free education up to the end of high school for all citizens and permanent residents under the age of 20. This service is provided through public and separate (usually Catholic) schools, which in Alberta also include Métis Settlements Schools, online (virtual) programs, outreach programs, and alternative programs.
Francophone Schools	Under the law, parents whose first language is French or who were educated in French have a constitutional right to have their child educated in French where there are enough students to warrant it.
Private Schools	Parents may choose to pay to educate their children within the private school system. Private schools still generally must follow provincial government mandated curriculum but do not necessarily follow all of the same rules, regulations, and government controls that apply to public schools.
Charter Schools	Charter schools are public schools designed to provide innovative or enhanced education programs.
Home Education/Blended Programs	Parents can choose to educate their children at home. In doing so, they assume primary responsibility for delivering and supervising their child’s courses of study and must work with a school board or private school.
First Nations Education Authorities	In Canada, in provinces such as Alberta, First Nations schools are band-operated, federally funded and located on First Nations reserves, providing First Nations students belonging to a particular nation a choice in where they can receive their education.

▲ **Figure 2-19** School choices available to students in Alberta

make sure that schools meet the needs of all people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Others feel that the government should treat the education system like a free market and allow the forces of supply and demand to decide what types of schools exist and where. For example, if parents and students demand a school that includes certain programs, these programs will be created by the schools.

In Alberta, there are many school choices, as shown in Figure 2-19. A 2003 study published by the Fraser Institute ranked Alberta first among all Canadian provinces for educational freedom.

...the management of education policy is one of the provincial government's most important responsibilities. Today's most compelling education research and the growing international movement toward educational choice suggest that governments can best fulfill their education responsibilities by improving the freedom of parents to choose their children's schools.

—Source: **Claudia R. Hepburn and Robert Van Belle, "The Canadian Education Freedom Index," The Fraser Institute, September 2003.**

Voucher education is a proposed system that would allow parents to use a government-issued funding voucher to enroll their children in the school of their choice, public or private. Commenting on increasing violence she was witnessing in Calgary schools, a substitute teacher had this to say about the idea:

"If vouchers were accepted, so many of these problems would evaporate very quickly. Because as soon as parents started pulling their children out of one school to send them to another, you will soon get the [first school] saying, 'Well, we'd better reform.'"

—Source: **R. McDonald, quoted in E.L. Hurlbert, "Parental Choice in Schooling: Violence, Values, and Vouchers." SSTA Research Centre Report #96-07. Saskatchewan School Boards Association,**
http://www.saskschoolboards.ca/research/parent_involvement/96-07.htm.

Not everyone believes that allowing competition between schools will improve the education system. The following viewpoint is from the Alberta Teachers' Association:

Advocates of privatization believe that free-market competition is the only way to improve education. They claim that free-market competition, by its very nature, eliminates inefficiency and ensures customer satisfaction...

...The real danger posed by privatization is that it makes quality education affordable to some but not to others and so diminishes the unity and cohesion of society. The mandate of a public education system is to be open to all children, fully funded by citizens and accountable to society as a whole.

—Source: **Alberta Teachers' Association, "Charter Schools, Private School and Vouchers,"**
<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Issues%20In%20Education/Ongoing%20Issues/Pages/Charter%20Schools%20Private%20Schools%20and%20Vouchers.aspx>.

In the United States, there has been a strong movement toward privatizing schools, and therefore removing these schools from the rules, regulations, and government controls that apply to public schools. In the United States, 23 per cent of schools are private, compared to 4 per cent in Alberta and 10 per cent in Québec. Strong supporters of individualism have been working toward privatizing public education because they believe that it is not the role of the government to dictate what education looks like and that people should be free to create schools as they see fit.

There is a balance between the freedom of individuals to choose their education and the right of all individuals to receive a quality education.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

What do you think the role of the government should be in ensuring that its citizens have access to education?



Figure 2-20 ▲ In the 1995 Tim Robbins film *Dead Man Walking*, Sean Penn plays a convicted murderer sentenced to death by lethal injection. While in prison on death row, he is befriended by Susan Sarandon’s character, Sister Helen Prejean.

The film was based on Prejean’s book of the same name. In an interview, Prejean was asked, “Why does the state of Louisiana allow capital punishment?” She answered, “70% of all executions occur in southern states... You know when you hear of these terrible crimes, the instinct for revenge is very strong. Here the government says we have to teach people a lesson and we have to give the most severe example of punishment we can so that it will curtail crime.”

Source: Sister Helen Prejean, “A Live Nun Talking About *Dead Man Walking*—Interview with Sister Helen Prejean,” interview with Alan Moroney, 1996. KPFT Public Radio, Houston, Texas.

Figure 2-22 According to Amnesty International, in 2007, at least 1252 people were executed in 24 countries. At least 3347 people were sentenced to death in 51 countries.

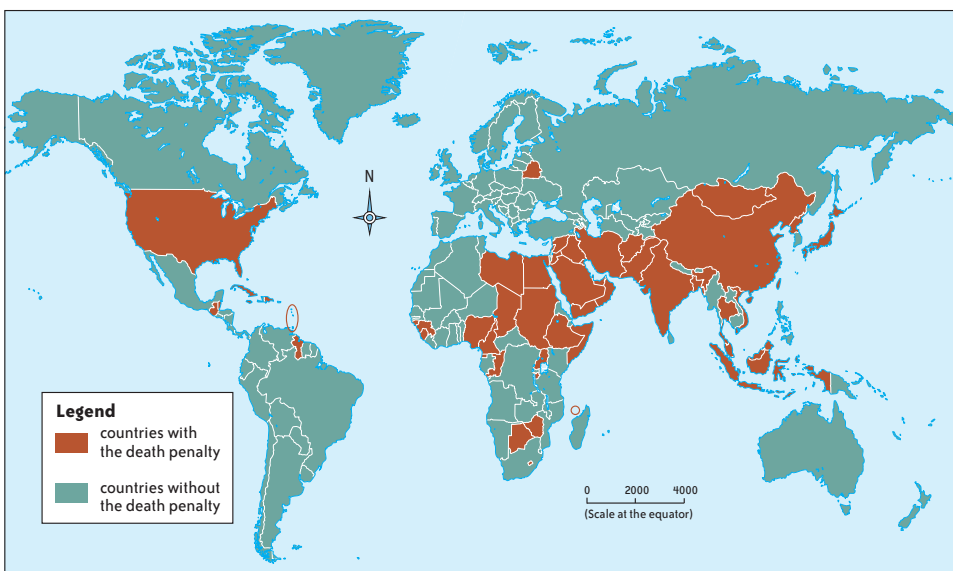
What might happen to people living in poverty, people living in remote areas, or people who speak a minority language if all schools became privatized? What might happen if the government controlled schools to the point that they all looked the same? It is up to the citizens of a society to decide how much influence individualism should have over education.

Capital Punishment and Individualism

How much control should the government have over an individual? Capital punishment, more commonly known as the death penalty, is one area of

Someone who believes in protecting the rights and freedoms of the whole group (collectivism) might argue the following:	Someone who believes in protecting the rights and freedoms of the individual (individualism) might argue the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. The general public’s safety is more important than a dangerous criminal’s right to life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human life is sacred. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees every individual’s right to life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By violating the rights of another person, a murderer forfeits his or her own rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can change and may turn their lives around.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital punishment may discourage others from committing murder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The courts can make a fatal mistake. In the past, innocent people have been executed for crimes they did not commit.

Figure 2-21 ▲ Where do you stand on the issue of capital punishment?



Source: “Abolitionist and Retentionist Countries.” Amnesty International, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty/abolitionist-and-retentionist-countries>.

debate where the values of collectivism and individualism collide. Some of the arguments on both sides are shown in Figure 2-21.

The Canadian government abolished the death penalty in 1976, after a close vote in the House of Commons. In 1987, Members of Parliament voted against reinstating the death penalty. Countries such as Canada and many of those in Europe have legislation like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Europe) that could be seen to protect the right of life, potentially making capital punishment unconstitutional. Polls in 1987, however, showed that approximately 70 per cent of Canadians were in favour of the death penalty. Why would a majority of elected officials vote against popular opinion?

Summary

One of the most important questions in modern politics is the following: How responsible should the government be for the well-being of individuals? This question has divided believers in individualism. Some feel that individuals cannot enjoy equal opportunity if the government is too involved in their lives. Others feel that, because of the circumstances that are out of people's control, the government must support those who are at a disadvantage.

These differing views influence how people feel about such things as education, health care, and public safety. For example, some feel that schools should be privatized and not under government control; others feel that privatizing schools will leave some individuals disadvantaged, with less freedom and fewer rather than more choices, because they will not be able to afford the choices being provided. Consider your point of view about these different social expressions of liberalism and individualism and how these expressions apply to your own beliefs and values.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 Create a Venn diagram outlining the strongest pros and cons for supporting a public school system. Include in the middle of the diagram items that you believe fall in the grey area. Develop a separate diagram that outlines the strongest pros and cons for supporting the privatization of the public school system. Which of your two diagrams represents the strongest argument? Why?
- 2 As a person living in Canada, to what extent would the values that you most believe in lead you to support legislation that would allow capital punishment? As you respond to this question, consider: What is your point of view about capital punishment? Do you think that it is murder or rather an appropriate consequence for people convicted of serious criminal acts? Are values of individualism a part of your answer?

- 3 How responsible do you think the government should be for the well-being of individuals? Complete a chart like the one below, and fill it in based on your beliefs. Please explain.

	Rating of Government Responsibility (1 to 4; 1 = very responsible and 4 = not responsible)	Explanation
Education		
Health		
Public Safety (for example, protection from criminals)		

The values of individualism are not always easy to apply. For example, what happens if one individual acts on his or her freedoms and this affects the rights of another? Many individuals feel that they should be free to share their possessions with others. What happens when the possessions being shared are music files? The artists and recording studios that created the music feel that this “sharing” is stealing.

Something to Think About:

As technology becomes an integral part of our daily lives, many people no longer take the time to think twice about downloading material from the Internet without paying the person who created it. When you listen to music or read someone else’s words, do you pay for them? If so, how? If not, why?

An Example:

Woman Faces the Music, Loses Download Case

CBS News, October 4, 2007

The recording industry won a key fight Thursday against illegal music downloading when a federal jury found a Minnesota woman shared copyrighted music online and levied \$222,000 in damages against her.

Jurors ordered Jammie Thomas, 30, to pay the six record companies that sued her \$9,250 for each of 24 songs they focused on in the case. They had alleged she shared 1,702 songs online in violation of their copyrights.

Thomas and her attorney, Brian Toder, declined comment as they left the courthouse. Jurors also left without commenting.

“This does send a message, I hope, that downloading and distributing our recordings is not OK,” said Richard Gabriel, the lead attorney for the music companies.

In the first such lawsuit to go to trial, six record companies accused Thomas of downloading the songs without permission and offering them online through a Kazaa file-sharing account. Thomas denied wrongdoing and testified that she didn’t have a Kazaa account.

Record companies have filed some 26,000 lawsuits since 2003 over file-sharing, which has hurt sales because it allows people to get music for free instead of paying for recordings in stores. Many other defendants have settled by paying the companies a few thousand dollars.

“We think we’re in for a long haul in terms of establishing that music has value, that music is property, and that property has to be respected.”

—Cathy Sherman, Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) President.

The RIAA says the lawsuits have mitigated illegal sharing, even though music file-sharing is rising overall. The group says the number of households that have used file-sharing programs to download music has risen from 6.9 million monthly in April 2003, before the lawsuits began, to 7.8 million in March 2007.

—Source: “Woman faces the music, loses download case.”

CBS News, October 4, 2007,

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/04/national/main3330186.shtml>.

Questions for Reflection

- 1 Create a mind map in which you consider the different perspectives about downloading music. What individual rights are affected for those enjoying the music and those creating and selling the music? How are economic freedom, property rights, and values focused on the individual involved?
- 2 Based on the sources and perspectives provided regarding this case and your own experience, take a stand on the issue of downloading music. Develop an informed position and sound arguments to support this stand that include
 - clear reasons for your response based on valid evidence
 - an explanation of which of your values best supports your response

Prepare to present your informed position in the format of your choice.

To help you select valid evidence and identify the main ideas behind different points of view, use the following questions to guide your decisions:

- What type of source is it (e.g., article, report, blog) and what is its origin (e.g., primary source from one of the people involved in the issue or a secondary report researched by someone else about the issue)?
- Who wrote the source and for what purpose? Does the author have authority or credibility to speak on this issue? Does the author appear to have a particular bias?
- Does the author support his or her argument with evidence (e.g., examples, reasons, events, data) and is the argument consistent? Does the author consider anyone else’s arguments as also being valid?
- What are the common ideas and underlying beliefs and values present in the evidence that communicate the author’s point of view?

FURTHER EXPLORATION

- 1 Review each of the sections of this chapter, and evaluate the importance of individualism in your life. What examples seem most relevant to your life now? Which issues, examples, and activities did you find most interesting? Why?
- 2 Consider the individual people and perspectives you have read about in this chapter and the issues they addressed or raised. Choose one individual and issue to explore further. Brainstorm possible perspectives on this issue using your own ideas and ideas from research about the person and the issue. Develop a specific response to the issue that you believe is most in alignment with that person's beliefs and values. Then, re-evaluate your research to select the sources you intend to use—sources that provide the most valid, relevant, and effective support for your response. Create a profile of this person that includes your representation of how you believe he or she would respond to the issue and your evidence; this profile can be included in a class “Individualism Hall of Fame,” which can be displayed in the classroom or online.
- 3 Choose and complete one of the following questions:
 - a) In 2007, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology student was arrested at gunpoint in Boston's Logan Airport. *The student, 19-year-old Star Simpson, walked into the airport at 8 a.m. with a circuit board affixed to the front of her sweatshirt. The circuit board displayed green LED lights and trailed wires running to a 9-volt battery. When an airport employee asked her about it, she did not respond...Police officers wielding machine guns quickly surrounded her.*
 —Source: “MIT Student Sporting Circuit-Board Artwork Is Arrested in Airport Bomb Scare.” *Chronicle of Higher Education News Blog, September 21, 2007*, <http://chronicle.com/news/article/3079/mit-student-sporting-circuit-board-artwork-is-arrested-in-airport-bomb-scare>.
 After she was arrested at gunpoint, Simpson described the clothing as an art project. What's your point of view? Should her individual freedom of expression have been limited?
 - b) In the 1940s, popular American artist Norman Rockwell created four paintings that expressed freedoms: freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of speech, and freedom of worship. Choose one freedom or right from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and create a visual presentation to express what it means to you.
 - c) Aung San Suu Kyi won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her pro-democracy work in Myanmar (also known as Burma). She spent many years under house arrest, isolated from her followers. Research her life, actions, and beliefs in print or online and analyze the main ideas present in each source. Examine the speaker, perspectives, and strength of the argument in each source. How well do the sources inform your understanding of Aung San Suu Kyi? Use your research to answer the following questions:
 - i) How are values of individualism expressed in Kyi's life?
 - ii) What does leadership mean to her?
 - iii) How can ideology define identity?

Chapter Summary and Reflection

In this chapter, you explored **individualism** and its influence on your own beliefs and values. Values and beliefs associated with individualism have a great influence over how we live as a society today. They have led to the development of liberal ideologies. Individualism is expressed politically, economically, and socially.

A strong belief in the value of individuals has led people to rebel against their governments and demand **individual rights and freedoms**. These rights and freedoms have been written into many of the laws of liberal democracies. Today, individualist values such as **economic freedom**, **self-interest**, **competition**, and **private property** are an important part of our society. Different points of view about individualism also influence how involved the government is in our daily lives.

How does what you have learned in this chapter influence your answer to the Chapter Issue: *Should the values of individualism shape an ideology?* Do any of the ideologies described in this chapter (for example, political, economic, and social expressions of liberalism) correspond with your beliefs and values? Individualism has had a strong influence on the development of **liberalism**, but liberalism does not mean that the individual is the only thing that matters. There is a delicate balance between the rights and freedoms that individuals enjoy and the well-being of the society as a whole, or the common good. In the next chapter, you will examine how the values of collectivism as a foundation of ideology have influenced liberalism.