

Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: Grade 6
Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS. RI.6.4- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

Resources Used:

Trump is violating the constitution, February 23, 2017.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/02/23/donald-trump-is-violating-the-constitution/>

Topic Background:

Over the first 100 days of Mr. Trump's presidency, there have been several questions about the legality of his executive orders and his connections to his businesses and foreign nations. This article tries to give perspective on the matter by comparing some of the same questions that were brought up during the Obama presidency.

Source(s) Used:

This source is an excerpt from a newspaper article about the Trump violating the constitution and how it is in complete opposite to how Obama followed most of the constitution rules.

Answer Key:

Students should be able to identify the meaning of the underlined word in the text as it is used and think of at least a synonym that would have the closest meaning to it.

"Emoluments" means fee, salary or profit from employment, and "punctilious" means showing great attention to detail or correct behavior.

Directions: Read the text and answer the following question.

The Question about Presidential Influences from Other Countries (Excerpted from “Trump is Violating the Constitution,” *The New York Review of Books*, 2017)

When Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he sought a formal opinion from the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel on whether he could accept the award without violating a constitutional prohibition on the president or any other federal officer accepting “emoluments,” essentially any payment or benefit, from a foreign state. (The office concluded that he could, only because the Nobel Prize Committee is a private entity with no foreign government involvement.) Like every president to precede him in the last four decades, President Obama placed all his investments in a blind trust, so that he would be unaware of his interests and therefore free of conflicts of interest with respect to the many decisions he might make that could affect his own personal wealth. President Obama, again following the precedents of his predecessors, also released his tax returns, both during his campaign for office and as president. Obama, in short, was punctilious about ethics, and his administration was almost entirely free of ethics scandals.

What are the meanings of the underlined words? What contextual clues helped you understand their meaning? If you were to replace those words with something else (a synonym), what would you choose?

emoluments

punctilious
