



A Democracy Minute

Perspectives on Leadership

This series of [A Democracy Minute](#) features twelve engaging, 60-second segments exploring the qualities, ideals, and challenges of leadership through the voices of individuals elected or appointed to public office. We hope these segments inspire thoughtful conversations about the vital role of leadership in a democracy in classrooms, communities, or beyond.



PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP

- ★ **MILITARY SERVICE** with [John McCain](#), Politician
- ★ **MOVEMENTS AND REVOLUTION** with [Eleanor Holmes Norton](#), Politician
- ★ **ADDRESSING SEXISM** with [Madeleine Albright](#), Diplomat
- ★ **ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES** with [President Gerald Ford](#), Politician
- ★ **SHARING A VISION** with [President Barack Obama](#), Politician
- ★ **PRACTICING RESTRAINT IN POLITICS** with [President George H.W. Bush](#), Politician
- ★ **CRISIS DECISION-MAKING** with [Condoleezza Rice](#), Politician
- ★ **PREPARING FOR LEADERSHIP** with [President Bill Clinton](#), Politician
- ★ **INSPIRATION TO LEAD** with [Carol Mosely Braun](#), Politician
- ★ **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS** with [President Jimmy Carter](#), Politician
- ★ **EMPOWERING WOMEN GLOBALLY** with [Hillary Clinton](#), Politician
- ★ **COMMON PURPOSE** with [President Joe Biden](#), Politician



WATCH & LEARN

Access *A Democracy Minute* on the [Life Stories Instagram](#) feed (each clip is 60 seconds) or watch the compilation of clips (12 mins) on the [Life Stories Learning page](#).



FOR CLASSROOM USE

Use these resources to kick-start lessons, spark discussions, or introduce diverse perspectives in Civics, U.S. History, English Language Arts, or related courses. These segments highlight various facets of leadership, inspiring students to explore their leadership potential within their school, community, and the world.

Through *A Democracy Minute*, students can:

- Discuss different models of leadership
- Explore key leadership qualities and values
- Reflect on leaders they admire and aspire to emulate



EXPLORE & REFLECT

Connect with each featured leader by linking to their biography on the [Life Stories Interview Archive](#). Reflect on a quote that resonates with the segment's theme and discuss a related, topic-specific question.



FEATURED LEADERS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



John McCain on Military Service

"It's much better to die for the things you believe in and the country you love." - McCain's grandfather

- *How do service and leadership influence each other?*



Eleanor Holmes Norton on Movements and Revolution

"We who are Black, we who are female, still refer to the women's rights movement, and the civil rights [as] movements. Those words mean that it's going to take more, forgive me, movement, to get us to the full equality that we deserve."

- *What role do leaders play in advancing social movements for change?*



Madeleine Albright on Addressing Sexism

Despite warnings that other countries may not "deal with a woman" she recalls, "I never had any problems with other countries' leaders. I had more problems with the men in our own government."

- *What barriers to trailblazing leaders face the first in their field?*



President Gerald Ford on Establishing Priorities

"I decided that [a pardon] was the only way I could get rid of Mr. Nixon's problems that were taking 25 percent of my daily time, so I could spend 100 percent of my time on the problems of 230 million Americans."

- *How do leaders determine their most important priorities?*



President Barack Obama on Sharing A Vision

"For our democracy to work... it matters that our leaders try to be as honest as possible and as transparent as possible, and that our politics aren't designed to exploit divisions, but are designed to elevate debate and to create a sense of a common bond around a common creed."

- *Do you agree with Obama's view on the role of leaders in our democracy?*



President George H.W. Bush on Practicing Restraint in Politics

"We had several times when restraint - I use the word prudence a lot - when prudence seemed to be the course to take. One of them was when the Berlin Wall fell down."

- *When can restraint be an effective political strategy?*



Condoleezza Rice on Crisis Decision-Making

"You don't really take the time to stand back, reflect, think; you just act. And for several days, that's really what we did. We had to focus on protecting the country."

- *What qualities of leadership are most critical during times of crisis?*



President Bill Clinton on Preparing For Leadership

Clinton believed that his twelve years as Governor of Arkansas were the most valuable preparation for the presidency. During that time he learned to collaborate with people who held differing viewpoints, navigate the challenges of passing legislation in an often contentious legislature, set clear priorities, articulate a compelling vision, and lead the public towards achieving common goals.

- *What leadership qualities are most important to you?*



Carol Mosely Braun on Inspiration to Lead

Inspiring leaders leave a lasting legacy. For Carol Moseley Braun it was Thurgood Marshall who believes "he made my entire life path possible both in terms of housing segregation, Brown v. Board of Education" and being able to get a decent education.

- *Who are leaders that inspire you?*



President Jimmy Carter on Building Partnerships

"Before I got there, I was shocked to realize that the vice president was not even informed about the characteristics or the proper use of nuclear weapons...[and] was not even authorized or trained to take over. So I changed all of that."

- *Why is collaboration among trusted colleagues essential in leadership?*



Hillary Clinton on Empowering Women Globally

Clinton believes it is the moral imperative of the twenty-first century to "end the pervasive discrimination and degradation of women" so that they can fulfill their full rights.

How do leaders develop a compelling vision and set priorities?



President Joe Biden on Our Common Purpose

On reflecting on his friend and long-time colleague in the Senate John McCain, Joe Biden believed they shared a common purpose as Americans.

- *What common purpose do you see within your community, family, or nation?*