

PATIENCE LEARNING • FREE 1-DAY CASE

The Line That Moved

A free single-session case from the world of **The Reign**, the 13-day revolution & political-power simulation.

GRADES 9–12 • WORLD HISTORY / GOVERNMENT (REVOLUTION & POLITICAL DRIFT) • ~45 MIN • 1 CLASS PERIOD

Your students hold a seat in the assembly of a kingdom coming apart. A position that was moderate and safe a week ago is about to be called treason — not because they changed their minds, but because the line moved under their feet. Can they see it happen in real time?

TEACHER QUICK-START

Objective: Students experience the “Overton shift” — how the range of acceptable political opinion moves during upheaval — and analyze how a fixed belief can become radical or treasonous without the belief itself changing.

Standards tie-in: C3 Framework D2.His.14 & D2.Civ.5 (analyze how change happens; explain the dynamics of political institutions) and evidence-based argument (D4.1); CCSS RH.9-10.2 (central ideas of a source).

What you need: Just this packet. Print the student pages (works individually or in teams of 3–4). No prep.

- 1. Set the scene (5 min).** “You hold a seat in the National Assembly of Valdoria. The kingdom is collapsing. Today you cast one vote — twice.”
- 2. Read the moment (8 min).** Teams read the Assembly briefing and the ‘Revolutionary Temperature.’
- 3. Vote & analyze (20 min).** Cast the same position at two different temperatures and track what happens to their safety.
- 4. The reveal (8 min).** Walk the answer key. The point: they never changed their view — the center did.
- 5. Reflection (4 min).** Each student answers the reflection question.

The Assembly Briefing

The Kingdom of Valdoria has collapsed under debt and famine. You hold a seat in the National Assembly. Factions rise and fall by the week, and there is a mood in the room — call it the **Revolutionary Temperature** — that decides which opinions are respectable and which get you denounced.

THE REVOLUTIONARY TEMPERATURE (1–10)

Temperature	The mood of the room
1–3 (Reform)	Change the system, but keep the king as a limited figurehead. Compromise is wise.
4–6 (Rupture)	The king is the problem. Half-measures are for cowards. Loyalty is suspect.
7–10 (Terror)	Anyone who ever defended the old order is an enemy. Yesterday's moderate is today's traitor.

YOUR POSITION (it does not change today)

You believe: “**The king should remain as a limited constitutional monarch, with an elected assembly holding real power.**” This is a genuine, defensible reform position. You hold it on Day 3, and you still hold it on Day 8. You do not change your mind. Hold onto that.

Your Call (Decision Sheet)

Team name: _____ Period: _____

Vote 1 — Day 3. Temperature = 2 (Reform). You rise and state your position: keep the king as a limited monarch, give power to the assembly. How does the room receive it? Circle one and explain:

SAFE / RISKY / DANGEROUS — because _____

Vote 2 — Day 8. Temperature = 8 (Terror). The kingdom has lurched. Executions have begun. You state *the exact same position* — word for word. How does the room receive it now? Circle one and explain:

SAFE / RISKY / DANGEROUS — because _____

Step 3 — What changed? Your words were identical both times. Your belief never moved. So why did the same sentence go from respectable to treasonous?

Step 4 — The survivor's choice. A neighbor in the assembly quietly shifts their public position each week to stay near the temperature. Are they a coward, a realist, or something else? Defend your answer — there is no single right one:

ANSWER KEY (for the reveal)

Vote 1 — Day 3 (Temp 2):

Safe. At Reform temperature, keeping a limited king IS the mainstream position. You sound reasonable, even statesmanlike.

Vote 2 — Day 8 (Temp 8):

Dangerous. At Terror temperature, defending *any* role for the king marks you as a royalist sympathizer — the same words that sounded wise on Day 3 can now get you denounced. Nothing about your position changed. The room did.

Step 3 — What changed:

The **center moved**. The range of acceptable opinion (the “Overton window”) slid toward extremism as the temperature rose. A fixed point looks moderate when the center is near it and radical when the center races away. You didn’t drift — the ground did.

Step 4 — The survivor’s choice (no single right answer):

Strong responses argue a real position AND acknowledge the cost either way: the shifter survives but stands for nothing and helps the temperature climb; the fixed thinker keeps integrity but may not live to use it. The best answers notice this is the exact trap real revolutionaries faced — and that calling it simply “cowardice” or simply “realism” is too easy.

The big idea:

Revolutions radicalize not only because people change their minds, but because the line of what’s acceptable moves — and a person standing still can be swept from moderate to enemy without taking a single step. Seeing the line move is the first defense against being moved by it.

REFLECTION (graded on thinking, not the “right” answer)

“You held the same position and went from safe to condemned. Where else — in history or now — have you seen the line move under people who never moved?”

SCORING THE THINKING

	3 — Strong	2 — Developing	1 — Beginning
Reads the shift	Explains the center moved, not the belief	Notices the change	Thinks the position changed
Historical reasoning	Connects to real revolution dynamics	General mention	None
Weighs the dilemma	Argues Step 4 with real trade-offs	One-sided	Label only
Explains clearly	A reader can follow it	Partly clear	Unclear

READY FOR THE FULL SIMULATION?

This was one shift. The Reign is twelve days of them.

In the full 13-day simulation, student factions run the assembly of a collapsing kingdom, riding a Revolutionary Temperature that keeps moving the line of what counts as reasonable. They start as idealistic reformers; by Day 9 they're voting to execute each other — and they can watch the number that made it happen. Graded on reasoning, never on political outcomes.

THE REIGN · GRADES 9–12 WORLD HISTORY · \$44 · patiencelearning.com/the-reign

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