TALKING POINTS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION: WE THE PEOPLE

Show & Theater Company:
• We the People by TheatreWorksUSA

Art Form:
• Musical Theater (a play with songs)

Context & Main Characters:
• Dawn Shapiro is running for Student Council President but is having a tough time coming up with an answer to the question: What does my government mean to me?
• The Founding Fathers come to Dawn’s rescue—albeit as rock and roll versions! They sing, play instruments, and dance!

Who are the Founding Fathers?
• The men who formed our nation.
• Women were definitely important during this time, but we don’t hear much about them because politics didn’t value them as much as now.

Where does the title of the play come from?
• From the preamble (or introduction) of the U.S. Constitution: “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union…”

The Constitution is the highest law of the U.S. and is basically a system of ruled laid out for our country
• “Amendments” or official changes have been added 27 times. The first 10 are called the Bill of Rights, which protect freedom of speech, of the press/media, our right to “due process” meaning we can’t go to jail for no reason, and more.

There are three “separate but equal” parts to our government called branches:
• The Executive Branch – the presidency
• The Legislative Branch – the Senate and the House of Representatives, i.e. who makes the laws
• The Judicial Branch – the courts including the Supreme Court, i.e. who enforces the laws

Why is it important to have three parts to government?
• This way one person or group doesn’t have too much power and more ideas are represented

Main characters:
• Dawn – a kid who generally feels her mall as more meaning than the government
• George Washington – the United States’ first President, Founding Father, and Revolutionary War hero
• John Adams – the United States’ first Vice President, second President, and Founding Father
• Thomas Jefferson – the United States’ second Vice President, third President, philosopher, Founding Father, and the main writer of the Declaration of Independence
• Benjamin Franklin – inventor, writer, philosopher, contributor to the Declaration of Independence, Founding Father

How can you get involved in government?
• Write your local elected officials, collect signatures for a cause you believe in, participate in school government, vote at school and in government elections when you turn 18!

Special Things to Look For:
• There is a special name for the clothing actors wear on stage—who knows what that is? (costume)
• What “tools” will the actors use, besides their costumes, to make us believe they are the Founding Fathers? (They will use their bodies and their voices.)

Theater Etiquette:
• Respect the theater, limit bathroom breaks, one person to a seat, do not kick the seats, no food or drink in the theater (bottled water okay), no audio, video recording or photography and remember to turn off cell phones/no texting (students and adults).

How is watching live theater different than watching a movie or TV?
• Can’t pause, rewind, or fast forward with live theater. Every sound students make and moving around can affect the performers and other members of the audience.

Show Info: We the People ● Tuesday, February 18, 2020 ● 9:30am & 11:30am ● Grades 4-8
George Washington
Thomas Jefferson