

### **Activity 9. Face-Off: Thomas Hobbes vs. John Locke – What is Human Nature?**

**Instructions:** Read the statements by British Enlightenment philosophers Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). Working individually, answer the document questions. Working in teams, compare and contrast their views by answering the summary questions. Note: These are composite quotes take from different sources written by the philosophers.

**Thomas Hobbes:** It is not wisdom but Authority that makes a law . . . I put for the general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceases only in death . . . During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that conditions called war; and such a war, as if of every man, against every man . . . The laws of nature . . . without the terror of some power to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions.

#### **Questions**

1. According to Hobbes, what force drives humans?
2. How is this force to be controlled?

**John Locke:** Liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others . . . Good and evil, reward and punishment, are the only motives to a rational creature: these are the spur and reins whereby all mankind are set on work, and guided . . . Man . . . hath by nature a power . . . to preserve his property – that is, his life, liberty, and estate - against the injuries and attempts of other men . . . The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom . . . All mankind . . . being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.

#### **Questions**

1. According to Locke, what is the most important human value?
2. How will this value be preserved?

#### **Summary Questions**

1. What topics to Hobbes and Locke discuss?
2. How are the ideas of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke similar and different?
3. Would you rather live in a world governed by the ideas of Thomas Hobbes or John Locke? Explain.