

BEFORE YOU DECIDE

A Civic Thinking Checklist

Thinking Is Patriotic

"Better decisions begin with better habits."

■ TAKE A BEAT <i>Slow down before deciding.</i> ☐ Am I reacting emotionally? ☐ Am I reacting to a headline or a fact? ☐ What do I actually know? ☐ What don't I know yet? ☐ Is this worth another five minutes?	■ TRIBE VS. ISSUE <i>Respond to the issue, not the side.</i> ☐ Am I reacting to the idea, or to who's for it? ☐ Would I feel the same if my own side proposed this? ☐ Can I state the issue without naming a party? ☐ Am I defending a position, or defending a team? ☐ Am I curious — or just confirming what I believe?
■ THE SYMMETRY TEST <i>Would I accept this if the other side did it?</i> ☐ Would I accept this rule if my side paid the cost? ☐ Am I judging this by a standard I'd apply to anyone? ☐ Would this tactic still seem fair with the roles reversed? ☐ Am I excusing something in an ally I'd condemn in an opponent?	■ DEFINE THE WIN <i>Agree on the goal before arguing the method.</i> ☐ What outcome are we actually trying to achieve? ☐ Have I defined success before defending a solution? ☐ What would count as 'winning' for both sides? ☐ Am I arguing about the goal, or about the method?
■ THE FALSIFIABILITY TEST <i>A claim you can't test can't be checked.</i> ☐ What evidence would prove this claim wrong? ☐ Is this claim specific enough to actually test? ☐ Am I only counting evidence that confirms what I believe? ☐ What would change my mind?	■ REAL VS. MANUFACTURED CONTROVERSY <i>Disputed-looking isn't the same as disputed.</i> ☐ Is there genuine expert disagreement, or does it just look that way? ☐ Am I confusing 'people are arguing' with 'experts disagree'? ☐ Who benefits from this looking more contested than it is? ☐ Have I checked what the actual expert consensus is?

BEFORE YOU SHARE • BEFORE YOU VOTE • BEFORE YOU DECIDE

- ✓ Have I taken a beat?
- ✓ Have I separated the tribe from the issue?
- ✓ Would I accept this if the roles were reversed?
- ✓ Have I defined the win before arguing the solution?
- ✓ Is this claim actually falsifiable?
- ✓ Have I checked whether this is real or manufactured controversy?

Self-government depends on self-governing citizens.

Democracy doesn't require us to agree.

It asks us to think.

ThinkingIsPatriotic.com

Take a Beat • Tribe vs. Issue • Symmetry Test • Define the Win • Falsifiability Test • Real vs. Manufactured Controversy