

Global Perspectives Political Ideologies

Radical: Seen as being on the far left of the political spectrum, radicals call for wide-sweeping rapid change in the basic structure of the political, social, and economic system. They may be willing to resort to extreme methods to bring about change, including the use of violence and revolution.

Liberal: Liberals believe that the government should be actively involved in the promotion of social welfare of a nation's citizens. Liberals usually call for gradual change within the existing political system. They reject violent revolution as a way of changing the way things are, often called the status quo.

Moderate: Moderates may share viewpoints with both liberals and conservatives. They are seen as tolerant of other people's views, and they do not hold extreme views of their own. They advocate a "go-slow" or "wait-and-see" approach to political change.

Conservative: People who hold conservative ideals favor keeping things the way they are or maintaining the status quo if it is what they desire. Conservatives are hesitant or cautious about adopting new policies, especially if they involve government activism in some way. They feel that the less government there is, the better. They agree with Jefferson's view that "the best government governs least."

Reactionary: Sitting on the far right of the ideological spectrum, reactionaries want to go back to the way things were – the "good ol' days". Often reactionaries are willing to use extreme methods, such as repressive use of government power to achieve their goals.

IDEOLOGY	Radical	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Reactionary
Government involvement	More	More	Some involvement	Less	Less
Speed of changes in government	Rapid	Gradual	Slow to no change	No Change	Return to the past
Political Parties	Communists Socialists Dem. Centrists Rep. Conservatives Independents *				
ISSUES	Radical	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Reactionary
Taxes	High taxes for high level of government services. State control over economy.		Mixture of both sides depending on individual convictions and political expediency.	Low taxes or large tax cuts. Reduction in government services and regulation.	
Education	Government subsidizes public education through college level.			Government turns control to local agencies. Vouchers OK.	
Defense	Reduce government spending on military. Interventionist foreign policy.			Increase spending on military readiness. Reduce U.S. involvement in world conflicts.	
Environment	Regulate business to protect natural resources. Steer away from nuclear, coal, oil fuels.			Support exploration of federal land for new energy sources. Reduce government regulation.	
	* Dem. = Democrats; Rep. = Republicans				