Handouts for Role Play

**White Radicals** – We believe that public school for all children is essential as the foundation of a democratic society, and it has worked this way in our northern states for years. Also, public schools are important to the reconstruction of the South. People need an education to be good citizens and productive people. But, while it might be fair to have black children attend any school, we worry that if we write this into this constitution, Virginia voters will vote against, or not ratify, the constitution.

**Black freedmen/Radicals** – We believe that public school for all children is essential as the foundation of a democratic society. To be good citizens, all children need to learn to read and write. We also believe that black children should have equal access to all schools – that is only fair. Black children deserve the same schools as white children. Education is the gateway to all the other rights and black children should be prepared to become full American citizens.

**White southern/Conservatives** – We are not convinced that there should be public schools for white children, whether rich or poor. Wealthy families can pay for private schools. And why do poor people need an education? Their menial labor does not require them to read and write. We are even less sure about public education for black children and absolutely certain that black and white children should not attend the same schools. We are afraid that, since Virginians already have to pay off large war debts, adding taxes to pay for public education would be a bad idea at this time.