



POST-TOUR LESSON 1

WHY DEMOCRACY?

GRADES 4-8



Key Questions

- What is democracy?
- What are the pros and cons of democracy?
- How does democracy compare to other ideologies?

Students will...

- Understand what democracy means and how it operates.
- Understand and articulate the pros and cons of democracy.
- Compare democracy to other ideologies.

Teacher Primer

Democracy is at the core of how we govern ourselves. The word “democracy” comes from the combination of two Greek words meaning "people" (demos) and "rule" (kratos). As you have taught your students, the power comes from the citizens because they, through voting in elections, choose Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to represent their interests. MLAs are expected to listen and learn about the issues that are relevant to those they represent and pursue their interests in the Legislative Assembly. This lesson will help further explain that idea, look at the pros and cons of democracy, and compare it to other government systems and principles for ruling that exist in the world.

Set

The Canadian Constitution protects the basic rights and freedoms of all people in Canada. These rights and freedoms include the right to equality, the right to hold and express opinions, and the right to gather to communicate those opinions. Ask students to imagine a world where they can be jailed if they speak out against the government. Inform students that, unfortunately, this is a reality for many people in the world. Inform students that they will learn more about our system of government and why it operates the way it does.

Development

Conduct a jigsaw activity, having students work in groups and report their findings to the rest of the class. Divide the class into groups, with each group covering one of the topics listed below:

- Communism
- Socialism
- Oligarchy
- Aristocracy
- Monarchy
- Theocracy
- Totalitarianism
- Military Dictatorship

Explain to students that they are to work together to fill out the attached "Government Breakdown" sheet for the form of government they were assigned. They will eventually present their findings to the rest of the class. Each student should complete their own sheet in tandem with the rest of their group. Take students through the sheet beforehand to help them understand the questions being asked before they start. Give students time to complete the sheet. This will take approximately 30 minutes.

Once students are done, at your discretion, they can present their findings. Hand out a copy of the attached "Forms of Government Key Points" sheet for each student to take notes while hearing students present their findings. Students only have two spots to put key facts.

- Instruct students to try and write down answers from their peers' presentations about "who has the power" and "what life would be like as a citizen." You can take it up as a class after each presentation or at the end.

Development

Once presentations are done, a class-wide discussion may be helpful to further solidify and contextualize all the information that students received. This can be done on another day to prevent information overload. Whenever you choose to have the conversation, it can be helpful to frame the discussion around, "who has the power" and "what life would be like to be a citizen" under that form of government. It is also necessary to mention that in reality, some countries blend different types of these forms of government.

Some other questions to discuss with the class could be:

- Why would people want to choose who leads them?
- Are there any downsides to choosing your leader?
- Are there any downsides to how democracies work? (A common downside is how long they can take to make decisions and implement change)
- Why could it be bad if one person makes all the decisions in a country?
- Why could it be bad if you were unable to change your government or let your government know how you feel if you're unhappy?

Let the discussion go where it goes, but try to keep it around the key questions "who has the power" and "what life would be like as a citizen."

Assessment

To determine how much students retained, hand out and explain the "Forms of Government Illustration Exercise." On this sheet, students illustrate and colour a picture/image/symbol/concept to display what each of the forms of government means/encompasses/is. For example, a logical display of the monarchy form of government might be a crown.

On the back side of the sheet, students need to explain their illustration for each form of government. Why did they choose the illustration they did? How does it represent the form of government they chose it for?

Closure

Thank students for their work, their presenting, and for listening to their peers present. Inform students that the next lesson will help them learn about how to interact with their government as citizens both now and when they are adults.

GOVERNMENT BREAKDOWN

Use this page to help you gather information about the form of government you were given. You will eventually use this to present!



Form of government:

Who has the power? Who rules?

How is a ruler chosen?



What do you think it would be like living with this form of government as a citizen?



Forms of Government Key Points

Communism



Socialism



Oligarchy



Aristocracy



Monarchy



Theocracy



Totalitarianism



Military Dictatorship



FORMS OF GOVERNMENT ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

COMMUNISM



SOCIALISM



OLIGARCHY



ARISTOCRACY



DEMOCRACY



MONARCHY



THEOCRACY



TOTALITARIANISM



MILITARY DICTATORSHIP



For each form of government, explain why you chose the illustration that you did. How does it match the form of government you drew it for?

Communism

Socialism

Oligarchy

Aristocracy

Democracy

Monarchy

Theocracy

Totalitarianism

Military Dictatorship
