



Democracy 2019

Teacher Notes

Overview

The *Democracy* program is designed specifically for Year 5 students. Its aim is to develop an understanding and appreciation of living in an Australian democracy including its key features and values.

In an interactive format students complete a series of activities that include:

- Defining what a democracy is
- Investigating the pillars that uphold Australia's democracy
- Discovering a short history of democracy tracing its origins back to Ancient Greece
- Contrasting some of the features of our democracy against other forms of government
- Discussing some of the values of Australia's democracy

Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss the definition of a democracy and consider the pillars that help to uphold Australia's democracy
- Order an abbreviated timeline of democracy from Ancient Greece through to modern day Australia
- Compare and contrast the key features of living in a modern day democracy
- Investigate some of the key values that underpin our democracy including freedom, equality, fairness, respect and justice through a class discussion and group work
- Participate in teams in our "Democracy Duel" game to help summarise some of the key concepts of the program

Western Australian Curriculum links

Curriculum Code	Knowledge & Understandings
Year 5 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)	
ACHASSK115	<u>Roles, responsibilities and participation</u> The key values that underpin Australia's democracy, including freedom, equality, fairness and justice

Curriculum link taken from:

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/p-10-curriculum/curriculum-browser/humanities-and-social-sciences>

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Background information for teachers

The word democracy translates to people-power or rule by the people. The idea came from the ancient Greeks who combined the words *demos* (people) and *kratia* (rule) to create the term.

What is a democracy?

Democracy is a form of government where people decide matters as a group. The word is typically used to describe a form of government in which all the citizens have a vote. In a country with a democratic government, the people's views influence the decisions made by the government.

Democracy in Ancient Greece

Around 2500 years ago in Ancient Greece, the people of Athens developed a way of making decisions that differed from the autocratic ways of the past. An autocratic system of government is a type of government where one person or small groups make all the decisions on behalf of the people of the state. Athens was the first city state to allow ordinary citizens access to government offices and courts. In theory, all Athenian citizens were eligible to speak and vote in the Assembly. In reality, this was not the case as women were not included nor were foreigners, slaves or freed slaves. The democracy therefore, was only a very small minority of the people living in Athens. It was, however, the closest any country had come to establishing a democratic society at this time.

Development of democracy in Australia

Australia's system of government grew over time from single governors representing the British Parliament to the fully elected representative democracy that functions today. Australia has been a leader in many important democratic steps such as granting women the right to vote and introducing the secret ballot. During the first few decades of European settlement in Australia, power lay in the hands of the governors who ruled on behalf of Britain. The early colony of New South Wales did not have its own government and could not make its own laws.

The development of representative government

Around 1830, people in New South Wales began to push for a representative government, one with members who were elected to represent the people. Finally, in 1843, the people got their chance to vote but only for some members of the new parliament. The other members were chosen by the British. The governor still had most of the power and the only people who could vote were wealthy landowners.

By the mid-1850s New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania had elected governments but it was still only men who owned a lot of property that could vote. Poorer men felt it was unfair that they had no vote - and therefore no say in government - but they still had to pay taxes. This was one of the complaints that led to the Eureka Stockade in Victoria in 1854, where miners rebelled against government authorities. The authorities responded harshly but most people sympathised with the miners. Not long after this event both Victoria and South Australia extended the vote to all men over 21 regardless of how much property they owned.

Australia's democracy today

Australia has not always been a democratic society. The law has not always given all people in society the same rights and opportunities. Examples of people who have not enjoyed equal opportunities and rights have been the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and women. Today however, the Constitution, together with statute and common law, protects the rights and freedoms of individuals and minority groups; diverse political interests are acknowledged; and all Australians are entitled to procedural fairness in the resolution of disputes.

Key values of Australia's democracy

Shared values such as freedom, equality, fairness and justice play a significant role in the democratic way of life in Australia. These shared values reflect a commitment to a society where everyone is entitled to certain rights and freedoms. Listed below are some of the freedoms and democratic values that shape the democracy that we live in.

- freedom of assembly and political participation;
- freedom of speech, expression and religious belief;
- fairness and equality before the law;
- Australia's commitment to other basic human rights (International Declaration of Human Rights).

Sources:

<http://moadoph.gov.au/democracy/australian-democracy/>

http://www.skwirk.com/p-c_s-18_u-492_t-1338_c-5143/a-brief-history-of-democracy-and-its-benefits/nsw/a-brief-history-of-democracy-and-its-benefits/potentials-of-democracy/introduction-to-democracy

Useful websites

ABC Splash	http://splash.abc.net.au/
Parliamentary Education Office	http://www.peo.gov.au/
Education Services Australia	http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/default.asp?id=9221
Australian Electoral Commission	http://education.aec.gov.au/democracy-rules/
Museum of Australian Democracy	http://moadoph.gov.au/democracy/defining-democracy/
ABC – BTN	http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s4460249.htm