
Systems of Democracy



An introductory politics module

Teacher's Book

Educasia
Education in Context

The Curriculum Project

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Many of the concepts and ideas in this module are quite complex, and are best taught in the student's first language (s), if that is possible.

Key vocabulary is highlighted in **bold** print in the Student's Book. Appendix One is a list of these words with definitions and examples.

1. Systems of Democracy – Who elects the government?

The Invention of Democracy

Brainstorm

Get students' ideas about democracy. Write their answers to the questions on the board. There are no right or wrong answers at this stage - just get students to say what they think.

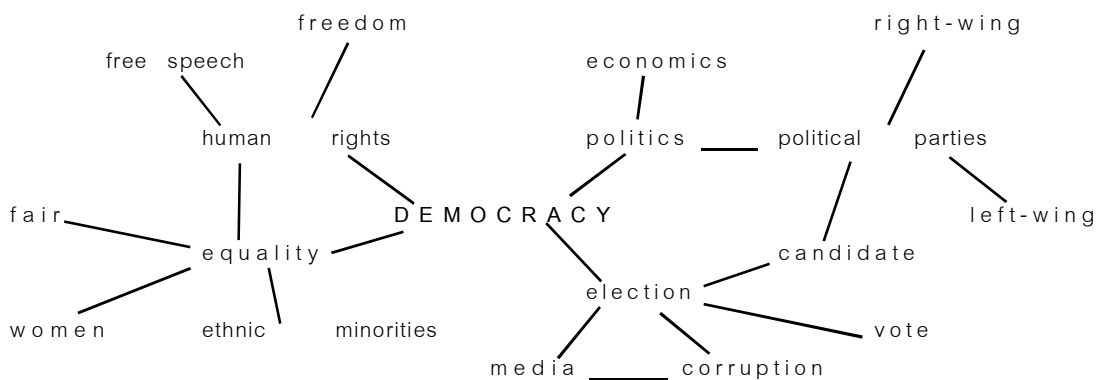
Preview

Mind-map

A mind-map is a network of connected words.

Encourage students to use monolingual (English/English) dictionaries to get more ideas for words. The *'Environment Words'* dictionary is very useful for this.

Here is an example of a mind-map about democracy:



You may want to copy some of this on the board, to show students an example. Students can do this activity individually, in pairs, or in groups.

Exercises

Students read the text and answer the questions.

Remember: Appendix 1 on page 39 is a glossary of the words in bold - if students have difficulty with these terms, encourage them to look them up in this wordlist.

Answers:

1. *Democracy means 'rule by the people'*
2. *Greeks who were not women, children, slaves, foreigners or people born outside the Greek city state. Adult free males who were born in the city and are not foreigners.*
3. *Voting, participating in public debates, military service, doing the work of government – all the work that a government has to do.*

Participation

Discussion

Discuss this issue, and try to reach a class consensus (get an age that everyone agrees on).

Exercise

Students think about and try to guess the dates that women got the vote in these countries.

Answers:

New Zealand - 1893

United States - 1920

Iran - 1965

Switzerland - 1971

Britain - 1918

Japan - 1947

Philippines - 1937

Discussion

Discuss these issues. After a general discussion, go around the class and ask each student their opinions on compulsory voting, and the reasons why they think this.

You may want to note down key points on the board.

Exercises**Answers:**

1. *No, in Turkey you must be 21 to vote.*

2. *Kuwait is a monarchy. Although there are elections, parliament is very weak and the royal family have most of the power.*

3. *No. Women in the US won the right to vote in 1920.*

4. *Yes. Nowadays, you don't have to own land to vote in Britain.*

On your own Students write a paragraph of 'eligibility to vote' rules, with reasons to justify their decisions. If you mark this, mark it for good reasoning, rather than language. Make notes of students' main ideas, and discuss them as a class.

What is government?

Look at the definitions and the paragraph about government. Don't worry too much if students are confused at this stage, but clarify if necessary:

Definition 1 - *government departments and organisations, rules and laws generally*

Definition 2 - *the group who is the government at the moment*

Definition 3 - *the people and organisations who enforce these laws (e.g police, army, courts, education departments etc.)*

Definition 4 - *people controlling you*

Exercises

Don't spend too much time explaining every word in these quotations.

If these are too difficult for the students, write the explanations below on the board (without the names) and get students to match the quotations with the explanations:

Voltaire - *When then government is doing bad things, it is dangerous for you to disagree with them.*

Thoreau - *If a government is bad, good people oppose them.*

Unknown - *If government workers have nothing useful to do, they will create work to justify their positions.*

Barry - *Governments write a lot of reports, but they don't do anything useful.*

Thatcher - *Organising a family and house are similar to organising a government.*

Ghandi - *It is best if people organise themselves well, than if a government organises them well.*

Thich Nhat Hanh - *Governments pretend the country has enemies, in order to get people to support them.*

Answers:

Voltaire - 2

Thoreau - 2 or 3

Unknown - 2 or 3

Barry - 2

Thatcher - 2

Ghandi - 1, 2 or 4

Thich Nhat Hanh - 2

Group work

Students work in groups of 3 or 4. Each group chooses a quotation and gives an example of it related to their lives.

e.g. the Voltaire quotation - *the Burmese government has imprisoned people who give information to the international media about the real situation in Burma.*

What does a Government Do?

Discussion

Have a class discussion on the various governing authorities in students' lives.
 What types of government are there around you? How do they affect your lives?
 What would happen if these governing powers were not there?
 Students read the text.

Group work

After students have read the text, put them in groups of four or five.
 Groupthink of examples of government action in each of these three types of roles.
 You may want to write these example on the board first.

Some example answers:

protecting individual freedoms:

making laws to protect free press
ensuring that all people get a chance to vote
making education free

limiting individual freedoms:

making alcohol illegal for children under 18
you have to have a licence to drive a truck

taking responsibility for common needs:

public transport
foreign policy

2. State, Nation and Citizenship

What is a State?

Brainstorm Brainstorm what students think are the meanings of *state* and *nation*.
Ask the students to think of examples of states and nations.
If this is difficult, ask students ‘*What is the difference between Karen State and the Karen nation?*’

Exercises Students write their own definitions of *state*. They can do this in either English or their own language. Get them to compare their definitions in pairs.

In English or L1, students write their own definitions of *sovereignty*. Get them to compare their definitions in pairs.

What is a nation?

Exercises

Students classify these nations into civic and ethnic nations.

Answers:

Chin - ethnic

Thailand - civic

Burma - civic

Burman - ethnic

United States of America - civic

Maori (native people of New Zealand) - ethnic

Shan - ethnic

Pa-O - ethnic

France - civic

Students decide which nation(s) they belong to. There are no right or wrong answers to this!

Group work

In groups, students brainstorm a list of groups of people, and define these groups. They can do this in either English or L1. If this is very difficult, you might want to brainstorm a list on the board first.

some possible groups: *community*

society - similar to community, but a large group

tribe - group who has a common ancestor

ethnic group - people who belong to the same race, tribe or nation

organisation - people who choose to join a group whose goals they agree with

committee - people who come together to organise something

team - a group of people who compete with other groups

Citizenship

Discussion

Students discuss who can be involved in politics in a community or country.

Point out that in a community, the community decides who can participate in community politics. In a nation-state, it usually depends on *citizenship*.

Different countries have different rules for citizenship, and some countries have different degrees of citizenship depending on how long you have lived in that country, whether you were born there, and/or whether you belong to a particular group of people, and/or how old you are. E.g. Thailand has different citizenship rules for people after they have lived in Thailand for twenty years. In New Zealand, you can apply to be a *resident* as soon as you legally emigrate there, as long as you fulfill certain criteria. As a resident you are allowed to live in New Zealand, get access to health, education and welfare services, you can work and you must pay tax, but you can't vote or get a New Zealand passport. After you have lived there for five years, you are allowed to become a *citizen*, which means you have the same rights and responsibilities as other New Zealand citizens.

Group work

Students work in groups to have a roleplay. They are the committee who decides on citizenship requirements in a future, democratic Burma.

Discussion

As a class, discuss the reasons why the Burmese government does not allow Indian or Chinese people living in Burma to become Burmese citizens. Why do they think the government has this rule? Do students agree with this rule?

Possible Reasons: - *They are afraid that Indian and Chinese people will get too much power. Both India and China are much bigger than Burma, and have a lot more money. Therefore they are afraid to allow individual Indian and Chinese people the same rights as Burmese citizens. Another possible reason is racism/predjudice/fear of foreigners.*

3. Systems of Democracy – Elections

Preview

Students think about their experience of elections. Get some students to tell the class about their experiences.

Different ways to organise elections

The point of the text is that there are a lot of ways to have elections, and some are fairer (more democratic) than others. Think about the elections students have participated in. Do they think these elections were fair? Did all people get a chance to make an informed choice? You might want to give an example.

e.g. Some elections involve each household, rather than each person, getting one vote. One possible way this might be unfair is that only one person in the house gets to vote. Perhaps different members of the household might have different opinions, but their views will not be represented.

Discussion

Use the ideas in the text as a checklist, and ask some students if these were used in an election they participated in, e.g. student representative elections, camp/village committee elections.

Roleplay

Students work in groups of four or five, and do the roleplay.

Each group is the National Election Committee for Burma, setting up an election for next year. They discuss the five most important priorities for the election to be fair and democratic. Groups should come up with a ranked list of five priorities for the election, 1 being the most important. They can use the ideas on the list, or come up with their own ideas.

e.g. If the group thinks it is most important that the winner is the person that the majority of people want, this becomes priority number one on the list.

Groups present their lists to the class.

Single member or multi member systems?




Exercise

Students read the information in the text, and draw an Indian ballot form. Don't worry about the quality of the drawing, but look for these points:

- a list of people
- boxes to mark
- pictures of candidates.

Answer:

The ballot form probably looks a little like this:

<u>Ballot</u>	
	1. A. Mehta (Congress) <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. D. Chatterjee (BJP) <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. P. E. Farouk (MLI) <input type="checkbox"/>

Group work

In groups, students write the disadvantages and advantages of the First Past the Post system. Try to elicit these points:

Advantages: *Easy to understand, and easy for election officials to count results.*

Disadvantages: *It is difficult for minorities to get elected, as the majority always wins.*

Discussion

Discuss these issues. Do students think there should be ways for women and smaller nationalities to win elections? Why? Which groups should have help?

Possible ideas: *If there are no special rules to help women and smaller nationalities, it is possible that all representatives could be men from the dominant ethnic group. Some groups that might benefit from help are any group that is not in the majority in their geographical area, e.g. Palaung people in Shan State, Muslims in Umpiem Mai camp, Hmong people in Thailand or Laos, Christians in India, etc.*

Group work

Have a debate. Students get into two teams - Team 1 is students who think 50% of seats in future parliament should be reserved for women, and Team 2 is students who disagree.

Each team selects two or three speakers.

Teams spend 15 minutes discussing ideas and arguments to support their opinions.

The speakers take turns to present their arguments.

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

Students read about STV. For further explanation, you can draw these diagrams on the board:

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Ana</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bobo</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Cici</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.</td></tr> </table>	Ana	3.	Bobo	2.	Cici	1.	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Ana</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bobo</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.</td></tr> <tr><td>Cici</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.</td></tr> </table>	Ana	2.	Bobo	1.	Cici	3.	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Ana</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bobo</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Cici</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.</td></tr> </table>	Ana	1.	Bobo	2.	Cici	3.	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Ana</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bobo</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.</td></tr> <tr><td>Cici</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.</td></tr> </table>	Ana	2.	Bobo	1.	Cici	3.
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Bobo	1.																										
Cici	3.																										
<p><i>This voter likes Cici best, Bobo second and Ana third.</i></p>		<p><i>These voters support Bobo or Ana. They don't like Cici. Cici has the least support overall, so she loses.</i></p>																									

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Ana</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bobo</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Cici</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.</td></tr> </table>	Ana	3.	Bobo	2.	Cici	1.	<p><i>This voter supported Cici, but Cici has lost. This person's vote goes to Bobo, as the no. 2 choice:</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><td>Ana</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bobo</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.</td></tr> </table>	Ana	2.	Bobo	1.
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Bobo	2.										
Cici	1.										
Ana	2.										
Bobo	1.										

<p><i>Now Cici is out, the votes are counted again. Bobo is the winner.</i></p>																			
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Discussion Discuss which system, *First Past the Post* or *STV*, is better for national elections in Burma. Try to elicit this point:

STV is more representative, as every person's vote counts. However, STV is quite difficult to understand. First Past the Post is easy to understand, but much less representative. Under First Past the Post, it is difficult for minor parties to get elected.

Discussion Discuss the difference between open and secret ballots. Which do students prefer? Why are open ballots problematic? Try to elicit this point:

With open ballots, everybody knows who you vote for. It is easy for people to try to control your vote, either by intimidation (e.g. if you don't vote for the village leader, people won't buy things from your shop) or pressure from family and friends.

Group work In groups, students look at an example of a group that holds elections in their community. How do they organise these elections? Are the elections fair?

Groups make a presentation about these elections, and explain the process of the election to the class, and whether they think these elections are fair.

You might like to do this as a *Poster Presentation* - give each group a large sheet of paper to make a poster to go with their presentation.

There is some information on the Thai electoral system in the *Supplementary Pack*.

Problems with elections

Exercises

Answers

1. The richer candidate might buy more advertising from the newspaper.
2. No, the country was very poor.
3. People who lived in areas where people had voted for him.
4. Because they want to have candidates who they think will appeal to the majority of voters
– someone who seems the same as most of the voters.

Brainstorm

Countries which have elected a woman leader include *Britain, India, Israel, Ireland, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, New Zealand* and *the Philippines*.

Countries which have never elected a female leader include *the United States, Japan, Thailand, Russia, France, Germany, Spain, Italy* and *Australia*.

Coalition Governments

Exercises

Answers:

1. *A coalition government consists of two or more parties.*
2. *The coalition in the newspaper article has 44 per cent of the vote.*
3. *The second biggest party in parliament is called the Ethnic Minority Alliance party.*

Discussion

Sometimes parties are sometimes happy to stay in opposition if they think it is a bad time to be government. Sometimes parties decide that the country is in a bad situation, which they cannot change. Rather than be blamed for ruling badly, and lose the following election, they may prefer to see another party become government and take the blame. The party will try to win the following election once its opponents have been made to look bad.

4. Defining Democracy

What is Democracy?

Exercises

Example answers:

1. Human dignity means that every human being should be valued and respected.
It is something that belongs to every human being, and should not be taken away by the state.
2. Human dignity is protected through human rights and freedoms.

Direct and Representative Democracy

Exercises

Students complete this chart of the characteristics of direct and representative democracy.

Answers:

Direct democracy:

- all citizens participate directly in decisions
- easiest with small numbers of people
- people meet and discuss issues
- decisions made by consenses or majority vote

Representative democracy:

- people vote for representatives
- representatives make decisions on behalf of the people
- people vote for the representatives they believe will make their ideas and needs heard.

Discussion Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of direct and representative democracy.
Try to elicit these points:

Direct democracy is more democratic, more participatory. People get more say in the political process. However, it is very difficult to arrange for large groups, as you need to get everyone together in the same place. Representative democracy is easier to organise, but you have to trust your representative to do what you want. It is difficult for one representative to fairly represent all people.

Referenda

A *referendum* (plural *referenda*, this is a Latin word) is a form of direct democracy that is still practiced. There is an activity, *Match the referenda*, in the **Supplementary Pack**.

Discussion Discuss the difficulties involved in holding referenda.
Point out that:

- people can only make useful decisions when they know all the issues involved. For a referendum to be valid, you need to ensure information about the issue gets out to all the people who are voting in it.
- It can be expensive and time-consuming to get this information to everyone.

Group work In groups, students decide on a useful issue to hold a referendum on in their community. They come up with a process to hold this referendum:

- how would they publicise the issues, and make sure everyone knows what they are voting for?
- who would be eligible to vote?

Groups design their referendum ballot forms, and present their referendum ideas to the class.

Accountability

Exercises **Answers:**

1. *Her policies were not successful, and she gave herself dictatorial powers. The Indian people didn't like this.*
2. *Powers like a dictator; e.g. ordering the army and police to obey her personally, ordering people to stay at home after dark, arresting people she thought threatened her power.*

Discussion Students think of examples where someone in a position of power was held accountable for their actions - voted out of office, or asked to resign, or somehow punished.

Democracy today

Discussion Discuss the ideas in the first paragraph, and get students' opinions.

- Do they think most people are not competent to govern a state? Why / why not?
- Should people leave the running of the country to wiser people? Why / why not?
- Who would decide who the wiser people are?
- Should running a country be the responsibility of all the people, or just a few?

If you like, get students to write a paragraph on these ideas for homework.

Exercises There are many possible answers to these questions.

Example answers:

1. *Two reasons are: That people stopped believing that only rich people should have all the power, and many anti-democratic types of government (e.g. communist, fascist) became very unpopular.*
2. *Some leaders are afraid of democracy, they think that democracy is not appropriate for their country, that it will create instability. They are also worried about losing power.*

Group work These quotations are from world leaders and political activists from the last 60 years.

In groups, students discuss each quotation. and decide what it means.

This exercise is best done in L1, but make sure students are re-phrasing (putting it into their own words), not just writing a word-for-word translation.

Example answers in English:

Ghandi - *A country has to want democracy. If people outside the country try to force it to be democratic, they will not succeed. Democracy will only work if a country wants it for themselves, not from outside force.*

King Mswati - *Democracy is the favourite political system of many of the most powerful countries. They want other countries to accept democracy. However, it is up to these other countries to choose democracy, or other forms of government.*

Lee Kuan Yew - *Some people think that democracy cannot work in Muslim countries. However, Malaysia and Indonesia have democratic systems. Remember that democracy in Indonesia is very recent, so there may be problems.*

Churchill - *One of the problems with democracy is that most voters do not have clear thinking and good ideas. (this is very similar to the first paragraph of the text above - that leaders should make the decisions as they are wiser than the people)*

Example answers in English (continued):

Roy - *There are a lot of problems with democracy today. Because of the free-market system, everything can be bought. Therefore many parts of democracy such as free press and independent judiciary are under the control of people with the most money.*

Mahatir - *Western style democracy is not suitable for Asia. Asian countries need a more controlled system (e.g. strong leaders, strict rules).*

Drilon - *Asia must develop a habit of democracy and democratic thinking. This will not be easy, but it is important.*

Bush - *It would be easier to govern the country if I was dictator of it, rather than a democratically elected president.*

Exercises

Students look at the graph and answer the questions.

Answers:

1. *'Universal suffrage' means that all adult citizens of a country are allowed to vote. So this chart shows how many countries have governments that were elected by all adult citizens. (There is debate over exclusions to universal suffrage, e.g. many countries do not allow prisoners or mentally ill people to vote).*
2. a. *true*
b. *false*
c. *true*
d. *true (or at least, not elected by universal suffrage - in most countries women, poor people, and people not from the ruling ethnic group were usually excluded from voting in 1900)*

Brainstorm

Brainstorm as many sentences as you can about the information in the chart.

You may want to do this by going around the class getting each student to say a different sentence, e.g.

In 1950 14 % of countries elected governments by universal suffrage.

There were more democratic countries in 1950 than in 1900.

In 1900, there were very few democratic countries.

Over half the world population live in democratic countries.

Group work Students read the descriptions of each category. Clarify anything they don't understand. In groups, students make lists of countries they think might belong in each category. You could make this into a competition between groups. Here is a partial list of countries and political systems; a full list of all the countries in the world is in the **Supplementary Pack**.

D – Democracy	RD – Restricted democracy	A – Authoritarian regime
M – Monarchy	P – Protectorate	
<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Greece</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Argentina</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Haiti</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Australia</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Hungary</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Iceland</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Bhutan</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>India</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Bolivia</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Iran</i> <i>A</i>
<i>Bosnia-Herzegovina</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Iraq</i> <i>P</i>
<i>Botswana</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Ireland</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Israel</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Brunei</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Italy</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Burma</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Japan</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Cambodia</i>	<i>RD</i>	<i>Jordan</i> <i>RD</i>
<i>Canada</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Kenya</i> <i>A</i>
<i>Chile</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Korea, North</i> <i>A</i>
<i>China</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Korea, South</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Croatia</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Kuwait</i> <i>M</i>
<i>Cuba</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Laos</i> <i>A</i>
<i>Colombia</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Libya</i> <i>A</i>
<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Malaysia</i> <i>RD</i>
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Mexico</i> <i>D</i>
<i>East Timor</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Mongolia</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>RD</i>	<i>Morocco</i> <i>M</i>
<i>El Salvador</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Mozambique</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Ethiopia</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Nepal</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Fiji</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Netherlands</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Finland</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>New Zealand</i> <i>D</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Nicaragua</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Ghana</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Nigeria</i> <i>D</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Norway</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Pakistan</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Peru</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Philippines</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Poland</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Russia</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Rwanda</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Samoa</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Saudi Arabia</i> <i>M</i>
		<i>Sierra Leone</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Singapore</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Somalia</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>South Africa</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Spain</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Sri Lanka</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Sudan</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Swaziland</i> <i>M</i>
		<i>Sweden</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Switzerland</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Syria</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Taiwan</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Tanzania</i> <i>RD</i>
		<i>Thailand</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Tonga</i> <i>RD</i>
		<i>Turkey</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>United Kingdom</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>United States of America</i> <i>D</i>
		<i>Vietnam</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Yugoslavia</i> <i>A</i>
		<i>Zimbabwe</i> <i>RD</i>

Review: Basic principles of democracy

Group work For this activity, you need the **Teach the Class: Principles of Democracy** handouts from the **Supplementary Pack**. There are 13 principle sheets.

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group some of the principle sheets - e.g. if you have a class of 17 students, make 5 groups and give each group 2 or 3 principles. Groups read their principles, and figure out how to explain it to the rest of the class - this will probably be easier in L1.

Groups take turns to make presentations of their principles, and answer questions from the class about their principles. Encourage students to ask as many questions as they can.

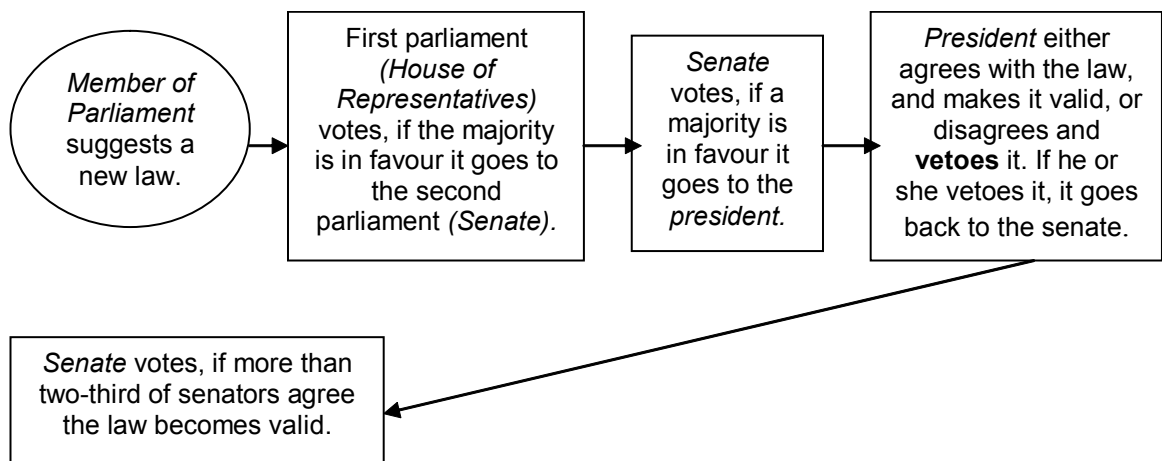
5. Systems of Democracy - How Laws are Made

Groupwork

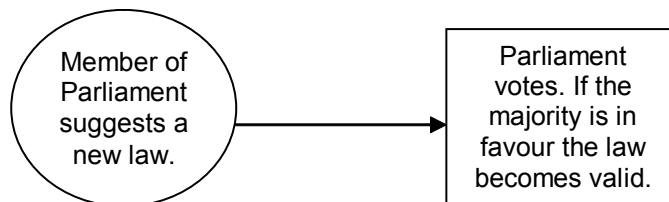
Group Brainstorm Competition.

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Each group has one writer. The groups have three minutes to think of as many laws as they can that are valid in their community – these might be camp laws, Thai laws, community authority laws – school rules are not laws! The winner is the group that has the biggest correct list of laws.

Students read the text, and look at the diagram of how British laws are made. You may want to draw this diagram on the board, to illustrate how U.S. laws are made:



Here is an diagram of how laws are made in New Zealand, a small country with only one house of parliament.



On your own

Students draw a diagram of how laws are made in either Burma, Thailand or in their communities.

Exercises

Answers:

1. *Because it is better to trust a parliament of many people, than one person to make decisions. A powerful presidential system is less democratic.*
2. *Yes.*
3. *Because he thinks the people should be able to directly elect the person they want to serve as president.*
4. *They both agree that people should be allowed to elect whoever they like, even if they elect a person who isn't good at the job.*

Discussion

Discuss these issues, and see what ideas the students come up with.

Make these points:

If parliament elected a bad prime minister, the people would have to either:

- *persuade parliament to change the prime minister*
- *change the parliament*

If the people elected a bad president, they would have to try to persuade him/her to resign, overthrow him/her or see if there are legal ways to remove him/her according to the constitution.

6. The Purpose of a Constitution

Preview

Discuss the idea of a constitution - do students know what a constitution is?

Do students know anything about the process of writing a constitution in Burma?

*At the moment (July 2005) there is a 'National Convention' to write a constitution for Burma. The representatives attending are from the military, and some ceasefire groups. Many opposition groups, including the National League for Democracy and the Karen National Union, are not represented. There is a lot of pressure put on the representatives to do what the military says. Many people consider that this process is not legitimate. For information about the constitution –building process in Burma, see *Drafting a Constitution in Burma: A Struggle for Participatory Process* in the **Supplementary Pack**.*

Exercises

Answers:

1. A constitution is harder to change than ordinary law.
2. No – most countries have one, but not all.
3. To set out the way the government is organised, the rules to limit what the government can do, and the basic rights of the people.
4. When the majority of people in a country can take away the rights of a minority, or force a minority to do something they disagree with.

Exercises

Answers:

1. Constitutions often do this.
2. This would be unusual, but possible.
3. Constitutions often do this.
4. Constitutions often do this.
5. Constitutions cannot protect people from a government that is prepared to break the law – they only work if the government agrees to uphold constitution laws.
6. Constitutions often do this.

Group work

For this activity, you need the **Texts Around the Room: Thai Constitution** handouts from the **Supplementary Pack**. There are five pages of the Thai Constitution here, with question sheets and an answer sheet for the teacher. (We couldn't print the whole Thai Constitution here, as it's very long).

Put each text up on the wall, in different parts of the classroom.

Students work in groups of four or five. Give each group a question sheet.

Groups identify the correct answer to the questions, and which text the answer is found on.

The groups that complete their question sheet first, with the most correct answers is the winner.

Answers are in the Supplementary Pack

Discussion

Students read the texts, and discuss the questions.

Separation of Powers

Discussion

Discuss who makes and administers laws in the students' communities.

Point out that:

- *The law-makers are the people who decide on what laws there are, or changes to the laws.*
- *The administrators are the people who decide whether you are guilty or innocent of breaking the laws, and what is an appropriate punishment for breaking the laws.*

You might like to get the students to look up *legislature*, *executive* and *judiciary* in their dictionaries.

Exercises

Example answers:

1. *judiciary*
2. *run the government, implement policies*
3. *makes the laws*
4. *executive*
5. *make the laws, or tell parliament what laws to make.*
6. *legislature*
7. *To stop one part of government from having too much power.*

7. Structure of Governments

Preview

Discuss who takes responsibility for these decisions within the students' communities.

Discussion

As a class, identify who makes what types of decisions in your situation. There may be a number of different authorities making decisions and laws, e.g., if you live in a Karen refugee camp:

- *the Thai Ministry of Interior (MOI) enforce who can leave and enter camp*
- *the KNU authorises marriages in some Karen areas*
- *Camp committee runs camp security, and administers camp elections*

Make lists of what different levels of authority are responsible for in your situation, under headings. The headings could be, for example:

Camp committee, village committee, KNU / NMSP / KIO / KNPP, Thai local government, Thai provincial government, Thai National government, SPDC local, provincial or national authorities...

Groupwork

In groups, students think about who would run these things in a democratic Burma. First they decide whether these things are better run by private business or by a government authority.

If they decide on a government authority, what level of government should run it?

They then review their decisions. Do they think all people in Burma would like each decision? What about ethnic minority groups?

Groups present their decisions to the class. Do most groups have the same ideas, or is there a lot of difference of opinion?

Federations

Preview

Discuss these questions. What do students know about federations

- *A federation is a group of countries that join together to form a single country.*

What countries do students know that have federations?

- *Some examples are Switzerland, the European Union, Australia, the USA*

Exercises

Answers:

1. *No, some people want their countries to leave the E.U.*
2. *The E.U. makes laws for all E.U. countries, but each country can make laws for itself, as well.*
3. *Most use the Euro now. Some still have their own money.*
4. *Each national government in the E.U.*

Losing and gaining independence

Exercises**Answers:**

1. *The northern states.*
2. *No, it's a collection of individual countries.*
3. *No, not since 1965.*
4. *No, it has decreased.*
5. *Australia.*

Discussion

Discuss these issues.

- *The important point of independence is probably whether a nation can leave a federation or other agreement without suffering severe penalties. US States could not be considered independent as they are unable to leave the federation. European States could probably leave the E.U. without difficulty. Some trade agreements include severe penalties if a country decides to leave, so the agreement may force a country to do things that harm their own interests.*

Exercises

Answers:

1. *Switzerland has three levels of government – federal, canton (state) and commune (local).*
2. *Canton level.*
3. *No, many political decisions are made by referendum*
4. *Four official ones.*

Discussion

Discuss these issues, and decide as a class which level of government should decide these things under a federal system.

8. Political corruption

Preview

Elicit students' definitions of political corruption, and come up with a class list of examples of it, e.g.

A politician who pays people to vote for him or her.

An MP who gives good jobs to all their family members.

Win elections and get rich

Exercises**Answers**

1. *They use government money to stay in power, or to make money for themselves.*
2. *He used criminals to spy on the opposition parties.*
3. *The people.*
4. *The people in those areas will benefit – maybe they will get good jobs, or sell their produce – so they will be pleased with the politician and support her or him.*
5. *Any four of these examples:*
 - *giving financial aid to countries which buy weapons from a country's companies*
 - *politicians giving government contracts to areas that support them.*
 - *selling government land or businesses to their friends at cheap prices*
 - *politicians taking bribes from people who want them support a policy.*
 - *politicians giving government jobs to their friends and relatives.*
 - *using government resources to run a private business.*
 - *political parties accepting big donations from businesses (some people think this is corrupt, others think it is OK.)*

Group work

In groups, students decide whether the examples are corruption or not.

Answers:

1. *Yes - the money is not being spent on government activities.*
2. *Yes - the politician is not acting in the best interests of the country.*
3. *No - the politician isn't using government resources.*
4. *Yes - the politician is using his position to affect the actions of the police. This is not part of his job.*
5. *Yes - if the job hasn't been publically announced his friend shouldn't be given the advantage of knowing about it early. If the job has been advertised already, he is doing nothing wrong.*
6. *Maybe - if he is being honest about his friend's abilities and is not putting pressure on the official, he is doing nothing wrong. If he is being dishonest, or offers to reward the official for giving his friend the job, or suggests he will cause problems for the official if he does not, then he is being corrupt.*
7. *No - not if it is personal money.*

Groups think of more examples of political corruption, and present them to the class.

Roleplay

Read through the situation, and divide students into groups of five or six. Within the groups, students decide who will take on which character. Groups work out who is going to say what, and practice their conversations. If you like, get groups to perform their roleplay to the class.

Have a class vote on whether this is an example of corruption.

There are some case studies of political corruption around the world in the **Supplementary Pack**.

9. 'Authoritarian Democracy'

Preview

In their dictionaries, students look up the word 'authoritarian'. Discuss what types of government could be defined as authoritarian, and whether *authoritarian democracy* is possible.

Discussion

Look back to some of the quotations on pages 16 and 17. These are some more examples of arguments against full democracy.

What are students' opinions of each of the three arguments against full democracy in the text?

Do they think that you have to choose between development and democracy, or is it possible for both to happen at the same time?

Arguments against authoritarian democracy

Group work

Students read the text

In groups, they list the characteristics of an authoritarian democracy.

They then divide the characteristics into *authoritarian* and *democracy*.

Example answers:

<u>authoritarian</u>	<u>democracy</u>
<i>most political activity is illegal</i> <i>impossible for a party other than a ruling party to be elected</i> <i>strong criticism of the ruling party is illegal</i> <i>ruling parties have close links with police and judges</i> <i>ruling parties have close links with the media</i>	<i>other political parties are allowed</i> <i>they hold elections</i>

Discussion

Discuss the ways that authoritarian democracy can be corrupt, and how this can be prevented in a true democracy.

In an authoritarian democracy, the leaders have more power than in a 'true' democracy. If a leader is corrupt, it is easy for them to control police and judges. e.g. If a leader's friends are arrested, it is easy for them to arrange for them to be released. In a true democracy, the leaders cannot control judges or police (see Separation of Powers, page 22)

Discussion

Review which countries are in ASEAN:

Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Brunei, The Philippines, Burma.

Check their locations on the map.

Which ASEAN countries could students describe as authoritarian democracies?

There is no exact answer to this question, and of course the political situation is always changing. In 2005, Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia call themselves democracies, and have authoritarian rules.

The Philippines is arguably the most democratic state in ASEAN, with a free press, many political parties and a high level of citizen participation in the political process. Laos and Vietnam are communist states, Brunei is an absolute monarchy, Burma is a military dictatorship.

10. Becoming a democracy

Preview

Brainstorm a list of countries that have recently become democracies.

- *Indonesia, Cambodia, Nigeria and South Africa have all become democracies in the last 15 years.*

Discuss what problems countries might have in the first few years of becoming a democracy. Get students to imagine when Burma becomes democratic - what problems would it have in the first few years.

- *Possible problems are economic problems, corruption, conflict, rising crime, how to deal with the old leaders, rebuilding the infrastructure and civil society, educating the people on democracy, leaders accepting accountability, ensuring elections are free and fair...*

Democratic Transition

Discussion

Discuss why a country might lose its democracy.

- *Early democracies are weak and people may not trust or understand it. The country may face economic problems. A lack of citizen participation or transparency would make it easy for the government to return to authoritarian law. There could be other conflicts in the country. It would be easy for a leader to seize too much power before the institutions of democracy are in place.*

Methods of Democratic Transition

Exercises

Students decide if these examples are *reform*, *overthrow* or *compromise*.

Answers:

1. *compromise*
2. *overthrow*
3. *reform*

Group work In groups, students read the case studies, and decide if each example of democratic transition was brought about by *overthrow*, *reform* or *compromise*.

Answers:

Cambodia - compromise

Spain - reform

Indonesia - overthrow

South Africa - compromise

Philippines - overthrow

Nigeria - reform

Russia - reform

Discussion

Discuss with students possible sources of information of these countries.
Brainstorm a list of potential sources.

Suggestions:

- *newspapers and magazines*
- *encyclopedias*
- *internet*
- *radio and television*
- *textbooks / books*
- *movies*

Group work

For this research project, students work in groups of three or four.

In the **Supplementary Pack**, there is some information about these countries and their current political situation (in July 2005).

Give each group the information on one of the countries.

If it is possible, encourage students to get information from other sources as well.

Groups read their information, and prepare a presentation about the current political situation in their countries.

If you like, get them to do *Poster Presentations* - give each group a large sheet of paper and some coloured pens or paints, and get them to make posters about the country, and present it to the class.

11. Political Theories

Preview

Ask the students for their definition of *political theory*.

Students decide which of the words in the box are political theories.

Encourage them to use their dictionaries.

Answers:

capitalism, socialism, anarchism, communism, fascism and *libertarianism* are all political theories (political ideologies)

Optimism, buddhism, criticism and *organism* are not.

Exercises

Answers:

1. *They call themselves communist, but practice social democratic economic policies.*
2. *In a free - market system, businesses can operate anywhere in the world and don't need to pay taxes to import and export goods.*
3. *In a social democracy, the government must set rules for businesses, charge them tax and look after people who can't work.*
4. *Everyone has equal power.*
5. *In most constitutional monarchies, parliament has the most power.*

Group work

For each political theory, groups discuss:

- What do you think is good about the political theory?
- What do you think is bad?
- What problems could each theory have?
- Which theory do you think is best? Why?

In groups, encourage the students to think deeply about these ideas and to discuss them among themselves. Encourage them to think of reasons why.

Get the groups to write their answers on large sheets of paper and stick them on the wall for other groups to look at.

Group work

In their groups, student think of questions to ask using the information about political theories. They can use the questions in the exercise section above as examples.

Each group should think of as many questions as possible - the answers must be available in the text.

After about fifteen minutes, stop the groups. Each group takes turns to ask a question, and other groups write their answers.

If a group gets a question right, they get a point.

If no groups get the correct answer, the group who asks the question gets a point.

The group with the most points is the winner.

Exercise **Answers:**

			j										
			a					c					
	c	a	p	i	t	a	l	i	s	m			
h	o		a		e			t		a			
	m	o	n	a	r	c	h	y		r			
	m				m					k			
	u					h		p	r	e	s	s	
a	n	a	r	c	h	i	s	m		t			
	i			h		t			s				
	s	o	c	i	a	l	i	s	t				
	m			n		e			a				
				a	r	r	e	s	t				
							u		e				



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