

Democracy in Action Online Program

Lesson Plan

The Democracy In Action Online Program is approximately 90 minutes long and designed specifically for Year 8 students. The program provides activities and information to develop an understanding and appreciation of democracy with a focus on Australia's unique democratic system. This program can be completed as one session; or select various parts to break the content and activities up to be completed over several sessions.

Learning intentions

Students will:

- Gain an appreciation that the concept of democracy is complex and evolving.
- Explore the different types of democracies and identify the types that best describe Australia.
- Discover some of the features that contribute to a well-functioning democracy.
- Classify some rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship.
- Examine six key democratic freedoms and the role they play in enabling active participation.

Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Define what democracy is and explain a brief history of the origin of democracy.
- Identify the types of democracies that best describe Australia.
- Classify some rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Define the freedoms of speech, religion, movement, media, assembly and association and explain their importance in enabling active participation.

Resources required for this lesson

- Smartboard or projector and screen
- Students own devices e.g. laptops or tablets (optional)
- Internet connection

Western Australian curriculum links

Curriculum Code	Knowledge & Understanding
Year 8 Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS)	
ACHCK061	The freedoms that enable active participation in Australia's democracy within the bounds of the law, including freedom of speech, association, assembly, religion and movement.

Curriculum links are taken from: <https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/humanities-and-social-sciences#year-8-syllabus>

Lesson Plan for Democracy in Action Online Program

Stage of Lesson	Time
Introduction	
<p>1. Introduction To Democracy</p> <p>This section provides an introductory explanation as to the Ancient Greek origin of “democracy” and provides a simple definition of democracy as “rule by the people”. It also introduces students to the notion that democracy is more than just about voting and elections. The word cloud helps to agitate what ideas and concepts may be found/necessary in democratic nations. Students can either read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your understanding of what is a democracy? What definition would you use? • Do you think one country can be more democratic than another? • What features do you think are necessary for a country to be a well-functioning democracy? • Which concepts/ideas on the word cloud do you understand, and which ones do you think can be found in Australia? • Do you agree with the quotes listed by the two US Presidents? 	6 minutes
<p>Check for understanding</p> <p>As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) complete the sentences to revise key concepts explored in the introduction.</p>	2 minutes
Main Body	
<p>2. Defining Democracy</p> <p>This topic begins with explanations as to what autocracies and oligarchies are to enable a clearer understanding as to what exactly a democracy is. It outlines two fundamental ideas about democracy namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the idea of democracy is underpinned by majority rule but there is a need for a balance to enable minority rights to be protected. 2. the importance of the separation of powers in a democracy to ensure each arm can keep a check and balance on each other. <p>Students can either read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are human rights? • What are the three arms of government? • What is the separation of powers principle and why is it so important to have this principle underpin democracies? • What is responsible government? 	5 minutes
<p>Fact or Myth</p> <p>As a whole class or in pairs using personal devices, use this activity to check in on student's understanding.</p>	2 minutes

<p>3. Development of Democracy</p> <p>This section provides a timeline for students to get an understanding that democracy is an evolving and always changing system of government. It has been shaped by key historical events as well as society's changing values. Students can read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class. Students to click on the various dates to discover some key events that have influenced Australia's democracy.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main difference between a direct democracy and a representative democracy? • Why is the Magna Carta important in the development of democracy? • Extension suggestion – students to examine the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Class discussion on the question: Does Australia do a good job protecting and promoting human rights? 	6 minutes
<p>Check for understanding</p> <p>As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) complete the 4 multi choice questions.</p>	3 minutes
<p>4. Democracy types</p> <p>This section explores the various types of democracies. Students can read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class. If completing as a class, students may try and suggest the six democracy types that best fit Australia prior to flipping the nine cards.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What aspects of Australia's democracy have we copied from the UK? From the US? • What is a referendum? • Which countries can be described as Presidential? Direct? Unitary? 	8 minutes
<p>Check for understanding</p> <p>As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) match the four cards with their corresponding democracy type.</p>	2 minutes
<p>5. Four Pillars of a Healthy Democracy</p> <p>Students to investigate the features of a strong and robust democracy. Students can click onto each of the pillars and read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you think, Australia performs on each of the pillars? • Are any pillars more important than others? 	6 minutes
<p>Check for understanding</p> <p>As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) complete the drag and drop cards to check in on students understanding.</p>	2 minutes
<p>Ranking Democracy – Democracy Index 2024</p> <p>Students to discover how Australia is currently doing in the democracy stakes. Students can drag and drop the four remaining countries to complete the top 15 ranking individually, in pairs, or as a class.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What surprised you about the countries that made (or did not make) this list? 	4 minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think Australia has slipped down the rankings since 2010? 	
6. Rights & Responsibilities In this topic, students explore not only some of their democratic rights but also some of their responsibilities to ensure Australian society is safe, harmonious and peaceful. Students can read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class. Discussion points to raise with students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should Australia have a “Bill of Rights”? 	4 minutes
Rights and Responsibilities Venn Diagram As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) students to classify various rights and responsibilities.	4 minutes
7. Democratic Freedoms Having looked at rights, this section allows students to explore the six freedoms that are the cornerstone of our democracy. Students can either read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class.	2 minutes
Democratic Freedoms Word Search As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) complete the word search.	4 minutes
Freedom Descriptions – Freedom Riddles As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) unravel the six freedom riddles.	6 minutes
Freedoms and Active Participation As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) watch the Behind the News video.	3 minutes
Check for understanding As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) complete the two multiple choice questions.	1 minute
Conclusion	
8. Reflection This final section allows students to reflect on the many concepts, ideas and quotes surrounding democracy. Students can either read the information individually, in pairs, or as a class. Use the six reflection questions to promote respectful group discussion and shine a light on a diversity of opinions to allow your classroom to become a microcosm of democracy.	7 minutes
Trivia Quiz As a class, complete the trivia quiz to revise concepts and ideas explored throughout the program. Divide students into groups (no more than five groups). Taking turns, each group chooses a question to answer based on the category and dollar amount, continuing until each group has answered four questions. If the group answers the question correctly, they “win” the dollar value assigned to the question. Record the amounts earned by each group and announce the group with the highest amount at the end as the winners.	13 minutes