

# Beginnings of Democracy



## Before Reading

### Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of this text is to report on democracy, the characteristics of democratic societies, and how democracy began. The text links with the *Social Studies* theme *Government and Democracy*.

### Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- chapter titles and page numbers
- photographs, maps and illustrations
- fact box
- glossary and index.

Ask "What type of book is this?" (Factual). How do you know? What type of factual book is this? (Report).

### Visual Literacy

Look at the front cover. Where are these people and what are they doing?

Browse the first few pages of the text and discuss the effect of the background images and colours. How do these relate to the subject matter?

### Background Knowledge

Read the title. What do you understand by the term 'democracy'? What aspects of democracy do you predict the book will cover?

Students should rate their current knowledge and understanding about democracy and its beginnings, giving themselves a score out of 10.

### Phonological Awareness

Make sure students are able to break words into syllables. Why is it important to pronounce words clearly when breaking them into syllables for spelling?

vote: 1 syllable; gov / erned: 2 syllables;  
dec / i / sions: 3 syllables;  
dem / oc / ra / cy: 4 syllables;  
rep / res / ent / a / tives: 5 syllables.

Write high frequency and vocabulary words on cards. Cut the words into syllables. Place the cards on the floor. Mix up the syllables. Students remake the words. Mix up the syllables again. What other different words can you make by combining the syllables?

## Vocabulary

ancient, aspects, beheaded, citizens, colonised, communities, decisions, democratic, European, execution, governed, individual, issue, overthrown, representatives, societies, version, vote

## High Frequency Words

addition, affected, allowed, beginnings, behalf, differs, ensure, instead, involves, limited, modern, possible, thought

Ask students to write a word from the list matching a specific criterion (e.g. write a word that has a suffix (addition); write a word from the same word family as 'different' (differs)).

Select a word. Write spaces for each letter in the word on the board. Students guess the letters in the word in less than 10 guesses to win the game.

## During Reading

### Vocabulary in Context

Find words in the text that belong to the same word family (e.g. democracy, democratic; governed, government; represent, representatives). List other words for each family. Use a dictionary to locate lesser-known words and define them (e.g. democrat, democratise; governing, governor).

Make sure students are able to locate and read the word origins entries in a dictionary. Define democracy using a dictionary that gives word origins, and compare it to the fact box on page 8.

### Checking for Meaning

#### Literal:

What is a representative democracy? (A system of government that involves people voting for representatives to make decisions on behalf of the community.)

What style of government operated in ancient Greece before it became a democracy? (A system of government whereby most states and communities were led by a single person or a small group of people who made all the decisions.)

What changes to the Greek style of democracy were made by the ancient Romans? (In ancient Rome, men were allowed to vote for other men to represent them in a democracy.)

Name some countries that have a democratic government today. (Australia, Canada, USA, New Zealand, UK)

#### Inferential:

In what real life situations could a true democracy work?

What are the benefits of a representative democratic style of government?

Make sure students understand the difference between literal and inferential information.

#### Response:

In what other situations does a representative democracy operate? (e.g. Junior School Council)

When is your family a true democracy?

How do you feel about living in a democracy?

## Grammatical Patterns

Make sure students understand the following components of a report:

- Introductory statement defining the topic: *Democracy is a system of government.* (p.4)
- Passages of description relating to various aspects of the topic: origin of the word democracy (p.8), democracy and the ancient Greeks (pp.8-15)
- Paragraphs with topic sentences to organise information: *Today, a democracy usually involves people voting for others to represent them.* (p.6) *Only male citizens were allowed to make the decisions.* (p.15)
- Use of timeless present tense indicated by action and relating verbs: *This form of government is called a representative democracy.* (p.6)
- Use of past tense action and relating verbs when reporting on past events: *But, the Greeks decided this system was unfair.* (p.10)
- Use of general nouns: *person* (p.5), *countries* (p.7), *women* (p.14)
- Use of technical language: *democracy* (p.4), *government* (p.10), *decision-making* (p.14).
- Use of nouns and noun groups as the beginning focus of a clause: *Countries with a representative government include:* (p.7), *The representatives could not make their own laws.* (p.11)

## Fluency / Punctuation Patterns

Connectives and pronouns link ideas between sentences for cohesion: *The representatives then make decisions on behalf of the community. This form of government is called a representative democracy.* (p.6) Demonstrate how these sentences are to be read together for full meaning.

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- Use of capital letters used for proper nouns: *Roman Empire* (p.20), *King Charles* (p.22)

- Use of commas to separate connectives at the beginning of sentences: *First, ancient Greece was quite small.* (p.13)
- Use of single quotation marks to define and highlight words: *'the people', 'to rule'* (p.8)

## Critical Literacy

Recall students' level of understanding rating before reading. What score out of 10 would you give your level of understanding after reading? Why? What have you learnt about democracy and its beginnings after reading this text?

## Linking Visual and Written

Explore the use of maps in this text. How do they help to visualise where events mentioned in the text take place? Why have illustrations rather than photographs been used in the chapters on ancient Greece and ancient Rome? Discuss the effect of using illustrations in factual texts. What would the illustrator need to know to be able to draw these illustrations accurately?

## After Reading

In what way is each chapter in this text a report? Identify the introductory statement, the main ideas written in paragraphs, and concluding statement. Write a sentence starter for the students to complete to summarise the main idea of a paragraph. (e.g. In ancient Greece, elected representatives ensured that ... (p.11))

## Activities

Students will:

- make and justify opinions about statements in the text
- locate and write words breaking them into syllables
- locate and write base words with suffixes added in a word find
- complete sentences to write a mini report about the beginnings of democracy.

Comprehension (meaning)    Vocabulary (structure)    Phonics (visual)    Writing (structure)

