

Democracy—*Freedom to Choose*

HSIE/SOSE outcome

Explains the development of the principles of Australian democracy.

Subject matter focus

Using the *Freedom to Choose* interactive the student will learn about different meanings of 'democracy'.

Implications for learning

In this area of study, students have opportunities to:

- Distinguish between definitions and judgements.
- Provide a basis for categorising ideas.
- Sequence segments of Australia's national anthem into a recognisable whole.
- Choose and justify a preferred definition of democracy.
- Predict how Australia's democracy might change in the next 100 years.
- Reflect on the effects of national symbols.

Take home message

Democracy means different things to different people.

***Freedom to Choose* outcome**

Explore different meanings of 'democracy'.

Using the *Freedom to Choose* interactive

This interactive uses a well-known symbol of Australia to explore the meaning of democracy:

- Drag and drop the stars and the Union Jack into place on the Australian flag to reveal several different statements about democracy.
- Categorise the statements and provide a basis for the categorisation eg social or political basis.
- Identify what the statements about democracy have in common? How do they differ?
- Drag and drop the stars and Union Jack into place on the Australian flag to play segments of the Australian national anthem.
- Click the stars and Union Jack in the sequence which will play a recognisable rendition of the Australian national anthem.

Key questions

What do you think 'democracy' means? (Accept and list all responses.) Discuss the responses.

Class activities

- Choose a definition of democracy based on preference. Justify your choice to the class.
- Decide which of the eight statements about democracy is most clever and why.
- Create a new arrangement using the musical stars and the Union Jack on the *Freedom to Choose* interactive. Give your piece of music a title.
- An experiment in true democracy: Ask your teacher to allocate part of one school day to democratic decision making—that is, everyone in the class contributes equally on each question put (during the specified part of the day) and a decision is reached through majority vote.
- Write your own definition of democracy or a poem about what democracy means to you.

- Pretend that you are an alien living on a planet in outer space. Create a story about the government ruling the planet. What is it called? What are the core beliefs? What operations are central to the planet's functioning?
- "You value your rights, when you have stood up for your rights"-explain.
- Research the Australian national anthem. Summarise its history. Present your information in either a written, visual or verbal form.
- Evaluate the Australian flag as a symbol of Australia. Should it be changed? Why /why not?
- Create a story explaining why all the people in the photo are there. What are they celebrating or protesting?
- Imagine you are in the photograph. What are you doing?
- Discuss: 'An informed democracy will behave in a responsible fashion' (Thomas Jefferson).

Reflection

- Can you think of anything that you have done today (or this week) that would not be allowed in an undemocratic country?
- Give the 'Citizen of the Year' award to yourself. What democratic virtue earned you the award?
- Pretend you are living in Australia 100 years from now. Describe the condition of Australian democracy?
- What if Australia were a fascist state. What might the quotes on the interactive say then?
- Decide whether our national anthem is fitting. Should it stay as it is or should it be changed? Why?
- Discuss: Do national flags promote a particular country's interests at the cost of world interests?
- Why do you think people feel so strongly about their flag?

Integration

- Music: Harmony and dischord. Can the students 'play' the stars in the sequence that imitates the Australian national anthem? What happens when the stars are 'played' out of sequence? Listen to other national anthems. What does the music bring to mind? Brainstorm words or draw pictures to the music.
- History: conduct historical research into other nations' flags and national anthems.

Literacy notes

This study provides opportunities for students to: discuss and explain points of view; explore fact and opinion; write a poem or narrative; conduct research.

Resources

- Flags of the world.
- National anthems from around the world.
- *Get Parliament*, magazine available from the Parliamentary Education Office. See http://www.peo.gov.au/publications/get_parliament.html

Links

- Welcome to Discovering Democracy: <http://www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/index.htm>
- Parliamentary Education Office – Parliamentary Functions <http://www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss29.html>