To Be or Not to Be Democratic – Grade Seven

Ohio Standards Connection:

Government

Benchmark C
Compare the defining characteristics of democracies, monarchies and dictatorships.

Indicator 1
Compare direct and representative democracy using examples of ancient Athens, the Roman republic and the United States today.

Social Studies Skills and Methods

Benchmark B
Organize historical information in text or graphic format and analyze the information to draw conclusions.

Indicator 1
Describe historical events and issues from the perspectives of people living at the time in order to avoid evaluating the past in terms of today’s norms and values.

Lesson Summary:
Students will compare the democracies of ancient Athens, the Roman Republic and the United States today. They will illustrate the similarities and differences in the three governments with a Venn diagram. They will communicate a position on public policy through the writing of a letter to either the government of ancient Athens or the Roman Republic as a citizen living during ancient times.

Estimated Duration: Three hours

Commentary:
This lesson combines indicators from two standards, Government and Social Studies Skills and Methods. Students will be engaged in activities defining characteristics of ancient governments, comparing those governments with the United States government today and understanding historical perspective. Because this lesson deals with the governments of ancient Athens and the Roman Republic, it is best used at the conclusion of the study of ancient Greece and ancient Rome.

Pre-Assessment:
Have students answer the questions on Attachment A. You may choose to have students respond orally or in writing and discuss the responses as a group.

1. What is a direct democracy?
2. What is a representative democracy?
3. What are the differences between these two types of governments?
4. What are one advantage and one disadvantage of direct democracy?
5. What are one advantage and one disadvantage of representative democracy?

Scoring Guidelines:
5 items correct Student has shown a thorough understanding of the basic vocabulary for the lesson.
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4 items correct    Teacher should remediate the missed term or concept.

Fewer than 4 items correct    Teacher should instruct on the meanings of the terms and concepts in order to continue with the lesson.

Post-Assessment:
Student directions for Part 1 and 2 of the Post-Assessment are on Attachment B.

Part 1, Chart:
Have students use the information in the Venn diagram that they have completed in class to fill in a chart which compares direct and representative democracy.

Part 2, Letter:
Have students compose a letter fulfilling the following requirements:
• Written from the point of view of a citizen of ancient Athens or the Roman Republic.
• Includes advice on the government’s handling of an important issue.
• Includes appropriate examples of the characteristics of the government of the society chosen.

Scoring Guidelines:
See Attachment C, Scoring Rubric for Post-Assessment.

Sample Answers for Post-Assessment Chart
Direct Democracy:
• “Pure” democracy
• Practiced in Ancient Athens
• The will of the people is translated into public policy directly by the people
• Mass meetings, assemblies
• People vote directly on government issues
• Practiced mostly in small communities
• Greek city-states were small enough for all male citizens to participate
• Practiced most often where problems of government are few and simple
• Relies on a public educated about all issues
• Citizens called upon to put the public good before private interests
• Hard for citizens to be knowledgeable about every issue

Representative Democracy:
• Indirect democracy, Founding Fathers of the U.S. called it a republic
• Practiced in Roman Republic and United States
• Small group of persons chosen by the people to act as their representatives;
• Representatives express the popular will
• Representatives debate and decide on issues
• People vote indirectly on government issues; people vote for representatives to carry out the will of the people
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- Practiced mostly in larger communities
- People do not have a direct say in governmental affairs
- Complex issues managed by committees
- Citizens need to be informed about views of representatives
- Representatives called upon to put the public good before political/election concerns

**Instructional Procedures:**

**Day One**
1. Complete the *Pre-Assessment*, Attachment A.
2. Create a chart to organize the answers for the following questions on ancient Greece, the Roman Republic and the United States today. Display the grid on chart paper or use an overhead projector.
   - What kind of government did/does each have?
   - How did it develop?
   - What were/are the characteristics of the government?
   - Who could/can be involved in the decisions made by the government?
   - What were/are some strengths and limitations of each government?
   - What types of issues would the government decide?
3. Divide students into groups of three. Provide each group with a *Worksheet*, Attachment D, and explain that each group will complete the worksheet.
4. Allow enough time for students to gather information and complete the questions. This may take more time depending on the makeup and capabilities of the class. Provide a variety of research materials including textbooks, history texts, encyclopedias and Internet access. Monitor groups to make sure that all participants are involved in the research process.

**Day Two**
5. Have groups report back to the class on their findings.
6. As a class, complete the chart created on Day One.
7. Have each student complete a *Venn Diagram*, Attachment E, showing comparisons between the three governments. Explain to students that this diagram has three circles, one for each of the governments studied. There are spaces for recording similarities between only two of the governments and a center section for recording attributes that all three governments share. Sample answers are provided on Attachment F. Students may work on this exercise as a group, in pairs or individually.

**Day Three**
8. Review Attachments D and E for accuracy. Review the lesson content with students and clear up any misconceptions.
9. Assign the *Post-Assessment*, Attachment B. Provide students with a copy of the rubric, Attachment C.
Day Four
10. Have students share and respond to their completed letters.

**Differentiated Instructional Support:**
Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s). Differentiated instruction could include:
- Group students heterogeneously to allow for student interaction with peers.
- Have students create illustrations defining each of the vocabulary words.
- Have students research the voting regulations and processes in each of the governments studied. Students should prepare a presentation to share this information with the class.

**Extensions:**
Have students create a poster or design a bulletin board detailing the governmental systems of ancient Athens, the Roman Republic and the United States today. Be sure to include similarities and differences in the characteristics of each governmental system. Allow students to choose one system as a favorite or illustrate the strengths of all three systems.

**Homework Options and Home Connections:**
Have students discuss with adults the characteristics of democracy in the United States. List the advantages and disadvantages of the U.S. governmental system.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**
**English Language Arts**
- **Writing Applications**
  - **Benchmark C:** Produce letters (e.g., business, letters to the editor, job applications) that address audience needs, stated purpose and context in a clear and efficient manner.
  - **Indicator 3:** Write business letters that are formatted to convey ideas, state problems, make requests or give compliments.

**Materials and Resources:**
The inclusion of a specific resource in any lesson formulated by the Ohio Department of Education should not be interpreted as an endorsement of that particular resource, or any of its contents, by the Ohio Department of Education. The Ohio Department of Education does not endorse any particular resource. The Web addresses listed are for a given site’s main page, therefore, it may be necessary to search within that site to find the specific information required for a given lesson. Please note that information published on the Internet changes over time, therefore the links provided may no longer contain the specific information related to a given lesson. Teachers are advised to preview all sites before using them with students.

**For the teacher:** Large chart paper or transparency and markers.

**For the students:** Paper, pencil/pen, textbooks, history texts, Internet access, non-fiction texts related to ancient Greece, ancient Rome and the U.S. government.
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Vocabulary:
- democracy
- direct democracy
- representative democracy
- indirect democracy
- senate
- dictator
- assembly
- congress

Technology Connections:
- Have students use software to create a flow chart showing the structure of each government and its relationship to its citizens.
- Visit government Web sites.
- Library specialist can aid classroom teacher in selecting history books and online resources.

Research Connections:

Nonlinguistic representations or graphic organizers help students think about and recall knowledge.

General Tips:
This lesson can be taught following the study of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Sufficient resources or knowledge of both civilizations and their governments, as well as the government of the United States, are necessary to complete the project.

Attachments:
Attachment A, Pre-Assessment
Attachment B, Post-Assessment
Attachment C, Scoring Rubric for Post-Assessment
Attachment D, Worksheet
Attachment E, Venn Diagram
Attachment F, Venn Diagram Sample Answers
Name: _______________________________________________

Directions: Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. What is a direct democracy?

2. What is a representative democracy?

3. What are the differences between these two types of governments?

4. What are one advantage and one disadvantage of direct democracy?

5. What are one advantage and one disadvantage of representative democracy?
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Attachment B
Post-Assessment

Part 1, Chart

Directions: You may use the Venn diagram completed in class to fill in the chart comparing direct and representative democracy. Use examples from ancient Athens, the Roman Republic and the United States today that demonstrate the principles of these two types of governments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Democracy</th>
<th>Representative Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2, Writing a Letter

Directions: Compose a letter using these guidelines:
- Write the letter from the point of view of a citizen of ancient Athens or a citizen of the Roman Republic. Give your character an appropriate name for the time period.
- Describe your government’s handling of an important issue such as women’s rights, conquest of new land or slavery, from the point of view of a person living in that place and time. Write as a resident of your chosen society to your leader, stating your views. Be sure to use the perspective of the times in your chosen society.
- The letter should be at least one full page in length and should include appropriate examples of the characteristics of the governmental system of the society.
## Attachment C
### Scoring Rubric for Post-Assessment

#### Part 1: Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Democracy</strong></td>
<td>Includes thorough and detailed examples that accurately represent the concepts.</td>
<td>Most examples accurately represent the concepts.</td>
<td>Some examples accurately represent the concepts.</td>
<td>Few examples accurately represent the concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representative Democracy</strong></td>
<td>Includes thorough and detailed examples that accurately represent the concepts.</td>
<td>Most examples accurately represent the concepts.</td>
<td>Some examples accurately represent the concepts.</td>
<td>Few examples accurately represent the concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>Thorough and detailed examples from all three societies studied.</td>
<td>Examples from two societies studied.</td>
<td>Examples from two societies studied.</td>
<td>Examples from one society studied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Part 2: Letter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perspective</strong></td>
<td>Incorporates detailed information that illustrates the perspectives of the time period accurately.</td>
<td>Incorporates general information that illustrates the perspectives of the time period accurately.</td>
<td>Incorporates general information that illustrates the perspectives of the time period with some inaccuracies.</td>
<td>Incorporates general information that illustrates the perspectives of the time period with many inaccuracies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References to Government</strong></td>
<td>Detailed references with accurate information.</td>
<td>General references with accurate information.</td>
<td>Vague references with some accurate information.</td>
<td>Few references with many inaccuracies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Skills</strong></td>
<td>Well written sentences with minor spelling or grammar errors.</td>
<td>Well written sentences with few spelling or grammar errors.</td>
<td>Partial sentences with many spelling or grammar errors.</td>
<td>Many errors which impede understanding of the content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Names: _______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
________________________________________________

Directions: As a group, research and answer the questions about the governments of ancient Athens, the Roman Republic and the United States today.

1. Ancient Athens
   a. What kind of government did ancient Athens have?

   b. How did it develop?

   c. List the characteristics of the government.

   d. Who could be involved in the decisions made by the government?

   e. List some strengths of the government of ancient Athens.

   f. What are some limitations of the government of ancient Athens?

   g. What types of issues would the government decide?
2. The Roman Republic
   
a. What kind of government did the Romans have during the time of the Republic?
   
b. How did it develop?
   
c. List the characteristics of the government.
   
d. Who could be involved in the decisions made by the government?
   
e. List some strengths of the government of the Roman Republic.
   
f. What are some limitations of the government of the Roman Republic?
   
g. What types of issues would the government decide?
3. The United States Today
   a. What kind of government does the United States have?
   b. How did it develop?
   c. List the characteristics of the government.
   d. Who can be involved in the decisions made by the government? Be specific.
   e. List some of the strengths of the government of the United States.
   f. Do you think there are any limitations to our form of government? Explain.
   g. What types of issues does the government decide?
Directions: Using the research you have done, complete the Venn diagram comparing the governments of Ancient Athens, the Roman Republic and the U.S. today.

The following categories may help you focus your comparisons:

a. Type of government     e. Types of issues the government decides
b. Size of the area governed     f. Advantages and disadvantages
c. Role of the citizens
d. Method of passing laws

c

ANCIENT ATHENS

ROMAN REPUBLIC

UNITED STATES TODAY
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Attachment F
Venn Diagram Sample Answers

a. Type of government
b. Size of the area governed
c. Role of the citizens
d. Method of passing laws
e. Types of issues the government decides
f. Advantages and disadvantages

Ancient Athens
a. direct democracy
b. small
c. direct participation in assemblies and lawmaking
d. citizens vote on each law
f. works well in small communities; citizens had to be educated; only a small group of men were eligible to participate

Roman Republic
f. not all citizens were educated and representatives were more knowledgeable to vote on issues; the large area would be hard to manage a direct democracy
a. indirect democracy
b. large
c. citizens elect representatives
d. representatives debate and decide laws
f. only a small number of citizens had a direct role in government

United States Today
f. representatives can be more knowledgeable on details of the many government issues; slow political process

e. security, economic issues, social issues, foreign relations, etc.