

Common Core Social Studies Learning Plan Template

Lesson Title: Constructing a Complex Definition of Democracy

Author Name: Jennifer Chandler

Contact Information: Carson High School

Appropriate for Grade Level(s): 10th Grade – World History, 11th Grade – U.S. History or 12th Grade – U.S. Government and Politics

History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s) (RI, W, S&L, L):

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2](#) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4](#) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.10](#) By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2b](#) Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2d](#) Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic; convey a knowledgeable stance in a style that responds to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.

Nevada State Standards

C13.[9-12].2 Analyze major conflicts in social, political, and economic life and evaluate the role of compromise in the resolution of these issues.

Nevada Skills Standards

Read texts by using reading strategies (i.e., prior knowledge, identify key vocabulary words, context clues, main ideas, supporting details, and text features: pictures, maps, text boxes).

Read for a specific purpose (i.e., detect cause & effect relationships, compare & contrast information, identify fact v. opinion, and author bias).

Type of Lesson: Context Definition

Student Readings (list): Historical and Modern Day quotes about Democracy

Total Time Needed: 90 minute class period OR two 45 minute class segments

The pages that follow the Learning Plan Template includes student readings and reading strategy/questions, source(s), handouts, assignment sheet, self-assessment/reflection and a rubric related to this lesson.

Lesson Outline:

Time Frame (e.g. 15 minutes)	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?
3 minutes	Hand out Concept Definition Assessment Page. Ask students to write down a definition of Democracy on the lines labeled Pre-assessment.	Students are writing down their understanding of the word Democracy.
15-20 minutes	Distribute copies of “Democracy Quotes” – these represent a wide variety of perspectives from within the United States and the world AND a balance of historical modern perspectives.	Skimming the various quotes to get a general overview of different opinions about democracy.
20-25 minutes	Instruct students to go back through each quote and work as a group to determine the stated and implied meanings of “democracy”.	Reading one quote and writing down what it literally and figuratively is stating about democracy. They are writing their terms on the grid at the top of the handout. Students are working as a group and discussing throughout.
15-20 minutes	Show students the next grid. Point out the top row. Emphasize that each row must have a category at the top. Now they must look at their initial word grid and find commonalities among the words. They must come up with at least three different categories, but cannot use more than six. Under no circumstances may they create a “miscellaneous” category.	Students are working in groups and discussing possible categories for their words. They are reasoning and justifying their choices. They are problem-solving where to place the words that don’t fit their initial categories. They are developing a deeper understanding of the concept “Democracy”.
DAY 2 (This is a natural place to break up the exercise if you are unable to complete the activity in one contained class period.)		
10 minutes	Once the category grid has been completed – EVERY word from the initial grid has been categorized, direct student groups to use their categories OR what they learned by creating the categories to compose a meaningful, complex definition of the term “Democracy” and write it on the lines provided on the back of the handout.	Students are working in groups to create a complex definition using categories and powerful combinations of distinct words from the initial passage. Once each group has composed their definition, a representative from each group writes out the definition on the board for the entire class to read.
5 minutes	Projects the full dictionary definition of Democracy on the PowerPoint/whiteboard. Reads dictionary definition aloud to the entire class. Provides time for students to compare their definitions to the dictionary definition. Teacher reads each student-generated complex definition on the board to the whole class.	Students look at and hear the dictionary definition being read aloud by the teacher. Students hear their classmates’ definitions being read aloud. Students compare all definitions presented silently on their own.

The pages that follow the Learning Plan Template includes student readings and reading strategy/questions, source(s), handouts, assignment sheet, self-assessment/reflection and a rubric related to this lesson.

10 minutes	Direct students to reconsider their original definitions and to add things from all of the different definitions to their own. Students are to work individually to improve their definition.	Students improve upon their definition using all the above mentioned resources.
5 minutes	Teacher serves as scribe. The whole group works together to compose a single, complex definition of Constitution.	Students work together to create one complete complex definition of Democracy. Then they copy the agreed upon definition on their paper.
5-10 minutes	Direct students to do the final two steps of the process. Ask students to reflect upon what they have learned during the process of creating a complex definition about the word democracy. Then, ask students to reflect upon their learning and compose two questions they have about democracy.	Students are writing down three things they have learned about the concept of democracy. Students compose two questions they still have about democracy.
****	Teacher uses the questions to direct future lessons.	

Description of Lesson Assessment: Use the Complex Definition Assessment Page. Ask students to write a definition of democracy PRIOR to beginning the lesson. They will need it for comparison in their reflection following the lesson. Student created final complex definition. Extension activity – students can look for current events that highlight one of the attributes of the democracy contained within their own definition OR bring in their own credible sources quotes to further extend the definition throughout the year.

<p>“Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal.”</p> <p>Aristotle</p>	<p>“Democracy... is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder; and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike.”</p> <p>Plato</p>	<p>“Democracy and socialism have nothing in common but one word, equality. But notice the difference: while democracy seeks equality in liberty, socialism seeks equality in restraint and servitude.”</p> <p>Alexis de Tocqueville</p>
<p>“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.”</p> <p>Franklin D. Roosevelt</p>	<p>“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”</p> <p>Franklin D. Roosevelt</p>	<p>“Democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man.”</p> <p>Ronald Reagan</p>
<p>“The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all.”</p> <p>John F. Kennedy</p>	<p>“It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.”</p> <p>Winston Churchill</p>	<p>“To make democracy work, we must be a nation of participants, not simply observers. One who does not vote has no right to complain.”</p> <p>Louis L'Amour</p>
<p>“The tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy is not so dangerous to the public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy.”</p> <p>Charles de Montesquieu</p>	<p>“Our country's founders cherished liberty, not democracy.”</p> <p>Ron Paul</p>	<p>“Two cheers for Democracy; one because it admits variety, and two because it permits criticism.”</p> <p>E. M. Forster</p>

The pages that follow the Learning Plan Template includes student readings and reading strategy/questions, source(s), handouts, assignment sheet, self-assessment/reflection and a rubric related to this lesson.

<p>“Democracy is still a radical idea in a world where we often confuse images with realities, words with actions.”</p> <p>Hillary Clinton</p>	<p>“A pure democracy is a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person.”</p> <p>James Madison</p>	<p>“Democracy shows not only its power in reforming governments, but in regenerating a race of men and this is the greatest blessing of free governments.”</p> <p>Andrew Jackson</p>
<p>“It is not enough to merely defend democracy. To defend it may be to lose it; to extend it is to strengthen it. Democracy is not property; it is an idea.”</p> <p>Hubert H. Humphrey</p>	<p>“Democracy is necessary to peace and to undermining the forces of terrorism.”</p> <p>Benazir Bhutto</p>	

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Democracy

Take turns reading each quotation aloud to your fellow group members. Continue until you have read all quotations. In the space below, work as a team to write down brief bullet point definitions for each usage of the word “democracy”. All team members need to record the same information. You must write down fifteen words/phrases or more. The more complete the grid, the better prepared you will be for the next part of the process. When we share with the class, please write down any new words mentioned that you do not already have on your list.

Now that you have a long list of words and phrases which are associated with the word “democracy”, please work in your small group to categorize all of these words. You must name between four and five categories and then place every word in the appropriate category. No word can go uncategorized. No category can be named “miscellaneous” or something that holds ones that don’t fit. A word from your list may serve as a category name.

Category 1 Name	Category 2 Name	Category 3 Name	Category 4 Name	Category 5 Name	Category 6 Name

As a group, please consider your categories and then write a definition of the word “democracy” that reflects the author’s connotation using the words from the text and your categories. (Everyone in your group will write the same thing on their paper):

According to the quotes, democracy _____

Now write the dictionary definition of the term democracy – write all possible meanings:

Think: After your classmates share their definitions and the dictionary definition is shared, what is one thing you might consider adding or deleting from your definition?

Now, make improvements on your own to your previous complex definition of democracy adding key ideas provided by your classmates you might have missed earlier:

Copy the definition created by the whole class in the space below:

Brainstorm a list of three things you have already learned about “democracy”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are two questions you have about the concept of “democracy?”

Name: _____ Class: _____

Concept Definition Assessment

Pre-assessment: Define democracy in your own words: _____

Once you have completed the pre-assessment, set this page aside until after the lesson.

Write each definition below:

Dictionary Definition of democracy:	Complex Context Definition of democracy:

What is the difference between the two definitions? _____

How does the dictionary definition help you in understanding this concept? _____

How has the definition derived from the context of the reading helped you in understanding this concept?

What is the disadvantage of only using the dictionary definition? _____

What is the disadvantage of only using the context definition? _____

How does your pre-assessment version of the definition compare to your final definition? _____

Democracy

Take turns reading each quotation aloud to your fellow group members. Continue until you have read all quotations. In the space below, work as a team to write down brief bullet point definitions for each usage of the word “democracy”. All team members need to record the same information. You must write down fifteen words/phrases or more. The more complete the grid, the better prepared you will be for the next part of the process. When we share with the class, please write down any new words mentioned that you do not already have on your list.

No king	People based	change	education	valuable	radical
president	Not communism	peace	liberty	property	conflict
Checks and balances	An idea	Ignorance weakens	Human rights	system	Worth dying for
voters	security	Permits criticism	free	Congress	
equality	Allows variety	Free choice	Pursuit of happiness	representative	

Now that you have a long list of words and phrases which are associated with the word “democracy”, please work in your small group to categorize all of these words. You must name between four and five categories and then place every word in the appropriate category. No word can go uncategorized. No category can be named “miscellaneous” or something that holds ones that don’t fit. A word from your list may serve as a category name.

Category 1 Name	Category 2 Name	Category 3 Name	Category 4 Name	Category 5 Name	Category 6 Name
values	functions	Essential components	Qualities	Weaknesses	
equality	Checks and balances	No king	An idea	ignorance	
liberty	representative	president	Not communism	conflict	
Human rights	system	Permits criticism	radical		
Free(dom)	Voters/elections	Free choice			
Pursuit of happiness	security	Congress			
Worth Dying For		Education			

As a group, please consider your categories and then write a definition of the word “democracy” that reflects the author’s connotation using the words from the text and your categories. (Everyone in your group will write the same thing on their paper):

According to the quotes, democracy (student examples)

. . . is a vision, when at its purest form, society as a whole participates in constantly criticizing and reforming their government to ensure equality and security and by doing so, protecting the people’s unalienable rights

. . . is an institution that is governed by the people that are knowledgeable to protect the people’s rights, create laws, provide security, and secure freedom and equality. Ideally active participation is necessary to ensure these things.

. . . is a type of government that consists of a system of checks and balances in which a variety of people chase liberty, equality, and education. Informed citizens are the key to the success of society.

Write two questions you have about democracy:

Why is it so controversial in the world?

Why must people be educated to get the best out of democracy?

Brainstorm a list of three things you have already learned about democracy:

It is more complicated than I thought

Democracy is slow and inefficient by design

Ignorance hurts democracy