

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

HISTORY
SOCIAL SCIENCE
FRAMEWORK

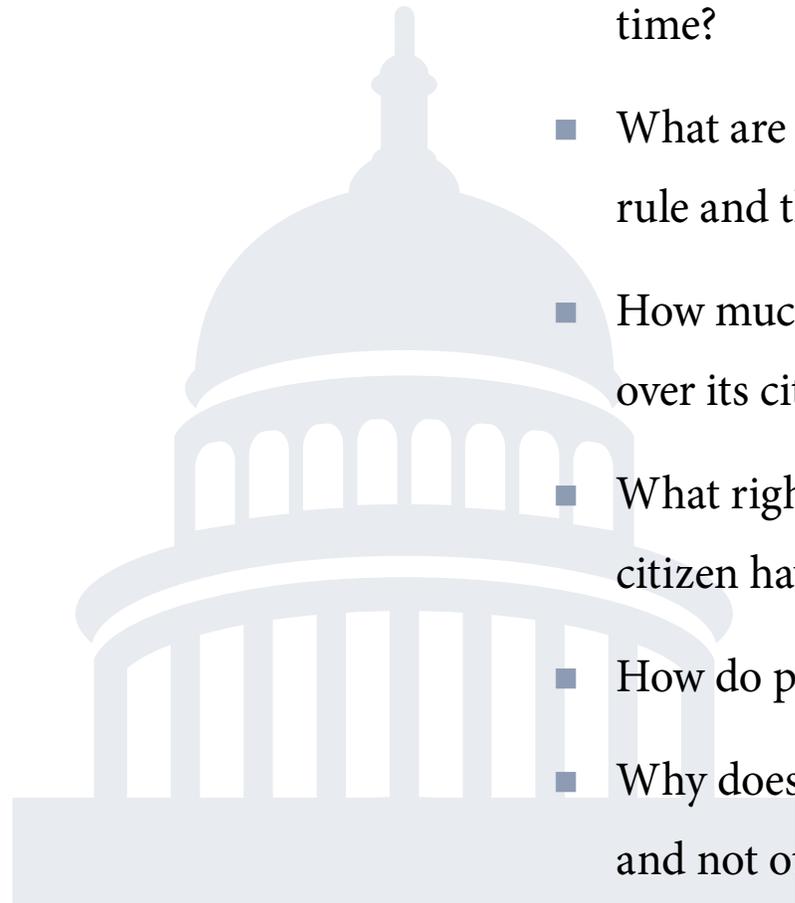
FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

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CHAPTER 17

Principles of American Democracy (One Semester)

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- What are the key elements of representative democracy, and how did they develop over time?
 - What are the trade-offs between majority rule and the protection of individual rights?
 - How much power should government have over its citizens?
 - What rights and responsibilities does a citizen have in a democracy?
 - How do people get elected?
 - Why does the government work sometimes and not others?

■ What problems are posed by representative government, and how can they be addressed?

In this course, students apply knowledge gained in previous years of study to pursue a deeper understanding of American government. Although this course is traditionally taught for a semester, given the importance and breadth of this content area, teachers may want to expand it into a yearlong course. Students consider the role of and necessity for government as they think about **How much power should government have over its citizens?** They consider how government can attain goals sanctioned by the majority while protecting its citizens from the abuse of power by asking **What are the trade-offs between majority rule and the protection of individual rights?** They will review and expand their knowledge of the key elements of a representative form of democracy, such as the idea that the authority to govern resides in its citizens.

Their study will be grounded in the understanding that all citizens have certain inalienable rights such as due process, what to believe, and where and how to live. This course is the culmination of the civic literacy strand of history–social studies that prepares students to vote and to be informed, skilled, and engaged participants in civic life.

As this course progresses, students will learn about the responsibilities they have or will soon have as voting members of an informed electorate. They consider the following question: **What rights and responsibilities does a citizen have in a democracy?** They will learn about the benefits to democracy of an electorate willing to compromise, practice genuine tolerance and respect toward others, and actively engage in an ethical and civil society. They will discover that all citizens have the power to elect and change their representatives—a power protected by free speech, thought, and assembly guarantees. They will learn that all citizens deserve equal treatment under the law, safeguarded from arbitrary or discriminatory treatment by the government. Students will review how these benefits developed in history, such as the broadening of the franchise from white males with property, to all white males, then to men and women of color, and finally, to eighteen- to twenty-one-year-olds.

Students will learn how the government works and how it is different from

other systems of governance. Students will examine both the constitutional basis for and current examples of the fact that members of the government are themselves subject to the law; students also learn about the vital importance of an independent judiciary. As they study the electoral process, they will consider the question **How do people get elected?** In their study of the institutions of state, local, and federal governments, they ask **Why does the government work sometimes and not others?** They will compare the democratic system with authoritarian regimes of the past and today to understand the unique nature of American constitutional democracy.

Finally, students will conclude their study of American government by examining both the historical and modern problems of American democracy. In this final unit, students can investigate a variety of topics, such as the fight against corruption by monopolies or moneyed elites during the Progressive Era, the tension between national security and civil liberties—especially after 9/11, the battle over health care reform in the Clinton and Obama administrations, and efforts to promote environmental protection and combat climate change.

Fundamental Principles of American Democracy

- Why do we need a government?
- How much power should government have over its citizens?
- What do the terms *liberty* and *equality* mean, and how do they relate to each other?
- What are the dangers of a democratic system?
- What are the trade-offs between majority rule and individual rights?

The semester begins with an examination of the ideas that have shaped the American democratic system. Students can start their studies by reviewing early experiments in democracy, such as the contributions of ancient Greek philosophers, direct but limited democracy in ancient Athens, and representative democracy in the Roman republic (and why it eventually failed). They explore the influence of Enlightenment ideas upon the Constitutional Framers' support of republicanism, content that was first introduced to students in the seventh grade and continued throughout the tenth- and eleventh-grade curriculum, focusing on

key ideas such as John Locke’s social contract and his concept of liberty and Charles-Louis Montesquieu’s separation of powers.

To organize their study of this topic, teachers may have students consider questions to determine the role of government: **Why do we need a government? How much power should government have over its citizens? What do the terms *liberty* and *equality* mean, and how do they relate to each other? What are the dangers of a democratic system?** Through close reading and analysis of the Declaration of Independence, the *Federalist Papers* and the anti-Federalist response, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, students analyze the tension and balance between promotion of the public good and the protection of individual liberties.

The *Federalist Papers* explicate major constitutional concepts such as separation of powers, checks and balances, and enumerated powers as well as the Framers’ understanding of human nature and the political process. In particular, *Federalist Paper Number 10* explains the role of organized interest, *Federalist Paper Number 51* outlines the rationale for checks and balances and separation of powers, and *Federalist Paper Number 78* centers on the role of the judiciary. Students should understand how these ideas shaped the American constitutional system and democratic behavior.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote observations about these topics that students may find relevant and engaging. Students should be encouraged to construct compelling questions about these ideas and their application by using both historical and contemporary issues. In so doing, students should use deliberative processes and evidence-based reasoning in making judgments and drawing conclusions. Similarly, students might participate in mock ratification debates; construct writings or classroom presentations articulating arguments, claims, and evidence from multiple sources; or make classroom presentations.

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens in a Democracy

- What rights and responsibilities does a citizen have in a democracy?
- What does it mean to be a citizen?

- How can citizens improve a democracy?

After reviewing the fundamental principles of American democratic thought and how democratic ideas and practices have developed historically, students focus their study on the question **What rights and responsibilities does a citizen have in a democracy?** Using the principles addressed in the first unit—the tension between public good and individual liberty—students examine the individual liberties outlined in the Bill of Rights.

Teachers review the origins of each of the individual freedoms and then prompt their students to consider how certain liberties, such as the freedom of speech, religion, or privacy, have been and may be restricted in a democratic system. In addition to political liberties, students explore individual and societal economic, social, and cultural freedoms, including property rights, labor rights, children’s rights, patents, and copyright, as well as rights necessary to basic well-being, such as rights to subsistence, education, and health. They identify those rights that pertain to all persons in a democracy, citizens and non-citizens alike.

After studying the freedoms citizens enjoy in American democracy, students then consider the path to citizenship and its obligations—such as serving on a jury, paying taxes, and obeying the law—in an attempt to answer the question **What does it mean to be a citizen?** Students learn that democracies depend on an actively engaged citizenry—individuals who fully participate in the responsibilities of citizenship (such as voting, serving in the military, or regular public service)—for their long-term survival. To promote civic engagement and deepen student understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in this unit, teachers may employ structured group discussions, simulations, classroom debates, and civics-based service-learning activities, designed to provide students with concrete answers to the question **How can citizens improve a democracy?**

These activities can help students explore the multiple ways in which citizens engage with their communities. Students may also participate in classroom mock trials; visit courtrooms; serve as poll workers; participate in voter registration; simulate or visit city council meetings; conduct projects to identify, analyze, and address a community problem; and participate in service-learning at a local hospital, shelter, arts organization, library, or environmental project to study how to address community needs. When students engage with the community in these

sorts of projects, teachers should be sure to have students connect their community service activity with their government classroom curriculum. They should answer questions, for example, such as Where in the Constitution does it connect to the courtroom or voting booth experience? Where in the Constitution does it connect to rights guaranteed to all persons? What is the citizen's role in ensuring these basic rights and protections to all? In addition, students may gain a better understanding of the importance of citizenship by observing a naturalization ceremony, interviewing or speaking to a recently naturalized student or parent, or by speaking with legislators or other public officials concerning issues and public policy concerns.

Fundamental Principles of Civil Society

- What is a civil society, and why do we want to have one?
- What are the limits of individual liberty?
- What are the dangers of majority rule?
- What is the role of religion in a democracy?
- How do government actions impact civil society?

The rights that students learned about in the first two units can exist only in a system dedicated to their preservation. After considering the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the United States, students next explore the core principles and values of a civil society by asking **What is a civil society, and why do we want to have one?** Once again, they return to the tension between majority rule and individual freedom, by considering the importance of free association in a democratic society and the power that such associations can have in fostering a civil society and in influencing the U.S. government. Students consider **What are the limits of individual liberty and the dangers of majority rule?** Students review the historical relationship between religion and government, seeking connections between the free exercise of religion outlined in the First Amendment and how that has fostered diversity in response to the question **What is the role of religion in a democracy?** They also explore the responsibility of the government to protect its citizens and promote social order.

The Three Branches of Government as Established by the U.S. Constitution

- Why does the Constitution both grant power and take it away?
- What is the most powerful branch of government?
- Why does it take so long for government to act?

Deriving its power from the governed and the principles of a civil society, the U.S. Constitution delineates the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of the federal government and the relationship between the federal government and the states. Students begin their in-depth study of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches by considering the question **Why does the Constitution both grant power and take it away?** Students focus their study on Articles I, II, and III of the Constitution to both clarify the individual responsibilities of each branch and, at the same time, detail the connections between branches and the system of separation of powers and checks and balances. Students do this in order to highlight the Constitution’s dual purpose—to enumerate power and to limit the abuse of that power.

As students investigate the individual powers of each branch (and the checks upon those powers), they develop their own answer to the question **What is the most powerful branch of government?** by using both historical and current evidence to support their interpretation. Throughout their study, students should be encouraged to investigate the issue of government gridlock, using the question **Why does it take so long for government to act?**

Article I: The Legislative Branch

In this unit, students examine the work of Congress. Article I of the Constitution has the longest list of enumerated powers of all of the three branches of government. Students can construct a pie chart of the major responsibilities designated to the legislative branch of government, filling in the other two branches as they get to them. They may also explore how this balance of power has shifted over time.

After receiving an overview of the mechanics of legislation, specific powers, eligibility and length of terms of members of Congress, and an introduction to current legislative leaders and their current representatives, students consider case



studies of recent issues. They do research on topics such as health care or labor law reform, economic stabilization policies, immigration policy, environmental protection laws, and antiterrorism legislation in order to answer a variety of questions, such as **What can Congress do? Why is it so hard to get a law passed? Who gets elected to Congress, and who does**

not? Who has power in Congress? Besides members of the House and Senate, who else can affect the legislative process? Which house of Congress is the most democratic? Which house is the most effective? How can individual citizens actually participate in the legislative process? They may consider how a topic is affected through the committee system, lobbying, the media, and special interests.

Students can examine the complex, important, and, sometimes controversial relationship between legislators (and other government officials) and professional lobbyists who advocate their clients' interests. Students can research the different types of organizations and individuals who hire lobbyists (including corporations, unions, nonprofit organizations, and private citizens), the benefits of an active and engaged lobbying effort (such as protection of the interests of views not in the majority, and access to experts in a given field), and the potential for corruption (such as those clients willing to buy access and influence, clients whose interests are directly opposed to the public interest, or lobbyists who represent their own needs over their clients').

Finally, students study how individual citizens can inform, gain access to, and influence the legislative policymaking process. Students conduct research, evaluate resources, and balance predicted outcomes and consequences to create position papers on proposed legislation, present oral arguments in favor of or in opposition to specific federal legislation, write letters or e-mails stating and supporting positions on pending legislation, engage in a simulated congressional hearing or session, or design campaigns for virtual candidates for office.

Article II: The Executive Branch

In this unit, students document the evolution of the presidency and the growth of executive powers in modern history. Like their study of Article I, students first develop a basic understanding of how the president is elected, the requirements for the office, how a president can be removed, and the specific executive powers enumerated in Article II. Teachers then turn to case studies to give students the opportunity to analyze presidential campaigns, the handling of international crises, and the scope and limits of presidential power (both foreign and domestic) in depth. Close reading of and comparing State of the Union addresses across administrations, analyzing factors that influence presidential public approval ratings as well as the successes and failures of presidential policies, and using role play, simulation, and interactive learning can illuminate the process of presidential decision making.

Grade Twelve Classroom Example: The Executive Branch

Ms. Costa's twelfth-grade government class targets its study of the executive branch by constructing a multimedia museum exhibit on presidential powers. Ms. Costa divides the class into groups of three and four, assigning each group a different president to research. Using resources in the library, U.S. history texts, and recommended Internet sites (such as the National Archives and Presidential Libraries, the Library of Congress, and federal agencies, such as the Department of State and the CIA), students briefly review the administration of their assigned president in order to select what they believe to be the most important event or act of the presidency—the one thing that best defines the president's use (or abuse) of executive power.

After selecting the event or act, each group designs a virtual museum exhibit on the president, using the event or act as the organizing feature of the display. Students use historical images, documents, artifacts, and (if available) film clips, media reports from the era, and historical accounts describing the event and the role of the individual president. Each group posts its display in the class's online museum on the Executive Branch, with bibliographic citations, original content describing each artifact, and a written argument explaining why this event or act best symbolizes the administration of the president assigned to the group, citing specific evidence from their research to

Example *(continued)*

support their claims. Students also provide oral presentations about their research at a special open house for parents and school leaders, which are recorded for inclusion with the online museum exhibit.

CA HSS Content Standard: PAD 12.4

CA HSS Analysis Skills (9–12): Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View 4, Historical Interpretation 1

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.11–12.7, 9, WHST.11–12.1, 6, SL.11–12.1b, 4

CA ELD Standards: ELD.PI.11–12.1, 6a, 9, 10a, 11a

As students study the executive branch, certain guiding questions can connect case studies and discrete examples: **How has the role of the presidency expanded? What are the factors that seem to help presidents win election? How does the president interact with the other branches of government, and how has that changed over time?**

Article III: The Judiciary

To begin their study of the judiciary, students consider the powers of this branch as outlined in Article III, the eligibility and length of service of judges, and the process of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices. Exclusive to the U.S. Supreme Court is the sole authority to definitively interpret the Constitution and the ability to use the supremacy clause.

Unlike the other two branches, however, members of the federal judiciary are not elected, leading some students to ask **How are Supreme Court justices selected? Why do they have unlimited terms? Is an unelected Supreme Court really democratic?** Students can examine controversies over the selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices and federal judges and the nature of an independent judiciary through structured classroom discussions and deliberations. In the next unit, the constitutional explanation of the judiciary will provide the context for the high court’s more notable rulings and shifts.

Interpreting the Constitution: The Work of the U.S. Supreme Court

- What is judicial review, and how does it work?
- What makes a law or an action unconstitutional, and does that determination ever change?

The courts play a unique role among the three branches in that the Framers intended the courts to be insulated from public opinion in order to independently interpret the laws. Students begin their study of the work of the Court by reviewing *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), to answer the question **What is judicial review, and how does it work?** Students concentrate on how the courts have interpreted the Bill of Rights over time, especially themes such as due process of law and equal protection as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment, by answering the question **What makes a law or an action unconstitutional, and does that determination ever change?**

Whenever possible, students should learn through illustrations of the kinds of controversies that have arisen because of challenges or differing interpretations of the Bill of Rights. For example, the unit can be organized around case studies of specific issues, such as the First Amendment's cases on free speech, free press, religious liberty, separation of church and state, academic freedom, and the right of assembly or the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirements and protections against unreasonable search and seizure.

Supreme Court and other federal court decisions may be debated or simulated in the classroom, following readings of original source materials, including excerpts from the cases of *Texas v. Johnson* (flag burning), *West Virginia v. Barnette* (flag salute in schools), *Tinker v. Des Moines* (symbolic speech in schools), *New York Times Co. v. United States* (press prior restraint), *Engel v. Vitale* (school prayer), and *Mapp v. Ohio* (search and seizure). These cases once again reflect tensions between individual rights and societal interests; they also illustrate how each case involved real people and how the present laws resulted from the debates, trials, and sacrifices of ordinary people.

Grade Twelve Classroom Example: Judicial Review

Mr. Singh's twelfth-grade government class is learning about landmark Supreme Court case law through a structured discussion strategy. After explaining the concepts of judicial review and precedent and reviewing the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, Mr. Singh divides the class into pairs and assigns them the task of judicial review—to analyze historical case law using precedent to make a decision based on evidence. Mr. Singh has organized a select group of important cases according to the appropriate freedom, grouping cases related to free speech together (such as *Texas v. Johnson* and *Tinker v. Des Moines*), others related to freedom of religion (such as *Engel v. Vitale*), search and seizure (including *Mapp v. Ohio* and *New Jersey v. TLO*), and equal protection (such as *Brown v. Board of Education* or *Obergefell v. Hodges*).

As Mr. Singh introduces each case, he provides a short overview of the dispute, which students summarize in their notes. He then directs students to first write their decision, based upon their interpretation of the relevant amendment to the Constitution and, as their study continues, language from previous decisions. After both partners have written their initial decisions, they discuss their reasoning with each other, and Mr. Singh randomly asks students to explain the decision and reasoning of their partners. Once he has collected responses from a handful of pairs, he shares a short excerpt from the actual decision with language from both the actual decision and the dissent. Students take note of this language, as it is used as precedent in subsequent case analysis.

As a culminating assessment, Mr. Singh asks his students to decide three fictional cases, using excerpts from relevant precedent from their collection of Supreme Court decisions.

CA HSS Content Standard: PAD 12.5

CA HSS Analysis Skills (9–12): Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View 4

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.11–12.1, 2, 3, 8, WHST.11–12.2, 9, SL.11–12.1

CA ELD Standards: ELD.PI.11–12.1, 3, 6b, 10a, 10b

In examining the evolution of civil rights under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, students can draw upon their knowledge of the Civil War and the passage of the Reconstruction-era amendments. Students may

examine the changing interpretation of civil rights law from the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896 to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954. Although it is not possible to analyze every decision that marked the shift of the Supreme Court from 1896 to 1954, critical reading of the *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, *Korematsu v. United States*, *Mendez v. Westminster School District* (U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, 1947), and *Sweatt v. Painter* decisions remind students that racial discrimination affected not only African Americans but other groups as well, including Asian Americans and Hispanics.

Subsequent Court cases addressed the rights of women (*Reed v. Reed*, 1971), American Indians (*Morton v. Mancari*, 1974) and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003, and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). The *Brown* decision and the cases of *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* provide students with the opportunity to deliberate and debate whether affirmative action is an appropriate way to address inequality. School-related cases of *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969), *Fricke v. Lynch* (1980), *New Jersey v. T.L.O* (1985), *Henkle v. Gregory* (2001), or the 2013 Resolution Agreement announced by the United States Department of Education in *Student v. Arcadia Unified School District* offer additional perspectives relevant to students on free speech, privacy, nondiscrimination, and civil rights for students in schools.

Students may use materials from these cases and others to analyze majority and minority opinions; participate in classroom courts; write simple briefs extracting the facts, decisions, arguments, reasoning, and holding of the case or editorial pieces stating their views; and using evidence to support their conclusions about the decision.

The Electoral Process

- How do you get elected?
- Who gets elected, and who does not?
- What impact do polls, political parties, and PACs have upon elections?
- How can I get involved in a campaign?
- Why should I vote?

In today's society, individuals participate as citizens by voting, jury service, volunteerism, serving as members of advisory bodies, in military service, in community organizations, and by engagement in the electoral and political process. In this unit, students study the role of political parties, the nomination process for presidential candidates, including the primary system, and the role of polls, campaign advertising and financing, the Electoral College, and methods of direct democracy utilized in California and various states. They do this by considering the following questions: **How do you get elected? Who gets elected, and who does not?** and **What impact do polls, political parties, and PACs have upon elections?**



Students also learn about how citizens participate in the political process through voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing legal challenges, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, and running for office. Because most students will be eligible to vote for the first time in a year of taking this course, questions like **Why should I vote?** and **How can I get involved in a**

campaign? seem particularly relevant. This unit lends itself to utilizing real-world examples, case studies, and debates while students address the material.

Students can study current elections and campaigns, take part in the Secretary of State's Poll Worker program, and serve as campaign volunteers during an election. Students can also analyze proposed initiatives, controversial issues surrounding campaign financing, voter identification laws, redistricting, and negative campaign ads. To learn more about how the election process affects them and their education, students might be encouraged to study a school board race, candidate positions on education, or a local school bond or parcel tax campaign.

As a practical matter, students should know how to register to vote—both online and by mail—what the requirements are for registration; how to request, fill out, and return an absentee ballot; what to expect on election day; how to find a polling place; and where and how to access and understand the voter information pamphlet and other materials to become an informed voter. While this

information may vary from county to county, students preparing to vote can go to the Secretary of State’s Web page at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/> as well as to their local registrar of voters to explore these topics. Teachers may want to consider an activity where students go through the above steps in order to help prepare them for the exercise of their rights as voting adults. Students should explore the effect of voter turnout on the democratic process. What difference does it make how large and diverse a proportion of the potential electorate actually participates in any given election?

Federalism: Different Levels of Government

- Why are powers divided among different levels of government?
- What level of government is the most important to me—local, state, tribal, or federal?
- What level of government is the most powerful—local, state, tribal, or federal?

In this unit, students analyze the principles of federalism. They should identify key provisions of the U.S. Constitution that established the federal system including enumerated powers, Article I restrictions on states’ powers, and the Ninth and Tenth Amendments. Teachers can emphasize how power and responsibilities are divided among national, state, local, and tribal governments and ask students to consider this question: **Why are powers divided among different levels of government?** Students should understand that local governments are established by the states, and tribal governments are recognized by constitutional provisions and federal law. The following questions help students consider the central principles: What are the major responsibilities of the various levels, and what are their revenue sources? What kinds of issues does each level of government handle?

At the federal level, examples might include regulation of interstate commerce and international trade, national defense, foreign policy, and antiterrorism, especially with the expansion of presidential and vice-presidential powers after the 9/11 attacks. Students can come to understand the scope of presidential power and decision making through case studies such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bosnian intervention, the formulation and passage of the Great Society legislative

program, the War Powers Act, and congressional authorizations of force in the Gulf War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Students should also identify typical responsibilities of state government, including education, infrastructure such as roads and bridges, criminal and civil law, and regulation of business. The state also oversees and regulates local governments and the services provided such as fire and police protection, sanitation, local public schools, public transportation, housing, and zoning and land use.

Nevertheless, what happens when there is overlapping jurisdiction? Matters such as education, health care, transportation, and housing often have multiple government agencies regulating and funding them. Students may explore questions such as these: How is public policy made at these various levels? How do regulatory departments and agencies function, and how do state and local regulatory agencies differ from those at the federal level? Students should examine the important realms of law and the courts (for example, criminal justice, family law, environmental protection, and education) that remain largely under state and county control.

Finally, students should explore the ways people interact with and influence state government and local government. **What level of government is the most important to me—local, state, tribal, or federal?** and **What level of government is the most powerful—local, state, tribal, or federal?** Lawyers, judges, or public officials can be invited into the classroom to participate in simulations and activities concerning the justice and court systems or municipal government. Examples of local government may be the school board, city council, county supervisors, and superior courts. Besides simulation, other options with more relevance for participation in democracy include participation in campaigns, voter registrations, and voting drives, as well as assistance in writing policy for local and state agencies. Students may attend and participate in public hearings. Students can be assigned project-based learning in which they identify and analyze a community problem in terms of its causes, effects, and policy implications; propose solutions; and take civic actions to implement those solutions, including the creation of evidence-based and multimedia presentations.

The Fourth Estate: The Role of the Media in American Public Life

- To what extent are the press and the media fulfilling a watchdog role?
- Do media outlets provide enough relevant information about government and politics to allow citizens to vote and participate in a well-informed way?
- How has the Internet revolution impacted journalism, and what are its effects on the coverage of public affairs and current issues?

Students also scrutinize the current role of the press in American democracy. Students may be presented with a series of compelling questions about the press (and its changing role in American political life over time) and be encouraged to form their own questions. **To what extent are the press and the media fulfilling a watchdog role? Do media outlets provide enough relevant information about government and politics to allow citizens to vote and participate in a well-informed way? How has the Internet revolution impacted journalism, and what are its effects on the coverage of public affairs and current issues?** How do elected officials and candidates for public office utilize the mass media to further their goals? Students may begin to answer these questions with a brief review of the First Amendment’s freedom of speech and of the press clauses and key U.S. Supreme Court press cases such as *Near v. Minnesota* (1931), *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* (1964) and *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1988).

Students should also discuss the responsibility of citizens to be informed about public issues by using the various media wisely. Students can engage in current-event and multimedia projects that would enable them to explore issues. For example, students may select a current issue of interest and research it by using multiple print and electronic media sources and analyze factual differences, bias, point of view and conclusions of each source. Based on their research, students could then write an evidence-based opinion piece on the issue.



Comparative Governments and the Challenges of Democracy

- Do citizens have rights that the state must respect; if so, what are they?
- What is the role of civil dissent and when is it necessary?
- Why have some revolutions been followed by purges of dissidents, mass arrests of political opponents, murder of “class enemies,” suppression of free speech, abolition of private property, and attacks on religious groups?
- Why do authoritarian governments spy on their citizens and prevent them from emigrating? Why do they jail or harass critics of their government? Why is only one party allowed in an authoritarian state? Why do ordinary people risk their lives to flee or transform authoritarian states?
- How do individual countries combat terrorist organizations that do not recognize international norms or boundaries? How can individual citizens or nongovernmental organizations improve civil society? How can multinational alliances work together to combat climate change?

This unit begins with a review of the major political and economic systems encountered by students during their previous years’ studies (particularly in seventh, eighth, tenth, and eleventh grades): feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, capitalism, monarchy, and parliamentary and constitutional liberal democracies in order to understand the historical context for both democratic and autocratic systems. Students can study the philosophies of these systems and the ways in which they influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.

Teachers may emphasize that most nations combine aspects of different philosophies. When studying the variety of forms that democracies take, students can compare systems of shared powers—such as the United States where power is shared among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government—with parliamentary systems.

Students should also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, co-federal, and unitary systems of government. Students can also examine how some Western democracies have “mixed” systems of capitalism and state socialism

and contemporary politics has been marked by movements toward more market-based systems in the developing world and democratic socialism in the industrialized world.

Students examine nondemocratic and tyrannical forms of government, the conditions that gave rise to them in certain historical contexts, and the ways in which they functioned in countries like Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia, and Iraq. Students may also define and identify illegitimate power and explore how dictators have gained and held onto office. The fundamental components that typically distinguish democracies from dictatorships include control of the media, lack of political and personal freedoms, corruption of public officials, lack of governmental transparency, and the lack of citizens' access to changing the government. Case studies should be included in this unit in order to consider the economic, social, and political conditions that often give rise to tyranny. **Does such a government rest on the consent of the governed? Do citizens have rights that the state must respect; if so, what are they? What is the role of civil dissent, and when is it necessary?**

To answer these questions, students refer to aspects of democracy, such as tolerance for dissent, political equality, engaged participation, majority rule with protection of minority rights, the underpinnings of civil society, and individual freedom. They can also explore the importance of the rule of law and the unique role of an independent judiciary in a democracy, the need for civilian control of military and police, and the desirability of popular petitions, rallies, and other forms of participation.

Recent events can be incorporated in analytical projects and group debates and discussions and deliberations. For example, students may develop analysis papers on the success of democratic movements based on the above criteria in various countries such as Afghanistan, China, Zimbabwe, or Argentina. Learning about different forms of nonelected governments can help students understand their antithesis, democracy, and the relative success of democratic reforms in places like Botswana and Costa Rica. Further analysis into the characteristics of nondemocratic systems may highlight the dangers of concentrating power in a small group of elites, widespread governmental corruption, a lack of due process, and demagoguery. Such characteristics can be seen in both official nation-states (such as Syria under Assad) or in nongovernmental terrorist groups (such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State).

Students can use what they learned in grade ten about communism, the Russian Revolution, the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin, and the expansion of Soviet power after World War II to recall the components of nonelected government in twentieth-century Russia. Alternatively, students can review what they learned in grade ten about the development of fascist dictatorships in Germany and Italy and how they systematically eliminated civil liberties, subverted the role of the military, and quashed political dissent.

Students can also address authoritarian regimes in recent times and places like Cuba, Laos, Vietnam, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, and China. Their similarities and differences, including the need for control of information, and the difficulties such regimes face in maintaining control of information given modern technology, such as the Internet and cell phones, may be the focus. Authoritarian governments in these contexts often come to power because they are supported by groups that believe that revolution or radical change can reform their societies.

Through this, students can study the concept of the total state in which the government, the military, the educational system, all social organizations, the media, and the economy are controlled by the regime. They may also consider the challenges of sustaining these kinds of governments—both within, from dissidents and without, from the Internet. Students should come away with both an understanding of the contexts in which different kinds of governments arise and also with a sense of the value of a free press, open educational institutions, free labor unions, and free speech in democratic regimes.

To deepen their understanding of authoritarian regimes, students should also examine the condition of human rights: **Why have some revolutions been followed by purges of dissidents, mass arrests of political opponents, murder of “class enemies,” suppression of free speech, abolition of private property, and attacks on religious groups? What are fundamental human rights are widely recognized throughout the world community? Why does denial of human rights so often accompany a violent change of government? Why do many artists and intellectuals defect to nonauthoritarian nations? Why do authoritarian governments spy on their citizens and prevent them from emigrating? Why do they jail or harass critics of their government? Why is only one party allowed in an authoritarian state? Why do ordinary people risk their lives to flee or transform authoritarian states?** Students can analyze why

communism collapsed and study the governments that arose in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Students should also examine international efforts to protect human rights (e.g., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, jurisdiction of the World Court and International Criminal Court) and current relevant issues such as protection of civilian populations during wartime, oppression of minority groups, and forced removal or genocide. Students can read and analyze the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and compare it to the 1776 Bill of Rights, noting similarities and differences for additional discussion (e.g., group rights versus individual rights).

Attention also should be given to historical and contemporary movements that overthrew tyrannical governments and/or movements toward democratic government in countries such as Spain, Poland, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, the Philippines, South Korea, Guatemala, El Salvador, South Africa, Turkey, and Egypt.

However, as each case illustrates, democracy is a process and must be understood on a spectrum and in its own geopolitical and temporal context. Questions like **How do government actions impact civil society?** can engage students in this unit. Teachers may conduct structured discussions in which students deliberate on issues that might impact America's vision of a civil society, such as globalization, international and internal migrations, environmental change, or technological innovation. They can consider the degree to which given movements were successful in establishing democratic governments. Students can also be assigned multimedia or writing projects on specific movements and draw evidence-based conclusions on their success.

Finally, students should understand the range of actors beyond the nation-state that influence today's world including nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and international and regional alliances, economic bodies, and associations. Contemporary problems such as the environment, economics, and terrorism cross state borders and demand a different kind of national and international community than the world of the twentieth century. Students can consider questions such as **How do individual countries combat terrorist organizations that do not recognize international norms**

or boundaries? What challenges do efforts to combat nonstate terrorist organizations create for the operation of international humanitarian law? How can individual citizens or nongovernmental organizations improve civil society? How can multinational alliances work together to combat climate change?

Compelling Questions and Contemporary Issues

This course provides opportunities for students to formulate compelling and supporting questions and analyze tensions in a constitutional democracy between key concepts and ideals such as majority rule and individual rights, liberty, and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; and the relationship of religion and government.

This course also provides opportunities for students to discuss, analyze, and construct writings on contemporary local, national, and international issues; participate in simulations of governmental processes; and apply what they have learned in addressing real-world problems. Opportunities may be offered inside and outside the classroom. Structured classroom discussions and writing activities challenge students to discuss current events and issues of their choosing by analyzing various perspectives, researching causes and effects, evaluating policy options, and stating and supporting reasoned and evidence-based opinions. These activities can also focus on the significance of elections and the roles that students might play as voters engaged in electoral politics.

Topics for discussion may include technology (such as nuclear proliferation or the effect of the Internet on the political process or on intellectual property), the environment (such as global warming, preservation of wildlife, or alternative energy sources), human rights (such as the use of torture, or immigration and refugee policies), politics (such as tax policy, voting and representation, campaign financing, or the fight against government corruption and efforts to improve government competence), foreign policy (such as responses to terrorism, or standards for foreign intervention), health (such as childhood obesity, health care reform, or responses to the spread of AIDS), the law (such as the constitutional scope and limits of presidential power, relations between law enforcement and the communities they protect, judicial independence, racism and sexism,

discrimination against members of the LGBT community, or protection of civil rights in times of war or national crisis) and economic issues (such as government regulation of markets, labor laws, free trade and fair trade, or debt relief to developing countries).

In debating, discussing, or writing about these issues, students consider the local, national, and global aspects.

Teachers encourage students to consider multiple perspectives that stretch across political, geographic, and class divides. Throughout the course, incorporating a range of activities and simulations of governmental processes will help students understand that being an active citizen means applying their knowledge beyond the textbook. They will have an opportunity to practice participating in community issues and civic dialogue. For example, when studying the role of Congress or a city council, students can participate in mock legislative hearings and debates; when studying the courts, they may take part in mock trials, moot-court simulations, or conflict-resolution mediations; or when studying international issues they can take part in model United Nations activities.

In addition, participating in elections, volunteering as poll workers, taking part in school governance and extracurricular activities, competing in civic-writing activities, and conducting service-learning projects with civic outcomes provide students with hands-on experiences with the political process and government.

Among the persistent issues facing the United States and California, in particular, is how to balance individual rights and liberties with the common good in matters related to land as well as water, air, and other natural resources. Students examine case studies that embody the struggle to find this balance and consider the spectrum of factors that influence policy decisions about natural resources and natural systems (see appendix G for Environmental Principle V). Students learn that many conflicts over environmental issues result from competing perspectives involving individual rights and the common good, an illustrative example of the reciprocity between rights and obligations. (See Education and the Environment Initiative curriculum unit “This Land Is Our Land,” 12.2.)



The course may culminate in an activity in which students analyze a local, state, national, or international political or social problem or issue. Teachers may assign a research paper or a multimedia project in which students analyze a problem or issue; consider its civic, economic, geographic, and/or historical dimensions; research it by examining multiple sources and points of view; evaluate the sources; critique and construct claims and conclusions based on the evidence; and present and defend their conclusions. Alternately, the activity might be a civics-based service-learning project in which students identify local problems or issues of concern; research and analyze them in terms of causes and effects and multiple points of view; identify, discuss, and evaluate public policies relating to the issues, including interacting with public officials; and construct a project to address it or a multimedia presentation to educate about it.