



Teacher's Guide

What is Democracy? Why Democracy?

Part 1

Based on the NCERT Curriculum for Standard IX



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

What is Democracy? Why Democracy? | Teacher's Guide (1/4)

Part 1

Class IX
Board – CBSE
Subject – Social Science
Textbook – Democratic Politics- I for class IX (NCERT)
Chapter 2 – What is Democracy? Why Democracy?
Number of parts – 04
Length – 50-55 minutes (estimated, for a class of 35-40 students)

Section I – What are we going to learn and why is it important?

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Understand the need to define democracy and revisit its definition over time.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Analyse examples of different countries and understand the need for a descriptive definition of democracy.

Key Terms

Democracy	Dictatorship	Monarchy
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Materials needed

- Projector to show pictures of politicians
- Print outs of activity sheets

Section II – How are we going to learn?

1. Recap of the previous chapter

Time: 5-7 minutes

Facilitation notes:

- Let's do a quick recap of stories about a few countries that we learnt in the previous chapter.

Additional Note: The recap of the following countries and rulers will set context for defining democracy.



Image 1 Source: [Wikipedia](#)



Image 2 Source: [Free World Maps](#)

- 'Discuss with the person sitting next to you and with a raise of hand, tell me which country this is? And who is the person next to the map?'*
(Show the above 2 images and take a few answers after 30 seconds)
 - Likely Response - 'The country is Poland and the person is Lech Walesa-the former President of Poland'
- 'How did Walesa become the President of Poland? Was he a dictator? Was he elected?'*
 - Likely Response - He was elected by the people of Poland
- 'Was Poland under Walesa a democratic country?'*
 - Likely Response - Yes



Image 3 Source: [Wikipedia](#)



Image 4 Source: [Wikimedia](#)

- *'Discuss with the person sitting next to you and with a raise of hand tell me which country this is? And who is the person next to the map?'*
(Show the above 2 images and take a few answers after 30 seconds)
 - Likely Response - Chile and she is Michelle Bachelet - former president of Chile
- *'Great! So how did she come to power? Was she a military dictator? Was she elected?'*
 - Likely Response - She was elected by the people of Chile
- *'And was Chile under Michelle Bachelet a democracy?'*
 - Likely Response – Yes

Conclusion:

- *'So looking at the trend here, for a country to be democratic what is the basic requirement?'*
 - Likely Response - for the ruler/head of the country to be elected by the people of the country.
- *'Excellent! But is that definition sufficient? In both of these cases, we knew the story behind it and we had known that the people before them were dictators, but what if we don't know anything much about the country, except a couple of facts. Would we still be able to distinguish between a democratic country and a non-democratic country?'*

2. Identifying a Democracy

Activity: Is that a democracy?

Time: 12-13 minutes

Materials Needed: Activity sheets for every group available in appendix 1 and 2

Facilitation Notes:

- *‘I have given you factual statements about a few countries. Based only on that information, you have to guess whether the country is a democracy or not. All these examples are based on real countries but you do not have to guess the name of the country. We will be discussing that after this activity. There are 3 options you can categorize them into - Yes, No, Maybe/Maybe not. ‘Yes’ which means that it is a democracy; ‘No’ - Means that it is not a democracy and ‘Maybe/Maybe Not’ means it might or might not be a democracy. Whichever category you put them into, you should have a good reason why you put it there. So discuss and debate it amongst your group members. Take 10 minutes to do it. You have 9 countries to categorise. Any doubts?’*

Instructions for the facilitator:

1. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students.
2. Give each group the following 9 statements in separate strips (printed/handwritten) given in Appendix 1, and the 3 headings given in Appendix 2.

Country A has been ruled by the same person for the last 18 years and there are discussions of amending the Constitution to increase the number of years that a person can rule.
In Country B, the cabinet was supervised by a National Security Council which was dominated by military officers.
Country C allows only candidates selected by the ruling party to stand for elections.
In Country D, women had the right to vote and stand for elections for the first time in 2015.
Country E does not have a written Constitution.
In Country F, the people held a nationwide protest against the government for not upholding its promises.
Country G has one of the highest unsolved journalists’ murder cases in the world, and no action has been taken against the crimes.
Until 1954, in Country H, students in schools and colleges were separated based on the colour of their skin.
Country I recently held elections, where voters could vote for only one candidate as he/she is the only person standing for elections.

- While the groups are discussing this, the 3 categories can be written on the board – “Yes”, “No” and “Maybe/Maybe Not”. Listen to the discussions of the different groups and facilitate in case there is any deviation from the topic.

Yes

No

Maybe/Maybe Not

- After all the groups are done with the classification, which can take approx. 10 minutes, start with the discussion.

Note to the Facilitator - The objective of this activity is to challenge the thinking and therefore it is ok, if the students are confused answering many of these cases. Avoid helping them during the discussion or helping them with the answers. The conclusion of the activity is that even though most of the countries that have declared themselves as ‘democratic’, have policies that make them seem otherwise. There is no strict ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer in these cases as they are mostly ambiguous considering their policies. The names of the countries will be revealed only after the discussion on the activity is over. The solution that is given for the activity only states the official title of the country and the type of government the country claims to be. For e.g., Country I is North Korea whose official name is Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and it is officially a democracy although most of its policies might seem otherwise.

3. Discussion on the Activity:

Time: 25 – 30 minutes

Instructions for the facilitator:

1. Divide the classroom area into 3 parts - for 'Yes', 'No' and 'Maybe/Maybe Not'.
2. If the students think the answer is 'Yes', then they move to that part of the classroom that is assigned for 'Yes', and so on.
3. After discussing each statement, the student can choose to change her/his answer and change their place accordingly, but allow them to change it only once, keeping the essence of time in mind.
4. Let the discussion on each statement last only about 2 mins. Avoid adding inputs to the discussion, only guide them if there is too much deviation from the topic.
5. If the area of the classroom is very small or if there are too many students then we can get one student representative from each group to move left/right/centre of the classroom. For each statement, a different student can represent the group, that way every student gets a chance.
6. Make a note of their answers on the board by writing 'A' under 'Yes', 'No' or 'Maybe/Maybe Not'. If different groups have answered 'Yes', 'No' and 'Maybe/Maybe Not', write A under all 3 on the board. If all the groups answered only 'Yes' then write A under only 'Yes' and not the others.

- *'Do you think Country A is a democracy? If your group's answer is YES, then move here. If your group's answer is NO then move there. If your group's answer is MAYBE/MAYBE NOT, then move here'*
- *'Why do you think A is/is not a democracy?' Take a response for each option. 'Based on listening to the reasoning of others, has anyone changed their mind and wants to move to a different part of the classroom?'*
- Similarly, let the students discuss each statement one after the other. Let all the students sit back in their places after completing a discussion on all the countries. By the end of this discussion, on the board, we will most likely see each country in more than one category as shown below.

Yes	No	Maybe/Maybe Not
A	A	A
	B	B
C	C	C
D	D	D
	E	E
	F	F
G	G	G

This table is only an example. It will be different according to students' opinion.

- *'Now, what did you learn from this exercise? Did it confuse you more? Did it give you more clarity? Looking at the board, is everyone sure or clear about what a democracy is?'* Take a few responses.
- *'This brings us to the **first** reason why we need to define democracy - Without a definition of democracy, everyone will have their own opinion of what is democratic and what is not, which is what happens everyday around the world. **To be able to measure whether an action is democratic or not, we need a broad and clear definition of democracy.'***
- *'When we were doing this exercise, did some of your opinions shift after listening to others' explanations? This brings us to the **second** reason - If someone can give a convincing argument, people can be convinced about what is democratic and what is not. A tactic frequently used by politicians around the world is to convince people about their actions or their inactions. Having a clear definition of democracy **will put a check on the misuse of the term democracy.'***
- *'Now let's get to a really interesting part of the class - actually finding out which country is which. Let's guess each of the countries one by one.'* Take a few responses for each country and write the first 3 columns on the board.

Solution table for the activity:

Country	Name of the country	Type of Government (as declared by the country)	Additional Comments
A	Russia	Democracy	Official name is Russian Federation
B	Pakistan	Democracy	This was under President General Parvez Musharraf
C	China	Democracy	Official name is People's Republic of China. Only candidates approved by the ruling party – Chinese Communist Party are allowed to contest the elections.
D	Saudi Arabia	Monarchy (Not a democracy)	They have a king and a crown prince and have never claimed to be a democracy.
E	Great Britain	Constitutional Monarchy	They have a royal family but the people elect a government to take care of all political affairs
F	Any democratic country		Being able to protest itself is an important democratic right, - as long as it is peaceful.
G	Philippines	Democracy	More than 40 journalists have been killed with no arrests

H	United States of America	Democracy	It was officially a democracy even back then
I	North Korea	Democracy	Its official name is Democratic People's Republic of Korea

- *'What observation can you make with this list? Are you surprised by any of the responses?'*
 - Likely Response - Most of the countries that we thought were not democracies or the countries that have been taking undemocratic actions are actually officially democracies.
- *'This brings us to the **third** reason - Most countries want to be known as a democracy, so they officially call themselves that. But almost every single country has taken some action or the other which is not democratic. Countries like North Korea and China call themselves democracies just because they conduct elections. Without a broad definition of democracy how would we **distinguish between a true democracy from a country that only claims to be democratic but whose actions are undemocratic.**'*
- *'Lastly, let's look at the problem that country D has - Saudi Arabia – women are not able to vote freely. Although Saudi Arabia is not a democracy, every other democratic country in the world, except New Zealand, had the same problem in the last 100 years. Even though they were democracies, they did not allow women to vote, because the definition of democracy was different. It did not allow women to vote. Today, democracy means something different. Maybe in the next 100 years, democracy will mean something different altogether - including questions like, can we allow robots to vote? **Which means that we not only need to define democracy but also revisit the definition of democracy according to current needs and how it evolves over time.**'*
- In conclusion, the reasons for defining democracy clearly are (to be written in the notebook):
 - a. **To be able to measure whether an action is democratic or not.**
 - b. **To ensure that the term democracy is not misused.**
 - c. **To distinguish between a true democracy from a country that only claims to be democratic.**

4. Activity: Case Studies

Time: 5 minutes

Instructions to the facilitator

1. Show the following case studies to the students through the projector. Ask them to read both of them and discuss if this election process seems democratic or not. Discuss a few answers in class. (Both these cases will be referred to in the next lesson plan)
2. Read the following case study and identify if this country is a democracy or not. Give your reasons.

A. Since its independence in 1930, Mexico holds elections after every 6 years to elect its president. The country has never been under a military or dictator's rule. But until 2000, every election was won by a party called PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). Opposition parties did contest elections, but never managed to win. The PRI was known to use many dirty tricks to win elections. All those who were employed in government offices had to attend its party meetings. Teachers of government schools used to force parents to vote for PRI. Media largely ignored the activities of the opposition political parties except to criticize them. Sometimes the polling booths were shifted from one place to another in the last minute, which made it difficult for people to cast their votes. The PRI spent a large sum of money in the campaign for its candidates.

B. In China elections are regularly held after every 5 years for electing the country's parliament, called Quanguo Renmin Diabiao Dahui (National People's Congress). The National People's congress has the power to appoint the President of the country. It has nearly 3000 members elected from all over China. Some members are elected by the army. Before contesting the elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party. Only those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party or 8 smaller parties allied to it were allowed to contest elections held in 2002-03. The government is always formed by the communist party.

Solution:

- A. It is an undemocratic election process, but Mexico is officially a democracy.
- B. It is an undemocratic election process, but China is officially a democracy.

Section III – Assessment

A. Based on our discussion in class today, which of the following statements is True and which is False?

1. We don't need to define democracy as it is always changing
2. We cannot define democracy as it is different for every country.
3. We need to define democracy if we want to check if actions taken by the government is democratic or not.
4. Even if we define democracy, we need to constantly revisit the definition to make it relevant to the times.

B. Name 2 countries which are officially democracies, but do not allow representatives from opposition to stand for elections

Answer Key

A.

1. False. Even if it evolves over time, it is necessary to have a definition of democracy to check if it is being applied in day-to-day governance.
2. False. The way democracy is practiced in every country might vary, but the essence of democracy is the same no matter which country.
3. True
4. True

B. China and North Korea, for example.

Section IV – Closure

Time: 5 minutes

Facilitation Notes:

Through the activity that we did, we were able to list the reasons for defining democracy clearly as:

a. To be able to measure whether an action is democratic or not.

b. To ensure that the term democracy is not misused.

c. To distinguish between a true democracy from a country that only claims to be democratic.

In conclusion:

- Democracy needs to be defined clearly with a set of features so that actions of governments can be measured against it. It needs to be regularly revisited so that the definition covers every aspect according to the changing world.
- If we do not define it clearly, we will see countries that will call themselves as democracies that will bring undemocratic policies. But if we need to define it, where do we start from?
- In the beginning of the class when we did a revision of Poland and Chile, we loosely defined democracy as one where the people of the country elect the ruler of the country.
- So, as homework let us try and expand this by answering a few questions.

Section V – Homework

1. As homework answer the above 4 questions keeping India in mind and we will discuss these answers in detail in the next class.

- a) Who can be a ruler of a country?
- b) What kind of powers does the ruler have?
- c) Who are the people who can elect the rulers?
- d) What kind of election process should there be?

Section V – Additional Resources

Resources for teachers

- Reading – SGI Network
A website that ranks many countries according to their governance, including quality of democracy.
http://www.sgi-network.org/2018/Sweden/Quality_of_Democracy
- Reading – Is Thailand’s election democratic?
This article on Thailand’s election in 2019 examines whether it was democratic or undemocratic.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2019/03/thailand-election-democratic-190324174814612.html>
- Video - How to Become the President of China
A video on the elections in China
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-qSHnRju4Q> - -

Resources for students

- Video - How India became a democracy



For more information on India as a democracy is a video summary of the book 'How India became a democracy'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKsh2GMgdbE>

- Video – Democracy: A short introduction

A simple introduction on democracy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6jgWxkbR7A>

Appendix 1

Country A has been ruled by the same person for the last 18 years and there are discussions of amending the Constitution to increase the number of years that a person can rule.

In Country B, the cabinet was supervised by a National Security Council which was dominated by military officers.

Country C allows only candidates selected by the ruling party to stand for elections

In Country D, women had the right to vote and stand for elections for the first time in 2015.

Country E does not have a written Constitution

In Country F, the people held a nationwide protest against the government for not upholding its promises

Country G has one of the highest unsolved journalists' murder cases in the world and no action has been taken against the crimes.

Until 1954, in Country H, students in schools and colleges were separated based on the colour of their skin.

Country I recently held elections, where voters could vote for only one candidate as he/she is the only person standing for elections.

Appendix 2

YES

NO

MAYBE/
MAYBE NOT

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