



## What is democracy?

Translate each quotation into your own words.

1. "The basis of a democratic government is liberty."  
- Aristotle, philosopher in ancient Greece
2. "As I would not be a slave, I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. If government differs from this, it is not a democracy."  
- President Abraham Lincoln, before the Civil War
3. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people . . ."  
- President Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address*
4. "How do you measure democracy? Well, how much freedom does the humblest citizen have?"  
- John Galsworthy, author
5. "I believe in democracy because it releases the energies of every human being."  
- President Woodrow Wilson
6. "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people! That is the definition of democracy."  
- Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England during World War II
7. "My political ideal is democracy. Every person should be respected as an individual."  
- Albert Einstein, physicist
8. "Democracy is the belief that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time."  
- E.B. White, newspaper editor
9. "Democracy is the only form of government that is founded on the dignity of man. Not the dignity of some men, of rich men, of educated men, or of white men. But of all men."  
- Robert Hutchins, President, University of Chicago
10. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."  
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
"I Have A Dream" speech (1963)  
To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and to pressure Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### The Answers

1. The main purpose of a government is to ensure rights of the individual.
2. In a democracy, each human being must be his own master.
3. Democracy is when: The people are the government. The people form the government. The people's happiness is the main goal of government.
4. If the lowliest citizen has little freedom, then you do not have a real democracy.
5. Democracy allows every individual to be all that he/she can be.
6. Churchill regarded President Lincoln's definition as the best.
7. The main purpose of a democratic government is to ensure the rights of the individual.
8. Majority rule is good. The majority is often right. But the majority is not always right.
9. Democracy is for everyone - not just the rich white men of property.
10. Society takes away man's equality. Government restores it. Dr. King: Forget the law. The real change is when people have equality in their hearts.

### **Can democracy work?**

11. Our political institutions work remarkably well. They are designed to clang against each other. The noise is democracy at work.

- Michael Novak

### **The Citizen**

12. I'm tired of hearing it said that democracy doesn't work. Of course it doesn't work. We are supposed to work it.

- Alexander Woollcott

13. People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote - a very different thing.

- Walter H. Judd

### **Majority rule / Minority rights**

14. Majority rule only works if you're also considering individual rights. Because you can't have five wolves and one sheep voting on what to have for supper.

- Larry Flynt

### **A Democracy Needs A Lot of Education**

15. The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.

- Winston Churchill

16. Democracy is a government where you can say what you think even if you don't think.

- Author Unknown

### **Other types of government**

17. Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those others that have been tried from time to time.

- Winston Churchill

11. When the people participate in government, it's messy. So what?

12. In order for democracy to work, every citizen must participate in government. Serve on a jury. Read what candidates have to say, register to vote, and vote! Why not run for office?

13. Only a minority of people do the above things.

14. If the majority rules, the sheep will always be eaten for supper.

15. Does the average voter research the issues or vote for the guy he likes?

16. There is a difference between the facts and your opinion.

17. Democracy is not perfect, but it's the best government that exists!

# Bloom!

## Democracy

Take a little seed and make it bloom into a lovely flower (or poisonous plant).

Break into six groups.  
Each group takes on an assignment.

### 1. Define

Using your textbook,  
define it in 25 words or less.

### 2. Interpret

Translate it into your own words.  
Make it memorable.

### 3. Apply

What if you applied this principle  
to your own life?

### 4. Analyze

List the parts of this theory.

### 5. Synthesize

Add up the parts . . . and create a new thing.

### 6. Evaluate

To what extent does the U.S. government  
live up to the definition of democracy?

#### The Answers

##### 1. **Democracy**

A system of government in which power is vested in the people,  
who rule through freely elected representatives.

2. Government of, by, and for the people.  
(Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*)

3. If we had democracy in my family,  
the children (as well as the parents)  
would govern.

4. What is democracy?

- a. Government by the people
- b. Rule of the majority
- c. A government in which the supreme power is vested in  
the people
- d. The people exercise their political power through a  
system of representation involving  
periodically held free elections
- e. respect for the individual

What is democracy?

- a. political equality (yes)
- b. social equality (yes, in the 20th century)
- c. economic equality (no)

5. The U.S. has a democratic system of government.

6. It does.