

# Emperor or President?

## Summary

This lesson will help students trace attributes of the United States government to those of ancient Greek democracy.

**Essential Question:** How can understanding the political systems of ancient times apply to modern day?

## Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 6th Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 3](#)

## Time Frame

2 class periods of 60 minutes each

## Group Size

Individual

## Life Skills

Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

Texts, atlases, encyclopedias, and internet resources on ancient Greek and Roman governments.

## Background for Teachers

From Greece one man led a city-state to Rome with an emperor ruling half of the known world to modern day democracies around the world all global governments are intertwined and linked by their histories. (You will need to login to [Utah's Online Library](#) first to access the Worldbook Online links)

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students will need an understanding of the US government: representative democracy, legislative branches, system of checks and balances, etc.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will compare the government of the United States to the various governmental experiments of Ancient Greece and Rome.

## Instructional Procedures

Teacher asks the class, "How are the rules at home, at school, and in the community the same? Different? Students brainstorm for 2-3 minutes with 'shoulder' partner (neighbor) and record thoughts on paper.

Student pairs share information with one other partnership.

Teacher creates a 3-way Venn diagram on the board and labels circles "Home," "School," and "Community." Teacher discusses with students the purpose of a Venn Diagram - to compare and contrast 2 more items.

Teacher calls on one student to serve as a recorder. Students call out one at a time the

differences between rules at school, home, and in the community. Recorder records ideas on the Venn diagram. Teacher guides students to eliminate duplications. (Five minutes)

Once differences are discussed, then students share similarities between the rules. Teacher guides students to eliminate duplications. (Five minutes)

Teacher asks, "Who made the classroom rules? The school rules? The community rules? What is the difference? What are the purposes?" The goal behind this discussion is to help students realize that there is a governmental structure that develops rules and laws.

If the teacher and students together decided on the classroom rules, then the teacher can point out that since everyone contributed to the making of classroom rules, the classroom is a democracy. Teacher should point out that in some situations not all people have a voice or only one voice is heard; this type of government is not a democracy. *The key is flexibility. Teacher should adapt discussion accordingly.*

Teacher reviews with students the type and structure of the United States government. Teacher points out that when structuring our government, the Founding Fathers modeled the government of the United States on the democratic government of ancient Greece.

Teacher passes out materials: venn diagram, reading information, and 2 different colors of pens (one for similarities and one for differences.)

Teacher models finding the important information and note taking.

Students silently read and record notes on the Venn diagram about ancient Greek and modern United States governments.

Once students are finished, the class comes together to complete a class Venn diagram on the board. Teacher gives students a chance to add, subtract, or change their personal Venn diagrams based on class discussion and class Venn diagram.

### Strategies for Diverse Learners

Teacher work with low learners in a small group to help them take notes and fill out their Venn diagrams.

Gifted students may do a three way comparison which would include the government of ancient Rome.

### Extensions

Simulation of a common issue (e.g. school uniforms) debate modeled on the format of an ancient Greek debate with issue vote to follow. Teacher must set ground rules for debate. (e.g. language)

Simulation of a Roman debate. Teacher randomly passes out cards to class. Some cards have *citizen* written on them while the others are blank. Students with the citizen cards come to the front of the room and sit on the floor. Others stay at their desks. *Teacher explains that the students with citizen cards are citizens of the republic and have a voice. Those with blank cards are not considered citizens and have absolutely no voice. Teacher then introduces the issue to be debated. (e.g. Principal has decided to lock the bathrooms) Student who are citizen will debate the issue. After the debate is finished, the teacher processes with all students on how they felt about the debate. Discuss "what worked" and "what didn't" during the debate.*

### Assessment Plan

Student produced Venn diagrams and participation.

### Bibliography

- <http://www.historyforkids.org>
- <http://www.readingquest.org>
- <http://www.worldbookonline.com>

## Authors

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