



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy by Nathaniel Harris

OBJECTIVE

Students understand the idea of democracy and play out the concept.

MATERIALS

Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy -
Nathaniel Harris

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Tell students that you are going to share with them a definition of democracy expressed by Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president.
- ✓ Say, *According to Lincoln, democracy is a, "government of the people, by the people, (and) for the people."* (excerpted from the Gettysburg address)
- ✓ Ask what this means to the students. Have them put this definition in their own words.
- ✓ Tell your students that they are now going to discover the many aspects of a democracy.
- ✓ Read selections from *Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Is the idea of democracy new? With whom did it originate? Is it the same idea or has it changed?*
- ★ *In a true democracy, all people participate in all the decision making. Are most of the world's democracies run this way? What do you think about that?*
- ★ *For most of human history, nations have not been run by democracies. Why do you think this has been the case?*
- ★ *In a democracy, can the majority do whatever they want? Can they take away the rights of everyone else? Why not?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Tell the students that you are going to play a game. Give them multiple game options to choose from.
- ✓ Ask, *What's the best way to choose a game? To have one person decide? To have a random group of people decide for everyone? Have everyone decide together?* Ask the students to explain why they think one option is better than another.
- ✓ Ask, *Is it easier to let one person decide, or maybe just a few? Wouldn't (student's name) like it best if he/she got to choose?* Listen to student responses. Say, *Oh, that is not good for everyone. Then what is a good way to decide?* Students will say that they should vote.
- ✓ Hold a vote over which game the class should play, having students write their game choice on pieces of paper (or create ballots). Play the game that gets the most votes.
- ✓ Ask the class if everyone got to play the game they wanted to play. Listen to responses.
- ✓ Point out that even though they all didn't get to play the game they wanted, through democracy they all had a voice and they all got to participate in a game.